

Jews and the State

Dangerous Alliances and the
Perils of Privilege

Edited by Ezra Mendelsohn

STUDIES IN
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Volume XIX

**Jews and the State:
Dangerous Alliances and
the Perils of Privilege**

*Ezra Mendelsohn,
Editor*

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Preface

It was once common to think of Jewish history as a morbid tale of persecution, misery, and martyrdom. As Shylock famously said, “Sufferance is the badge of all our tribe,” and over the centuries many Jews and non-Jews alike have tended to agree with Shakespeare’s Jewish villain. As is well known, the great Jewish historian Salo Baron chastised his 19th-century predecessor, Heinrich Graetz, for having written a history of the Jews that was characterized by “suffering and tears.”

The new Jewish history produced in Israel and in the West is, of course, far removed from the “Leidensgeschichte” of Graetz. Still, in recent years, the persecution of the Jews, and the various modern manifestations of antisemitism, have been the subject of more scholarly and popular works (not to mention memoirs and fictional accounts) than has any other aspect of modern Jewish history—a result, obviously, of the unprecedented catastrophe that befell European Jewry during the Second World War.

As against this old/new emphasis on Jewish suffering the symposium in this volume of *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* takes up the problem of Jewish privilege. In certain places and at certain times in the modern Jewish diaspora, the Jewish community either enjoyed a privileged position in society or was believed to enjoy such a status by elements among the non-Jewish majority. It was often the case that Jews allied themselves, or were thought to be allying themselves, with regimes (usually states, but sometimes local authorities in regions that enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy) that were regarded by many as highly oppressive. Of the eight case studies that constitute our symposium, two involve Jewish “alliances” (if that is what they were) with openly racist regimes (South Africa and the American South in the era of apartheid), three are concerned with the fateful Jewish support for Communist regimes in post-Second World War East Central Europe (Hungary, Romania, and Poland), and two analyze the relationship between Jews, the “native population,” and the French regimes in colonial North Africa (Morocco and Algeria). The symposium also includes an essay on the situation in the province of Quebec, where Jews found themselves caught between the Anglican establishment and its highly attractive English culture, on the one hand, and the majority population of francophone Canadians, on the other.

As Richard Cohen demonstrates in his introduction to the symposium, the tradition of Jews seeking the protection of the state (or, as a variation on this theme, of powerful social classes within the state), and offering in return their full support, is deeply rooted in the Jewish past. Were such alliances inevitable? Were they the result of a conscious Jewish policy, and did they command the support of most members of the Jewish community? How were they perceived by non-Jews, and what price (if any) did the Jews pay for entering into them (a question that becomes particularly rel-

evant when sudden regime change occurs, as for example in the case of South Africa). These are among the questions raised by the distinguished contributors to this volume, whose essays allow the reader to recognize both the similarities between, say, the policies of Rabbi Moses Rosen in Romania and various rabbis in pre-Mandela South Africa, and at the same time to realize that each case possesses its own unique characteristics.

I wish to thank my fellow editors of *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, Jonathan Frankel, Eli Lederhendler, and Peter Medding, for their help in preparing this volume. It is not easy to know how to thank properly our two managing editors, Laurie Fialkoff and Hannah Levinsky-Koevary—we have run out of superlatives. Suffice it to say that their success in overcoming innumerable difficulties (consider, to cite one such difficulty, the issue of Hungarian accent marks) in order to produce a wonderfully well-edited new volume each year is, in my view, nothing short of miraculous.

We wish to thank the Samuel and Althea Stroum Philanthropic Fund for its continued generous support of our journal. Publication of this volume was also assisted by a grant from the Ben-Eli Honig Fund at the Hebrew University to support Zionist studies. Over the years we have also enjoyed the support of the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation. Its dedicated representative, Pamela Ween Brumberg, was a good and valued friend of our journal, and it is with deep sorrow that we record her death. We also wish to express our sadness at the death of Charles Liebman of Bar-Ilan University, a frequent and highly valued contributor to these pages.

E.M.

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Jews and the State:
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Jews and the State: The Historical Context

Richard I. Cohen
(THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY)

Izsó Köves (1853–1917), a Hungarian-born artist of Jewish origin, had a particular interest in portraying scenes of Jewish history: Spinoza before his judges; the Tortosa debate (the famous Jewish-Christian disputation in early 15th-century Spain); and a canvas integrating Hungarian and Jewish history, *The Jews of Buda before King Matthias*, which depicts a Jewish delegation joining the procession to meet Matthias and his queen, Beatrix of Aragon, on their return to the city following their marriage in 1476.¹ In another painting, based on an incident that never actually occurred, Moses Mendelssohn is seen presenting himself before Frederick the Great and Baron von Fritsche (a minister from Saxony).² Bending over in a gesture of fealty, having removed his hat, Mendelssohn, dressed in a dark cape, greets the king and the baron—who, for their part, seem pleased with the encounter (Fig. 1).

What lay at the basis of Köves' imaginative portrayal, painted at a time when a growing number of Hungarian Jews were undergoing acculturation and Magyarization? Quite possibly, the artist meant to show both the Jews' fealty and the honor Frederick bestowed upon them by meeting their most distinguished philosopher. In light of the theme of this volume, this painting may also be taken to represent the recurrent attraction of Jews to secular rulers, whom they looked to for respect and appreciation.

Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi has addressed the issue of the Jews' desire to be closely associated with the state in his study of the Lisbon massacre of 1506.³ Like other scholars who preceded him, Yerushalmi is intrigued by the manner in which Solomon Ibn Verga, an exiled Jew from Spain and the author of *Shevet Yehudah*, a historical work, repeatedly lauded the kings of Europe for their benevolent attitude toward the Jews—adding invariably the epithet *melekh hesed* (“gracious” or “righteous” king) to their names. Even when writing about the expulsion of 1492, Ibn Verga maintained this position and absolved King Ferdinand of any responsibility, blaming instead Torquemada, since he was the one who succeeded in convincing Queen Isabella to expel the Jews. Ibn Verga also held the Jews partly responsible for their own misfortune. Had they behaved less haughtily and with greater perspicacity, he claimed, they might have been able to avert the evil decree.

Ibn Verga's approach, namely, that rulers bestow security and benefits upon the



Figure 1. Iszó Köves, *Moses Mendelssohn before Frederick the Great*, c. 1880s (whereabouts unknown), depicts Mendelssohn's reception by Frederick the Great and Baron von Fritsche. The artist must have known that Mendelssohn was often called "the Jewish Socrates," since he included a bust of the Greek philosopher in Frederick's parlor room in the upper left-hand corner of the painting, intimating that a certain bond existed between the Jewish philosopher and the ruler.

Jews, and that the Jews suffer misfortune because of their own behavior, resonated throughout the centuries. The corollary to this approach was that Jews could never place their trust in other elements within society, since “the masses” (*hehamon*), as they were often called, were both unreliable and unruly. This analysis was shared by other illustrious medieval writers, including Profiat Duran, Isaac Abravanel, Solomon Usque, and Joseph Ha-Kohen. Like Ibn Verga, they believed that Jews should nurture a relationship with the crown that would allow them enough leeway to further their religious and economic concerns, while at the same time protecting them from the masses.

Ibn Verga’s “royal image,” to quote Yerushalmi’s felicitous phrase, did not emerge out of a vacuum. The tradition of Jewish alliances with the ruling authorities can be traced back to Hellenistic times, and the precept “the law of the land is the law” (*dina demalkhuta dina*), originally formulated in the 3rd century, became a guiding principle in medieval Jewish life. Based on the understanding that Jews were obligated to fulfill certain duties to the crown (especially, but not exclusively, those of a fiscal nature), and in turn were to be granted a certain degree of self-rule, this internal code was honed over time by the rabbis, who believed it to be essential for the survival of the Jewish community. Thus Jews were instructed by their leaders to place their trust in rulers, for whom, from early medieval times, they offered a special prayer.⁴

Advocates of this policy were by no means oblivious to its consequences. They were aware that preference for a “royal” alliance over alliances with other potential foci of power (corporations, local authorities, non-ruling ethnic or religious groups, the clergy, or even the amorphous “masses”) jeopardized the Jews’ relationship with groups that were in conflict with the ruling authorities. Indeed, the example of the Jews in the Polish Commonwealth of the late Middle Ages demonstrates both the attraction of an alliance with the most powerful segment of society and its potential dangers.

In Poland, the Jews confronted a complicated mosaic of ethnic and religious communities—among them Poles, Ruthenians, Armenians, Scots, and Tatars—living in a state characterized by a very weak central authority. Petty nobles, magnates (the elite nobility), peasants, clergy, local patricians, rulers of royal towns, and merchants were among those who vied for authority and control. Meanwhile, national and religious minorities competed for privileges from the king, duke, or lord who defined their place in the social order. Such privileges became all the more critical from the 16th century onward, as the central authority gradually ceded its power to the estates. In this internal tug-of-war, Jews often found themselves subject to legal disabilities, though they were never reduced to serfdom. Certain cities, for example, were allowed by the state “not to tolerate Jews” (*de non tolerandis Judaeis*).⁵

In this context, alliance-building was particularly important, and Jews were alert to the dangers inherent in allying themselves with one force over another. Encouraged by magnates to settle in the towns that were part of their estates, the Jews generally obliged, since the magnates offered both economic opportunity and religious freedom. In this marriage of convenience, the Jews regarded the magnates much as Ibn Verga had viewed *malkhei hesed*, while they themselves became an important factor in the magnates’ efforts to curtail the power of city merchants and guilds. Although the magnates (like most others) often subscribed to negative views of the Jews, they were keenly aware of the considerable economic benefits to be gained from this al-

liance. Indeed, Murray Rosman has shown that the more powerful the magnates, the more interested they were in settling Jews in their towns.⁶

Although the Jews were convinced that the magnates' interests coincided with their own, they "had to be mindful of underlying tensions between them and their non-Jewish neighbors, tensions that could be catalyzed into active persecution when the conditions were right."⁷ Nonetheless, as the magnate oligarchy grew stronger in 17th- and 18th-century Poland, the symbiotic relationship between the great lords and the Jews deepened. The landowners' income increased considerably, while the Jews experienced impressive demographic growth and extensive cultural activity ranging from rabbinic scholarship to unprecedented, innovative synagogue architecture. As a result of their role in the magnate network, Jews also became involved in Polish politics, both on the national and local levels, allying themselves with the magnates against the weakening central authority and other segments of society.⁸

The dangers of this alliance became clear during the horrific events of 1648–1649 ("the catastrophe"), when Jews were caught up in the crossfire of the Cossack rebellion against the Polish crown and the great landowners. Though they were far from being the prime cause of the uprising, Jews were regarded by the Cossacks, peasants, and other participants in the revolt as allies of the Poles in general, and of the magnates in particular. For all their privileges, Jews were not given adequate protection; thousands were massacred. Nonetheless, their loyalty to the magnates did not waver. Following these cataclysmic years, Polish Jews behaved as if no alternative existed other than to deepen their ties with the magnates, whose power over their respective latifundia was absolute. As Rosman notes, the magnates still "offered the best promise of physical security, benign legal status, and prosperity."⁹ Indeed, as recent research has shown, Jews in Poland rebounded from 1648–1649 with tremendous resilience, supported as they often were by the magnates. In the census of 1764, on the eve of partition, the Jewish population may have been as high as 750,000, which represented an annual increase (from 1667) of 1.5 to 2 percent.¹⁰

The Polish case demonstrates how Jews in a complex society were unable to remain passive. Did they make their alliance consciously, as a product of a traditional pattern, or did they have no real choice? Most likely the latter, as the extensive opportunities offered by the magnates obviously could not be matched by other groups, which, in any event, both greatly feared the Jews' economic success and distrusted them for religious reasons. As it was, the prominent position Jews established within the magnates' estates—as *arrendators* (lessees of properties), as manufacturers and distributors of alcohol, and as marketing agents for products produced on the land—determined their role in Polish society long after the Polish state had been dissolved at the end of the 18th century.

Polish magnates were not the only elite European group to believe that Jews could promote broad economic interests. In the early modern period, European rulers began to reassess their discriminatory medieval attitudes and, as a result, offered a modicum of opportunity to a select number of Jews. *Raison d'état* and the growing mercantilist spirit played a significant role in this development. Nevertheless, as was the case in Poland, pro-Jewish attitudes were supported by few and opposed by many.

In England, for instance, immediately following the overthrow of the Stuarts in 1649, readmission of the Jews began to be discussed openly in certain circles, fol-

lowing a petition sent by two English nationals residing in Amsterdam. This petition, addressed to the English Council of War, spoke in religious terms, arguing that the expulsion of the Jews in 1290 had sparked “God’s anger” against England, and thus needed to be rescinded. Although similar views had been expressed from the beginning of the 17th century, the movement to allow Jews back into England took a decisive turn only as a result of the intervention of Rabbi Manasseh Ben Israel of Amsterdam, who was supported by the Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell. Yet the Whitehall Conference—convened by Cromwell in December 1655 with the expressed intent of expediting Jewish readmission—faced considerable opposition from a wide range of Englishmen, including clerics and merchants, and it failed to produce the desired proclamation. Cromwell, undaunted, proceeded to grant the minuscule and unofficial colony of Sephardic Jews (residing in England as “Spaniards”) sufficient guarantees to enable them to live openly as Jews. With Cromwell’s death and the restoration of a Stuart, Charles II, to the throne in 1660, opposition forces reasserted their rejection of the idea of readmitting the Jews. The crown, however, was determined to pursue a more open economic policy and not to succumb to the pressure of the powerful merchant class. As David Katz put it, “once Cromwell and Charles II realized that Jews as a nation could never be admitted through the front door, they were anxious to go around the back themselves and let them in through the entrance reserved for tradesmen.”¹¹ Thus, readmission was achieved by virtue of Cromwell’s intervention and assent, and by 1700, a Jew had been knighted for the first time in English history.

Neither Cromwell nor Charles II feared that Jews would become a liability to society, although they did worry about the negative influence of other religious groups, such as Catholics and Dissidents. Their position was similar to that of the French monarchy, which decided in 1685 to revoke the Edict of Nantes—an act that resulted in the evacuation of more than 200,000 Huguenots—while at the same time allowing several thousand Jews to remain in its midst. Although popular opinion was certainly not in favor of the Jews, Jean Baptiste Colbert, Louis XIV’s influential minister, adamantly supported them, emphasizing their unique contribution to international trade with the French economy.¹²

Economics, however, was not the only reason behind the toleration, and sometimes even the privileging, of the Jews. Writing in the early 18th century, the Anglo-Irish deist John Toland produced a fascinating theological and pragmatic argument for granting Jewish naturalization. In *Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews in Great Britain and Ireland*, Toland considered and systematically dismissed many of the common prejudices against Jews and called for their being placed “on the same foot with all other nations.” Of particular interest are his reflections on the relationship between Jews and the state. Toland, like Jewish apologists (such as Manasseh Ben Israel and Simone Luzzatto) before him, argued that since Jews had no country of their own and felt no loyalty to foreign powers or institutions—unlike Catholics, for example, who were bound to the Vatican—they would be completely devoted citizens, refraining from any political activity to the country’s detriment. Treated fairly, he wrote, the Jews would be “ours for ever.”¹³

Toland was by no means unaware of possible objections to his proposal. Interestingly, he reiterated a theme raised by Ibn Verga, namely, that “Brutes . . . led or driven by a few self-interested Demagogues” would be opposed to the admission of

foreigners to Britain, since these brought the threat of economic competition or political change. Moreover, various churches (especially the National Church and the Dissenters) might assume that the Jews would ally themselves with their rivals and thus weaken them. Toland's own position, however, was that the Jewish way was "to preserve the legal Establishment, on which their own security is grounded." A typical mercantilist, he believed in the benefits that a growing population, including Jewish immigrants, would bring to his country.¹⁴

In Toland's mind, Jews were inclined to be wedded to the state, loyal and obedient, and unlikely to engage in any radical political activity. Unlike Catholics or heathens, they posed no threat to society; shorn of sovereignty and territory, they would be ideal citizens. Such views, expressed in early 18th-century England (many years later, similar arguments would be set forth by Benjamin Disraeli) had little resonance—indeed, Toland's apprehensions concerning the possible opposition to Jewish naturalization proved to be exact. In 1753, a proposed bill to naturalize the Jews was defeated after an alliance of city merchants and clerical figures relentlessly portrayed it as a paramount danger to English society. Although the Jews continued their intensive process of integration and acculturation in England, they enjoyed very narrow support throughout the 1700s.¹⁵

A splendid example of the application of Toland's theories regarding the relationship between Jews and the state is the "court Jew" phenomenon of 17th- and 18th-century Central Europe. To be sure, Jews who reached the height of political power during the age of European mercantilism were not the first of their kind. There are well-known cases of Jews who, from the period of the Abbasid Caliphate in the 9th century until the rise of the Ottoman empire, attained glory and authority in the countries they inhabited. These courtiers developed remarkable relations with their rulers and were given significant functions in the government, often enjoying privileges that contrasted sharply with their official legal status as *dhimmis*.¹⁶ Regarded as loyal to the state—and particularly to its ruler—they were often both daring and power-hungry. In their quest for authority, some of them found themselves embroiled in disputes with non-Jewish courtiers, or with the Jewish community itself. In fact, they were living contradictions, since their tremendous power coexisted with the firm notion of the Jews' being an inferior people. Their situation was thus inherently dangerous, and many a medieval Jewish courtier fell from riches to rags. Their fate, and at times that of the entire Jewish community, could be tragic.

An example is the Jewish courtier (*nagid*) Joseph ibn Naghrela of Granada, who, as a result of political infighting, came under attack and was murdered in 1066. An Andalusian poet, Abu Ishaq of Elvira, had earlier appealed to the king to bring an end to the "impossible alliance" between the royal court and the Jews, which wreaked havoc on all that was precious to the Muslims:

Through him [Joseph] the Jews have become
great and proud and arrogant—
they, who were among the most abject
and have gained their desires and attained the utmost,
and this happened suddenly, before they even realized it.
And how many a worthy Muslim humbly obeys
the vilest ape among these miscreants . . .

Put them back where they belong
and reduce them to the lowest of the low . . .
These low-born people would not be seated in society
or paraded among the intimates of the ruler.¹⁷

Abu Ishaq's damning words point to the more problematical aspects of the Jews' alliance with their rulers: their accumulation of wealth and influence, their superior position over the native non-Jewish population, and the consequent need of non-Jews to accord them respect. His dramatic and even violent outcry against Jewish power ("Do not consider it a breach of faith to kill them/the breach of faith would be to let them carry on") would be heard again in Central Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. Thus, the Central European court Jew would often find himself (or herself; some courtiers were female) faced with the same dilemma encountered by the *nagid* of Granada. Offered unique privileges, such Jews saw an opportunity to improve dramatically their own position in society. But this entailed considerable risk. What Toland viewed as the linchpin of the Jews' allegiance to the state—their homelessness and lack of a political basis—made the Jews desirable allies, yet also left them highly vulnerable.

Of course, the European context was quite different from that of medieval Spain. Court Jews of the 17th and 18th centuries lived in an age of absolutism and commercial capitalism in which absolutist rulers sought ways to improve government efficiency and develop foreign trade.¹⁸ In many areas, Jews were active in purveying military equipment to their ruler and in providing ready cash. Samuel Oppenheimer (1630–1703), for instance, developed a complicated network of contractors and subcontractors in the Holy Roman Empire that enabled him to provide exceptional services to the Habsburg ruler, Leopold I. After having expelled close to 3,000 Jews from Vienna in 1670, Leopold appointed Oppenheimer as his imperial factor, granting him various commercial monopolies that enabled him to develop an extensive pan-European firm. His success, however, provoked animosity and jealousy among Oppenheimer's fellow courtiers. They constantly tried to undermine him, and they were eventually successful. Twice imprisoned, his home in Vienna ransacked, Oppenheimer had little hope of repaying extensive debts; upon his deathbed, he was on the verge of bankruptcy. His fate was similar to that of other court Jews, though he at least died a natural death.¹⁹

Absolutist rulers—emperors, dukes, princes, and bishops—continued to seek out entrepreneurial Jews, who were called into service in sensitive economic and political areas: they were masters of the mint, tax collectors, financial confidantes, bankers, secret political agents, advisers, and purveyors for the army. They were allowed to enter cities with special permission (and royal protection) in order to expedite their functions. Often a ruler personalized his relationship with a court Jew by awarding him with special gifts, as in the case of Leopold I, who gave Oppenheimer's successor, Rabbi Samson Wertheimer, an "Imperial chain of grace and our portrait" in 1703. Several years later, Wertheimer and his son were present at the coronation of Leopold's son, Karl VI, in the St. Bartholomaei Stiftskirche in Frankfurt, alongside more than 400 Christian princes and counts. Once again, Wertheimer was given a gold chain, this time by the new emperor. One can only surmise what this court Jew and rabbi felt at such a moment. Fully committed to the social and cultural world of traditional Jewish

society, Wertheimer had successfully intervened on behalf of the Jews on a number of occasions (for instance, he was instrumental in postponing the publication of Johann Andreas Eisenmenger's antisemitic work, *Entdecktes Judenthum*). At the same time, he lived lavishly and identified with Baroque court culture. Yet neither he, nor his son, nor other court Jews of his day, would ever build a power base in general society, and they remained outside the web of social contracts within that society.²⁰

Conscious as they were of their dangerous position, what motivated the court Jews to behave as they did? Was this, as Hannah Arendt, among others, has argued, merely a lack of political wisdom?²¹ Certainly their behavior manifests personal ambition, the desire to succeed in one of very few areas open to them in the political and social context of their time. In addition, however, the court Jew phenomenon is yet another example of the marriage of convenience that so often came about between state rulers and the Jews. Rulers needed outsiders to help them circumvent vested interests, develop the economy, and centralize authority; Jews sought the protection of a "righteous ruler"—though such protection was often contingent on the Jews' wealth and economic connections.

The frailness of the protection offered to court Jews is famously illustrated by the rise and fall of Joseph Oppenheimer (also known as *Jud Süß*, or the Jew Süß), an 18th-century German Jew.²² The son of a wealthy merchant and tax collector, Oppenheimer gained the confidence of Karl Alexander, prince and later duke of Württemberg, and assumed a wide range of governmental responsibilities, including the procurement of military and other supplies, minting, and tax farming. He also became a pivotal figure in Duke Karl's attempt to revamp and centralize state government, often by oppressive means. This led to widespread resentment against both Oppenheimer and the duke (a convert to Catholicism in a predominantly Protestant country). Oppenheimer was reviled as well for his economic intrigues and his ostentatious and promiscuous lifestyle. When Duke Karl suddenly died, Oppenheimer's opponents quickly moved against him, arresting him and charging him with extortion and misuse of state funds. Following a lengthy trial, Oppenheimer was convicted. On February 4, 1738, he was hanged in the presence of thousands of spectators.

Over the next two centuries, the saga of Oppenheimer's career and precipitous fall from grace was treated in numerous literary, artistic, and scholarly works, the most notorious being the Nazi film *Jud Süß* (1940), which was seen by more than 20 million viewers between 1940 and 1943.²³ Directed by Veit Harlan, this film portrayed Oppenheimer as an unscrupulous, villainous Jew whose exploitative skills threatened Württemberg and, by implication, all of Germany. A number of scholarly works written before the Nazi era had been more sympathetic both to Oppenheimer and to court Jews in general. Selma Stern, whose 1929 biography of Oppenheimer provided the historical context for his activities, returned to this theme after the Second World War. Wishing to "clear [Oppenheimer's] name of the false charges against him . . ." Stern ended her monograph on court Jews with a moving description of his execution and concluded that

the career of the Court Jew has a symbolic significance for the fate of the Jew in all ages. For time and again the Jew has helped prepare the way for a new era, only to find himself ground between the old forces which had outlived their day and the new which, with his help, were giving the world the promise of a better future.²⁴

This view was challenged by Hannah Arendt, who argued that Jews (court Jews, in particular) preferred privilege and proximity to power, while remaining distant from society and politics. According to Arendt, the choice made by such Jews had serious implications both for the future role of the Jews in the state and for relations between Jews and Gentiles.²⁵

Another remarkable example of the relations between Jews and the state is afforded by the history of the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah) movement. When Moses Mendelssohn, the preeminent figure of the Haskalah movement, turned to Christian Wilhelm von Dohm with the request that he write in defense of the Jews of France, he showed that there were alternatives to total reliance upon the state. At the same time, since the Haskalah program, which called for reforms in Jewish life, invariably conflicted with the established Jewish leadership, 18th- and 19th-century maskilim often did look to the absolutist state for support, believing as they did in the state's ability and desire to restructure Jewish life.

As had Jewish figures of the past, the maskilim had a low opinion of the "masses"—in this case, both Gentile and Jewish—and they rarely regarded them as likely partners in their social and political struggles. Naphtali Herz Wessely, whose famous tract of 1782, *Divrei shalom veemet* (Words of peace and truth) followed Joseph II's first edict of toleration for the Jews of Lower Austria, is a perfect example of this point of view. A major theme of the pamphlet was the need for Jewish reciprocity in the wake of Joseph's edict: "and you brothers of Israel who live under this great ruler, how will you reciprocate for all of the great good he has done for you, or what will you be able to give him?" Joseph's actions, Wessely argued, demonstrated that the age of persecution had ended and that Jews might now emerge from their confinement and intellectual seclusion in order to join the wider society. In response to vicious rabbinic attacks against *Divrei shalom veemet*, Wessely went even further, claiming that Joseph II was not acting in isolation: Enlightenment thought now guided the attitude toward the Jews of many European rulers, creating a basis for a new relationship between Jews and the state. In his appreciation of the liberal tendencies of rulers such as Frederick the Great of Prussia, Catherine the Great of Russia, Louis XVI of France, and Gustavus III of Sweden, Wessely even appropriated the classic terminology used by Ibn Verga, depicting them all as *malkhei ḥesed*.

Later, in *Sefer hamidot* (The book of virtues), a more theoretical work of 1785, Wessely turned to political theory and proposed a political orientation recalling that of the 17th-century Dutch political thinker Hugo Grotius. Government, according to Wessely, must be administered according to laws and regulations established by scholars and individuals of intelligence—"philosopher kings"—who would keep the masses in check and teach them to differentiate between good and evil. Civility required obeying the laws out of understanding or, barring that, fear of punishment (according to Wessely, it was important to have an army both to enforce law and to maintain order). Overall, Wessely's views were reminiscent of Toland's, and they were embraced by many other maskilim. Rabbi Eliahu Morpurgo, who translated *Divrei shalom veemet* into Italian almost as soon as the work was published, went so far as to claim that if the law of the land opposed halakhah, a Jew must abide by the government's decree.

Herz Homberg, the Habsburg maskil of the late 18th century, wrote in near-messianic terms about the new age that was dawning in Europe, which he described as a reversal of 1,700 years of exile and suffering. Homberg credited the rulers of Europe for this change of spirit and called upon the Jews to acknowledge and praise their actions. A similar refrain was heard in other countries, especially in 19th-century Russia, where maskilim hailed the progressive attitudes of the absolutist tsars.²⁶ Of course, they were often mistaken, since the absolute state that they idealized only rarely granted them the support they so earnestly requested, and sometimes actively supported the traditional Jewish establishment.

Notwithstanding, maskilim seldom envisaged political allies within the broader Gentile or Jewish society. Whether it was for assistance in publishing Enlightenment books (as with, for example, Isaac Ber Levinsohn in Russia in the 1820s), setting up a new educational structure (as with the petitions of Herz Homberg and Isaac Euchel, or the contacts established between S.S. Uvarov and Max Lilienthal) or transforming the economic structure of the Jews (as with Nota Khaimovitch Notkin of Shklov's reform proposals in 1797, presented to the General Procurator, Aleksei Kurakin), maskilim turned to the rulers, believing that only an imposed solution could bring about the desired results. With this in mind, the special poems written for rulers, and the eulogies written after their deaths, should not be regarded simply as lip service.²⁷ Abraham Baer Gottlober's ode to Alexander II in 1856, for instance, accurately expresses (albeit in almost ludicrous fashion) the political orientation of many maskilim:

As faithful as they are to God and their
father's Law, so are they to the king, and
keep his laws.
For in going forth into Exile they were commanded
to seek the peace of the country
to which they were driven,
even to shed their blood for it, if required [. . . .]

The heart of this people is faithful
to God and His anointed one:
With all their heart and soul
they love their king.²⁸

By invoking the spirit expressed in Köves' painting of Mendelssohn bowing to and being received by Frederick the Great, Gottlober added another dimension to the "royal image," transforming it into something that was divinely inspired. By and large, the maskilim remained faithful to this idea; until the last decades of the 19th century, they behaved as if no other alternative existed.

The fruits of emancipation threatened to weaken traditional Jewish alliances with absolutist regimes and to terminate the privileged, autonomous status that many had come to value. It is therefore no surprise that emancipation was not always perceived as desirable by elements within European Jewry. Traditional society, as the maskilim correctly predicted, tended to view emancipation as a threat to their existence. Alsatian Jews, for instance, frowned on the terms of emancipation as framed during the French Revolution—equal citizenship in return for the abolition of their autonomous

existence—fearing its ramifications for traditional Jewish life. Such views were shared by traditional elements in Dutch Jewish society that preferred autonomy over collective emancipation, and by some leading figures within English Jewry who, at the time of the 19th-century emancipation debates, feared the loss of their religious identity. As Geoffrey Alderman summarized the English case: “The quest for Jewish political emancipation was not one in which British Jewry, as a collective, took part.”²⁹ Despite the prodding of French Jewish leaders, very few Algerian Jews took advantage of the French senate decree of 1865 that granted Muslims and Jews the possibility of requesting and receiving French citizenship on a personal basis, provided that they forgo their traditional, religious status. One can thus assume that had a vote been taken among Algerian Jews on the eve of the Crémieux decree of 1870, which granted them French citizenship, the majority would have rejected it.³⁰

In time, these negative (and sometimes indifferent) attitudes toward emancipation dissipated, as emancipation took its course and Jews came to regard its implementation as the bedrock of their existence. Those who became “fous de la république,” in Pierre Birnbaum’s brilliant characterization of the “state Jews” in the Third Republic in France, were joined by many Jews in other countries as the new order, based on meritocracy, enabled them to become true devotees of the lands they inhabited.³¹ Once again, the Jews became wedded to the state, this time in a modern context.

The complex nature of modern Jewish politics and the often remarkable political involvement of Jews in various countries in the last 150 years represents an extraordinary transformation in Jewish life. It also raises an interesting historical question: How did this range of political activity and identification with the state affect the Jews’ traditional distrust of the “masses”? Clearly, as a number of studies have shown, a wide spectrum of configurations emerged that broke down the old historical paradigm among certain types of Jews.³² In modern times, Jews—whether fully equal citizens or not—have forged alliances with various political forces and have played varying roles in determining the character of the states they have inhabited. Each country, of course, has had its own unique set of circumstances; as Ezra Mendelsohn has argued, “if the nature of the general environment often governed the *form* of Jewish politics, it also played a role in determining the *content* of these politics.”³³ The “masses” were no longer perceived as being one-dimensional, and Jews formed alliances with non-Jews of different classes, political affiliations, and religious views. Nonetheless, despite the patterns of rapprochement and camaraderie that transpired between Jews and their fellow citizens, a certain fear still lingered.

Amos Oz, the Israeli novelist, has faithfully recorded this sentiment in citing the views of an aunt who had emigrated from Poland to Palestine. In a long monologue in which she briefed her young sabra nephew on the nature of Jewish life in Poland, she noted:

But more than anything, they always feared the mob [*asafsuf*]. They were afraid of what would happen between periods of rule—if, for example, the Poles would be expelled and the Communists would replace them. They feared that in the interval, bands of Ukrainians would appear, or Belorussians, or the incited Polish masses or, more to the north, the Lithuanians. It was a volcano from which lava constantly dripped and the smell of smoke was always present. “In the dark they sharpen the knives,” we said, and we did not say who, because it could have been all of them. The masses [*hehamon*]. And also



Figure 2. David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, presenting a Hanukkah menorah to President Harry Truman, probably on the former's trip to the United States in 1951. Abba Eban, who then served as Israel's ambassador to Washington and as its chief delegate to the United Nations, looks on.

among us in the land of Israel [*baarez*], it appears, the Jewish masses—they are something of a monstrosity.³⁴

During the Holocaust, Jews vacillated between the new choices made possible in modern times and longstanding predispositions. In a period of utter powerlessness and victimization, classical images reasserted themselves, whether consciously or unconsciously, but also converged with newly formed ideologies and expectations. Some still believed that privileges might be obtained by aligning with the state and the powerful (as happened in several of the ghettos); others rejected all such connections and sought ways to ally with opposition forces; and yet others resigned themselves to their fate, trusting in the state's protection, or in God's. None of these options proved successful in the struggle to survive. After the Holocaust and under the impact of the terrible events, Jews would begin anew to assess their faith in the state and their attitude toward the masses. Today, it appears as though Köves' image of Mendelssohn bowing respectfully before Frederick the Great has been put to rest. In its stead, Jews seem more at home with a different image: that of a proudly smiling David Ben-Gurion presenting President Harry Truman with a gift—a Hanukkah menorah (Fig. 2).

Notes

1. For a description and painting of the 1476 procession, see Géza Komoróczy (ed.), *Jewish Budapest: Monuments, Rites, History* (Budapest: 1999), 10–12. Although Köves' paintings of

Spinoza, the Tortosa debate, and the 1476 procession have been cited (in single-paragraph entries) in several reference works, no one mentions having seen them, and their location is unknown. Moreover, there is little biographical information regarding the artist; even the Hungarian Jewish journal *Múlt és jövő*, which is devoted to the arts, has never published an article on Köves. Known for his portraits, Köves was apparently commissioned by the Hungarian government to commemorate the heroic 15th-century warrior János Hunyadi.

2. A photocopy of *Mendelssohn before Frederick the Great*, apparently cut out from a journal, was found in the Louttit Collection of the Wandering Jew in the Special Collections of the Brown University Library in Providence, Rhode Island. Other than this photocopy, no trace of the painting has been located, although it has been cited in various reference works.

While the meeting between Mendelssohn and Frederick the Great did not take place, various contemporaneous sources speculated about a possible meeting between the two. A number of 18th-century engravings present a more accurate (if rather comical) description of Mendelssohn's arrival in Potsdam. There, Mendelssohn did meet, in 1771, with Baron von Fritsche. It is unclear whether Köves was aware of these 18th-century engravings or of the painting, by Moritz Oppenheim, that depicted the philosopher's meeting with the ruler and with von Fritsche. This painting is also lost, although reference is made to it both in Oppenheim's memoirs and in a recent, major retrospective of his work. See Moritz Oppenheim, *Erinnerungen*, ed. Alfred Oppenheim (Frankfurt: 1924), 116; Georg Heuberger and Anton Merk (eds.), *Moritz Daniel Oppenheim. Die Entdeckung des jüdischen Selbstbewusstseins in der Kunst/ Jewish Identity in 19th Century Art* (Frankfurt: 1999), 368. On the interview in Potsdam, see Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn: A Biographical Study* (London: 1973), 275–277; on Moses Samuel Löwe's adaptation of an etching by Daniel Chodowiecki, see Hermann Simon, *Das Berliner Jüdische Museum in der Oranienburger Strasse. Geschichte einer zerstörten Kulturstätte* (Berlin: 1983), 47.

3. See Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *The Lisbon Massacre of 1506 and the Royal Image in the Shebet Yehudah* (Cincinnati: 1976) (Hebrew Union College Annual and Supplement, no. 1).

4. See David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York: 1986), 34–86; idem, "Modern Jewish Ideologies and the Historiography of Jewish Politics," in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vol. 10, *Reshaping the Past: Jewish History and the Historians*, ed. Jonathan Frankel (New York: 1994), 3–16; David Vital, *A People Apart: A Political History of the Jews in Europe 1789–1939* (Oxford: 1999), 1–25.

5. See Jacob Goldberg, *Jewish Privileges in the Polish Commonwealth: Charters of Rights Granted to Jewish Communities in Poland-Lithuania in the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Jerusalem: 1985), introduction.

6. See M.J. Rosman, *The Lords' Jews: Magnate-Jewish Relations in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1990).

7. *Ibid.*, 38.

8. *Ibid.*, 105, 208; see also Goldberg, *Jewish Privileges in the Polish Commonwealth*, passim; Shaul Stampfer, "The 1764 Census of Polish Jewry," in *Bar Ilan: Annual of Bar-Ilan University Studies in Judaica and the Humanities*, nos. 14–15, ed. Gershon Bacon and Moshe Rosman (Ramat Gan: 1989), 41–58; Gershon David Hundert, "Shekiyat yirat kavod bekehilot beit yisrael bepolin-lita," *ibid.*, 41–50 (Heb. section).

9. Rosman, *The Lords' Jews*, 210; see also Bernard D. Weinryb, *The Jews of Poland: A Social and Economic History of the Jewish Community in Poland from 1100–1800* (Philadelphia: 1973), 181–205. Peasant revolts against the Radziwill estates from 1739 to 1744 also had a significant impact on influential Jewish leaseholders.

10. Stampfer, "The 1764 Census of Polish Jewry," 60–176.

11. David S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603–1655* (Oxford: 1982), 244.

12. See Arthur Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews* (New York: 1968), 12–28, 64–68; Jonathan I. Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism 1550–1750* (Oxford: 1989), 161–163.

13. Anon. [John Toland], *Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews in Great Britain and Ireland, on the Same Foot with All Other Nations* (London: 1714), 14.

14. Ibid., 12; see also Robert E. Sullivan, *John Toland and the Deist Controversy: A Story in Adaptations* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1982); Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Georgian England, 1714–1830: Tradition and Change in a Liberal Society* (Philadelphia: 1979), 26–27.

15. See, for example, Frank Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes: A Paradigm of Otherness in English Popular Culture, 1660–1830* (Baltimore: 1995); Isaiah Shachar, “The Emergence of the Modern Pictorial Stereotype of ‘The Jews’ in England,” in *Studies in the Cultural Life of the Jews in England* (Folklore Research Center Studies, vol. 5), ed. Dov Noy and Issachar Ben-Ami (Jerusalem: 1975), 331–365; Thomas W. Perry, *Public Opinion, Propaganda, and Politics in Eighteenth-Century England: A Study of the Jew Bill of 1753* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1962).

16. For an extended discussion on *dhimmis*, see the article by Daniel J. Schroeter, “From Dhimmis to Colonized Subjects: Moroccan Jews and the Sharifian and French Colonial State,” in this volume, pp. 104–123.

17. Quoted by Yosef Kaplan, “Court Jews before the Hofjuden,” in *From Court Jews to the Rothschilds: Art, Patronage, and Power 1600–1800*, ed. Vivian B. Mann and Richard I. Cohen (Munich: 1996), 24.

18. For recent studies on a variety of court Jews, see Rotraud Ries and J. Friedrich Battenberg (eds.), *Hofjuden—Ökonomie und Interkulturalität. Die jüdische Wirtschaftselite im 18. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: 2002).

19. See Max Grunwald, *Samuel Oppenheimer und sein Kreis* (Vienna: 1913); Anat Peri, “Pe’ilutam shel sapakei zava yehudim bemamlekhet hungariyah bamaḥazit harishonah shel hameah ha18,” *Zion* 57 (1992), 135–172.

20. See Richard I. Cohen and Vivian B. Mann, “Melding Worlds: Court Jews and the Arts of the Baroque,” in Mann and Cohen (eds.), *From Court Jews to the Rothschilds*, 96–98.

21. See, for example, Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: 1951).

22. On Oppenheimer, see, for example, Barbara Gerber, *Jud Süß. Ein Beitrag zur historischen Antisemitismus und Rezeptionsforschung* (Hamburg: 1990).

23. See Susan Tegel, *Jew Süß/Jud Süß (Germany, 1940)* (Wiltshire: 1996).

24. Selma Stern, *The Court Jew: A Contribution to the History of the Period of Absolutism in Central Europe*, trans. Ralph Weiman (Philadelphia: 1950), 116, 267.

25. See Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

26. See Biale, *Power and Powerlessness*, 133; cf. Ismar Schorsch, “On the History of the Political Judgment of the Jew,” in idem, *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (Hanover: 1994), 118–132.

27. See Eli Lederhendler, *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics: Political Transition and Political Reconstruction in the Jewish Community of Tsarist Russia* (New York: 1989), 58–110; Michael Stanislawski, *For Whom Do I Toil? Judah Leib Gordon and the Crisis of Russian Jewry* (New York: 1988), 150–174.

28. Quoted in Lederhendler, *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics*, 106.

29. Geoffrey Alderman, “English Jews or Jews of the English Persuasion? Reflections on the Emancipation of Anglo-Jewry,” in *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship*, ed. Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (Princeton: 1995), 135.

30. See Michel Abitbol, *MiCrémieux lePetain: haantishemiyut bemaroko hakolonialit (1870–1940)* (Jerusalem: 1993); see also the article by Pierre Birnbaum, “French Jews and the ‘Regeneration’ of Algerian Jewry” in this volume, pp. 88–103.

31. See Pierre Birnbaum, *Les fous de la République: histoire politique des juifs d’état, de Gambetta à Vichy* (Paris: 1992); published in English as *The Jews of the Republic: A Political History of State Jews in France from Gambetta to Vichy*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Stanford: 1996).

32. See, for example, Marjorie Lamberti, *Jewish Activism in Imperial Germany* (New Haven: 1978); Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862–1917* (Cambridge: 1981); Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Berkeley: 2001).

33. Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (New York: 1993), 56–57.

34. Amos Oz, *Sipur ‘al ahavah vehoshekh* (Jerusalem: 2002), 223.

The Jewish Response to Apartheid: The Record and Its Consequences

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The Jewish community of South Africa is arguably the most striking example in modern times of Jewish participation in the privileged segment of a society dominated by a repressive regime. This situation, although not unique, was certainly unusual in the historic experience of Jews, especially since racist criteria underlay the regime in question. An examination of the record of Jewish political behavior and its consequences for the status and welfare of Jews within the broader society is therefore of special interest. However, since the racially discriminatory social order of South Africa prevailed long before the term “apartheid” became current, and the presence of a Jewish community there long preceded the apartheid era, a brief introduction is necessary.

Like other communities in the New World, South African Jewry was the outcome of emigration from Europe. It began in the course of the 19th century as an incidental offshoot of British Jewry, was greatly consolidated from the 1880s to 1930 by a broad wave of immigration from Eastern Europe (predominantly from the “Litvak” northwestern region of the Russian Pale of Settlement), and was capped by a small wave of German Jewish refugees (about 6,500) in the 1930s.¹ The South African census of 1980 showed 117,963 Jews, about 2.6 percent of the total white population. By 2000, demographic decline, largely a consequence of emigration, left a smaller community estimated at about 80,000, or 0.18 percent of the total South African population.

The society into which these Jews entered was one in which an ascriptive attribute, race (signified by skin color), was the primary determinant of people’s lives. Socially, it was stratified by what might be described as caste-like divisions between various racial groups, of which the white group was in every respect dominant. The subordinate groups were designated collectively as “non-Europeans,” comprising Africans (at various times labeled natives, Bantu or blacks), Asiatics (mainly Indians), and mixed race-persons (“Coloreds”).² Politically, for the white inhabitants South Africa was a parliamentary democracy on the Westminster model, whereas for all others it was a white oligarchy.

Since the privileged white segment was divided into Afrikaners and English-speakers (in a ratio of about three to two), even the national identity of South African whites was inchoate. This was conducive to the preservation of a separate Jewish group identity. On the one hand, the Jews certainly became acculturated to the white part of society—specifically the English segment, which overwhelmingly served as their reference group. On the other, compared to Britain or the United States (although similar in this regard to Quebec), South Africa offered the Jews considerably more latitude in retaining their distinctive identity, not only in the religious sense but also as an ethnic group. This ethnicity found expression primarily in Zionism. Indeed, in no other major Jewish community of the New World was Zionism so normative an ingredient of Jewish identity, and the Zionist organization so institutionally predominant, as in South Africa.³

Outside of the economic sphere in which Jews, in common with all whites, related to the other segments of society as masters to servants or as employers to employees, the average Jew would never normally interact with nonwhites in any social or cultural institutions. Exempt by virtue of skin color from the discrimination suffered by “non-Europeans,” Jews who came to South Africa, once they were formally naturalized, enjoyed full civic and political rights in the white parliamentary democracy.⁴ To be sure, this status was at times challenged, mainly by means of attempts to stop or limit Jewish immigration.⁵ Such efforts came to a head in 1930 with the passing of the Quota Act, which effectively reduced the flow of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe to a mere trickle.

The across-the-board endorsement of the Quota Act by white South Africans is explicable in terms of antecedent antisemitic influences traceable to the very beginning of a Jewish presence in South Africa.⁶ These influences also largely account for the antisemitic aftermath of the Quota Act—the onset of vitriolic political antisemitism spearheaded by Nazi-style Greyshirt organizations. During the 1930s, the “Jewish problem” became a major political issue. When a loophole in the quota formula allowed a spurt of further Jewish immigration from Nazi Germany, a storm of popular opposition issued in the passage of a new Aliens Act in 1937, which effectively put an end to all Jewish immigration.

In the course of the 1930s and 1940s, the Afrikaner nationalist movement as a whole imbibed antisemitic attitudes, which were then embodied in the program of the National party. By 1938, the Afrikaner nationalist opposition headed by Daniel F. Malan was campaigning on a platform that demanded total prohibition of Jewish immigration and even the imposition of a quota system directed against Jews in commerce and the professions.⁷ Under these circumstances, Jewish candidates for political election—and indeed almost the entire Jewish public—were clearly associated with Jan Smuts’ wing of the governing United party, which, although fully upholding white supremacy, embraced a policy of Afrikaner-British reconciliation. When the government split in 1939 over the question of whether South Africa should enter the war on Britain’s side against Germany, it was a foregone conclusion that Jews would lend their support overwhelmingly to the Smuts wing of the United party, which led South Africa through the war period in alliance with Britain.

In May 1948, the Afrikaner nationalist party (known as the *Gesuiwerde* [Purified] National party), led by Daniel F. Malan, came to power and introduced the policy of

apartheid. In light of the antisemitic record of this party, it is not surprising that a shiver of trepidation ran through the Jewish community when the new government took over. As will be shown, the intimidating shadow of Afrikaner nationalist anti-semitism is an absolutely fundamental factor in explaining the behavior of the Jewish community in the ensuing era of apartheid.

The Advent of Apartheid and the Jewish Communal Response

The apartheid system was the new government's panacea for those problems and dangers of the post-world war era that threatened the supremacy of the whites—who at long last, were being led by representatives of the Afrikaner *volk*. Its innovatory thrust lay not in the system itself but rather in its ideological rationalization, its reinforced legislative institutionalization, and the implementation of massive social engineering to fortify it against the winds of change in Africa.

As a program of action, apartheid meant reinforcing white domination of the entire political and economic order of the country. It also meant the bureaucratic systematization of separation between the various racial groups. Members of racial groups other than those designated for a particular urban area were uprooted and forced to move to other designated areas. In the field of black education, the policy was to withhold from blacks such education as might prepare them for positions that they were in any case not allowed to hold. At the same time, the government began long-term planning for the consolidation of certain historical tribal areas into projected "Bantu homelands." All urban blacks were ultimately to hold citizenship and political rights in the respective homelands of their particular ethnic tribes, rather than in the white state of South Africa.

The boundless inequity, disruption, distress, and suffering resulting from these measures aroused widespread black unrest alongside bitter, but essentially nonviolent, opposition. The government, for its part, reacted with an escalating series of repressive legislative and police measures. The most significant of these was the 1950 Suppression of Communism Act, which defined "Communism" in the most sweeping of terms, thus investing the authorities with enormously wide powers to ban any organization that could be deemed, even in the remotest sense, to be furthering the aims of Communism. The authorities were also empowered to impose bans on persons, publications, and gatherings. There was no recourse to the courts against banning orders, whose terms varied from person to person, but which usually involved restriction to a magisterial district and reporting in person to the police at fixed intervals. Banned persons were forbidden to communicate with each other, to attend any gathering of persons above a specified small number, to speak in public, or to write in any newspaper or other published form. To quote a banned person became a punishable offense. From 1963, police officers could arrest without warrant and detain for a period of up to 90 days any person deemed a suspect of any political offense; this procedure could be repeated immediately after the person's formal release. In many cases, detainees were subjected to cruel solitary confinement.

By the late 1960s, almost every form of overt political resistance to the policy of apartheid and separate development had been legislated out of existence and crushed.

Organizations such as the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan-Africanist Congress, the South African Indian Congress and the (white) Congress of Democrats had been banned, and most of their leaders had been arrested or else had fled the country. It is true that a variety of still legally defensible—and at times quite formidable—acts and expressions of liberal opposition to apartheid persisted in the all-white parliament, provincial and municipal councils, some of the universities, and, above all, in the press. At the same time, the residual multiracial radical resistance was forced underground.

In analyzing the behavior of the Jewish community's representative body, the Jewish Board of Deputies,⁸ in the apartheid era, it is important to note that the new government headed by Malan made a concerted effort to jettison antisemitic elements and seek rapprochement with the Jewish community. Attendant on this new course was the government's cooperativeness with regard to the Jewish community's efforts to aid the new state of Israel—a matter of utmost importance for this most Zionist of Jewish communities. Indeed, Malan made a private visit to Israel in 1953 (the first prime minister in office to do so). Precisely because of such overt gestures, the Board of Deputies felt obliged to reciprocate; adopting a stand of open opposition to the government seemed out of the question.

Instead, the Board's executive formulated a policy of scrupulous noninvolvement in politics. In innumerable statements issued throughout the 1950s and 1960s, it reiterated that

Jews participate in South African public life as citizens of South Africa and have no collective attitude to the political issues which citizens are called upon to decide Jews share with their fellow citizens of other faiths and origins a common interest in and responsibility for our country's affairs and participate in them according to their individual convictions.⁹

Accordingly, the Board of Deputies consistently deplored appeals to Jews *qua* Jews, whether issued for or against the government's policies. The explicit justification most frequently offered for this position was that a collective Jewish political viewpoint simply did not exist. The implicit justification, more rarely enunciated, was that even were it possible to arrive at a single viewpoint, this would be undesirable if not downright dangerous to the interests and safety of the community.

To be sure, this position was not arrived at without debate. At every congress of the Board of Deputies, the question was raised whether, as the acknowledged representative body of the Jewish community, the organization had an obligation to speak out on fundamental moral issues that transcended formal party politics. Some delegates argued that the Board had no business making statements on any controversial public issue not directly affecting Jewish rights. Others asserted that the agreed principle of noninvolvement in politics did not preclude some statement against racial prejudice and in affirmation of fundamental human rights. Hence, resolutions were periodically passed giving expression to a Jewish ethos sufficiently generalized so as to be politically innocuous. Every Jewish citizen, for example, was encouraged

to make his individual contribution in accordance with the teaching and precepts of Judaism towards the promotion of understanding, goodwill and cooperation between the

various races, peoples and groups in South Africa and towards the achievement of a peaceful and secure future for all inhabitants of the country, based on the principles of justice and the dignity of the individual.¹⁰

In this way, the Board delicately trod its precarious path between non-embroilment in the political thicket, on the one hand, and the impulses of Jewish moral conscience, on the other.

The chairman of the Board of Deputies' public relations committee throughout most of this period was Arthur Suzman, who, in his personal capacity, was a member of the anti-apartheid Progressive party. Suzman wrestled repeatedly with the Board's profound dilemma in his addresses to successive congresses. In the end, however, he came to the regretful conclusion that "though we may rightly be expected to speak with one moral voice—to do so without entering the political arena appears to be a well-nigh insuperable task."¹¹ Thus, the golden mean between self-interest and principles to which the Board of Deputies aspired remained exasperatingly elusive. In the eyes of opponents to the existing social order, the Board's policy appeared to be no more than pious lip service to what was often labeled "Jewish values"—if not shameful hypocrisy. For government supporters, however, the Jewish organization was suspected of engaging in covert anti-apartheid political involvement.

What stakes were actually involved for the South African Jewish community? In retrospect, it appears that the South African government could hardly have afforded to further antagonize world opinion by adding blatant persecution of the Jews to its record of apartheid racism. Punitive sanctions were possible, but in all likelihood could not have gone beyond placing administrative obstacles to a Jewish communal life in which Zionism occupied a place of centrality. Yet during the 1950s and 1960s, when the apartheid regime reached new heights of repression, Jewish leaders had little cause for sanguinity. They remembered all too well the record of antisemitism in the two decades preceding 1948. Moreover, the sense of vulnerability that pervaded the Jewish community was acutely exacerbated throughout the 1960s by Israel's support for sanctions against the South African regime. In the U.N., Israel consistently voted in favor of sanctions even in instances in which other western countries, notably the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, preferred to abstain. This policy led to sharp criticism in a segment of the Afrikaans-language press, which held that South Africa and Israel ought to share a common cause against the Soviet Communist cum Third-World threat. On the government level, Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd, the main architect of apartheid policy, reacted to Israeli policy in late 1961 by withdrawing the highly valued permission Jews enjoyed to transfer funds raised for the Jewish Agency for Israel. The Jewish community was also subjected to thinly disguised pressure that it both dissociate from Israel's actions and attempt to bring about a change in Israeli foreign policy.¹²

The strained relations between Israel and South Africa greatly compounded the apprehensions of the Jewish leadership. It had to maneuver with great caution, demonstrating noninvolvement in the local struggle against apartheid without actually condoning government policy, while simultaneously refusing to criticize Israel without actually condoning its actions against South Africa.

The Rabbinate's Response

Given this background, the delicate position of the Jewish Board of Deputies is readily understandable. But what of the rabbinate? Since concern with moral issues affecting society was universally recognized as the legitimate province of the clergy, rabbis potentially enjoyed considerably more latitude in responding to the moral implications of apartheid. These advantages of clerical prerogative were not overlooked by the Board of Deputies, which—ostensibly at least—tended to shift responsibility to the rabbinate in questions pertaining to the moral ethos of Judaism. However, knowing full well that the Gentile public was unlikely to separate the statements of rabbis from the view of Jewry at large, the Board was reluctant wholly to relinquish its discretionary influence. Typical of this ambivalence was its frequently reiterated statement declaring, on the one hand, “members of the Jewish ministry have the right, and indeed, the duty of speaking to the community on the relevance of Jewish religious and ethical principles to the problems of today,” yet cautioning, on the other hand, “at the same time the Board has emphasized the duty which rests upon all to deal with those important matters in moderate and sober language and with a due sense of public responsibility.”¹³

For all but a handful of rabbis serving in South Africa, whose views will later be discussed, this caveat was hardly necessary, since, by and large, they concurred with the Board's views and felt bound by the same considerations and constraints. Their consequent abstention from any political involvement was in marked contrast to the actions of a number of Christian clergymen who opposed apartheid from its onset with the utmost conviction and courage.¹⁴ Yet a balanced evaluation of the record of the rabbinate on the question of apartheid in South Africa ought to take into account the fact that, unlike the major Christian churches, Judaism had no adherents outside the white population of South Africa. Consequently, the rabbinate was never answerable to, or responsible for, a black membership suffering directly from the apartheid system; it never had to formulate theological or practical principles either justifying or denouncing discrimination among its own members. What the rabbinate did have to contend with was the vulnerable minority-group status of Jews within the white racial group. A primary sense of responsibility for the safety and welfare of the Jewish community inhibited even those few rabbis whose consciences were deeply perturbed by the acute moral issues that apartheid placed at their door.

Rare were those occasions when a rabbi adopted a stand of unequivocal opposition to the whole apartheid system, and when this did happen, the response within the Jewish community was anything but enthusiastic. A striking illustration is the case of the Hungarian-born André Ungar, who came to South Africa from Europe in 1955, at the age of 25, to serve as rabbi of the Progressive (Reform) congregation in the city of Port Elizabeth. Ungar found apartheid utterly appalling and soon began vehemently to say as much, both from the pulpit and from public platforms. The reaction that followed was instructive. In December 1956, the minister of the interior sent notice to the secretary of the congregation, informing him that Ungar's permit of residence had been withdrawn. It so happened that Ungar had already notified his congregation that he intended leaving South Africa. This was much to the relief of the communal leadership because his actions were, in fact, an acute source of embar-

rassment.¹⁵ Indeed, the local committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies issued a statement arguing that Ungar had spoken “neither for his own congregation nor for South African Jewry as a whole.”¹⁶ This incident illustrates the fearful and timorous mindset of the Jewish communal leadership, lay and religious. Most telling of all is the fact that even the chief minister of the United Progressive Jewish Congregation, Moses Cyrus Weiler, refrained from taking a public stand in support of Ungar.

Weiler had formulated his own guidelines in relation to political issues and the welfare of the underprivileged in South Africa. It was his view that Jews ought to give expression to their religiously rooted ethical concerns only through welfare and educational action. An example was the elementary school (with attached health and scholarship facilities) named after him, which he encouraged the Women’s Sisterhood of the Progressive congregation to set up in the poverty-stricken Alexandra township of Johannesburg.

By and large the Orthodox rabbinate adopted much the same attitude but did relatively less in practical terms. Some rabbis maintained utter silence on the implications of apartheid society from the point of view of Judaism, while others frequently spoke out from the pulpit, stressing Judaism’s incompatibility with racist beliefs or the practice of racial discrimination. Out of a sense of responsibility for the Jewish community’s position, even the more concerned remained careful not to spell out the implications of their sermons in terms that categorically impugned the government’s apartheid program. Over time, however, the Orthodox chief rabbi, Louis Rabinowitz, voiced increasingly explicit opposition to apartheid. On several occasions he expressed dissatisfaction with the Board of Deputies’ stance insofar as it implied a denial of any collective view even on the purely moral dilemmas inherent in South African society. “Our concern is with the doctrines of Judaism, not the views of individual Jews,” he said, “and we betray these doctrines if we do not proclaim that Judaism teaches, without equivocation, the absolute equality of all men before God.”¹⁷

As might have been expected, Rabbi Rabinowitz’s outspokenness and occasional participation in protests alongside Christian clerics drew fire from some of the Afrikaans newspapers. He was also the recipient of anonymous hate mail and threats.¹⁸ In 1961, taking stock of his 15-year ministry on the eve of his departure to settle in Israel, Rabinowitz retroactively criticized “the caution which the Board has shown in refusing to declare a Jewish ethical attitude on the vexed problem of race relations.” According to Rabinowitz, such caution could be “variously interpreted according to one’s views as either admirable discretion or reprehensible timorousness,” and it had inevitably meant “the abdication of any claim to give a lead in these matters.”¹⁹ In one of his Yom Kippur sermons, he gave vent to his anguish and frustration:

. . . and the most lamentable failure of Judaism to make its impact upon our lives lies not in the failure to observe, but in the almost complete absence of any specific Jewish ethical standards which mark us out from the community in which we live. What do we do to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bonds of oppression? . . . There are some Jews in the community who do attempt to do something . . . and when, as a result, they fall foul of the powers that be, the defence put up by the Jewish community is to prove

that these are Jews only by name, that they do not belong to any synagogue Have Jewish ethics ever descended to a more shameful nadir? . . . I have practically abandoned all hope of effecting any change in this matter. The power of fear and of the possibility of security being affected is too strong. . . . Do not think that I am proud of my record in this matter, that I do not squirm inwardly at the thought that on many occasions I have been infected with that same fear and that same cowardice and have failed to rise to the level which my calling demands of me. But when from time to time a blatant, glaring case of injustice occurs, and it is one in which there is a hope that my intervention may possibly have a salutary effect, then no power in the world can prevent me giving expression to what I conscientiously believe to be the authentic voice of prophetic Judaism.²⁰

Notwithstanding this dilemma of conscience, in the final analysis even as powerful and assertive a personality as Rabbi Rabinowitz did not seriously enter the lists in the battle against apartheid; this in itself was evidence of the constraining power of the Jewish sense of vulnerability in the heyday period of apartheid. One of Rabinowitz's rabbinical protégés, however, did venture somewhat beyond the limits set by the chief rabbi's example. The young, South African-born Benzion (Ben) Isaacson was the rabbinical figure who most closely approximated the daring Christian clerics (for instance, Father Trevor Huddleston and Bishop Ambrose Reeves) who fearlessly battled the apartheid system while at the same time contending with objections from within their own flocks. From the outset of his rabbinical career, when he served as assistant rabbi to Rabinowitz, Isaacson stood out as an outspoken critic of both the apartheid system and the quiescence of the official Jewish community. This stance quickly aroused the anger of a number of congregants, who objected strongly to the "political" implications of Isaacson's preaching. Rabinowitz, who had a great fondness for Isaacson and who set much store on the younger man's prospects as a rabbi in his own mold, stood firmly by his protégé. Nonetheless, in 1965, Isaacson reached a point of utter frustration and decided to settle in Israel. In a valedictory article for the *Jewish Times*, he wrote:

It is my personal conviction that a society based on racial discrimination is immoral and in conflict with the ethical teachings of Judaism. But while we are told on the one hand, that the rabbi is free to discuss and even criticise the South African scene from his pulpit, my experience has pointed to the exact opposite trend. Criticism of racial discrimination . . . leads to outcries of "politics from the pulpit," "endangering the Jewish community," and even cries of "defrock him." On the other hand, those rabbis who defend the existing society are not accused of the above crimes. In such a situation, I feel myself stifled to the point of choking.²¹

Jews in the Liberal and Radical Opposition to Apartheid

In contrast with the record of the official Jewish community, the prominence of individual Jews in the organized opposition to apartheid was greatly disproportionate to the relatively small number of Jews in the overall white population. Before illustrating this phenomenon, however, it is necessary to note that, by and large, the political behavior of Jews conformed with that of English-speaking whites in general. Empirical studies conducted in the late 1960s and early 1970s by sociologist Henry Lever indicated that the political preferences of Jews in South Africa tended to be

much the same as those of English-speaking Gentiles of the same socioeconomic status. Although Lever found that “Jews were found to be consistently more tolerant than any other group in their attitudes to non-Whites,” he concluded that, overall, factors such as family income and level of education appeared to be more important determinants of political preference than the sense of Jewish identity.²²

To the limited extent that it is possible to discern a pattern of Jewish political behavior in the period between 1948 and 1970, it appears to have gravitated around the conservative center of the political spectrum—namely the United party formerly led by Jan Smuts, with a growing segment moving somewhat left of center to a position represented by the new Progressive party (founded in 1959). What did this trend in electoral support mean in terms of specific political advocacy with respect to apartheid? The United party, although enjoying mixed English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking support, was quite as committed to white supremacy as were the Afrikaner nationalists. At best, it tried, to no great effect, to counter the ideological dogmatism of apartheid with pragmatic adjustments “based on common sense and tolerance rather than ideological orthodoxy,” but its vague mantras of “white leadership with justice,” “enlightened leadership and guidance of the White group in the interests of all races,” and a “race federation” translated into not much more than superficial modifications of the pre-1948 pattern of race relations.²³ The Progressive party, in contrast, expressed a far stronger opposition to racial discrimination and a greater willingness to progress, albeit in controlled stages, toward a nonracial and democratic order.²⁴ It was not, however, until about 1978 that the Progressives’ program moved forward to proposing universal suffrage.

In sum, there appeared to be a grain of truth in the cynical quip that most Jews spoke like Progressives, voted for the United party and hoped that the National party would remain in power. Yet at the same time, Jews were extraordinarily salient in the vanguard of white opposition to apartheid. Helen Suzman, who from 1961 to 1974 was the Progressive party’s only member of parliament, exemplified above all others the conspicuous involvement of Jews in the liberal opposition to apartheid. She courageously battled each and every apartheid measure, often enduring not only general calumny but also antisemitic taunts from the government benches. Her parliamentary speeches were models of nondemagogic delivery, finely researched data, and sound reasoning. Although holding fast to her ideological convictions as a political liberal, Suzman also played a key role in rendering every form of legal, material, and moral succor to radicals who fell foul of the apartheid state’s laws, such as those accused in the great “treason trial” of the late 1950s and political prisoners such as Nelson Mandela and his comrades.

Suzman belonged to the legal opposition to apartheid, which included such groups as the Institute of Race Relations, which conducted research and acted as a pressure group on the government; the Black Sash movement, which mobilized women for protest and social action;²⁵ the Christian Institute, an ecumenical organization founded in 1963 for promoting dialogue; the Liberal party, formed in 1953 but dissolved in 1968 after interracial political organization was proscribed; and the Progressive party, which at first coexisted with the Liberals and afterwards succeeded it, in a sense by default.²⁶ All of these organizations were composed essentially of an English-speaking membership and were led by major public figures such as Alan Paton, Margaret

Ballinger, and Patrick Duncan (of the Liberal party) and “renegade” Afrikaners such as Beyers Naudé of the Christian Institute. Although the role of Jewish individuals in such groups should not be exaggerated, they were involved in numbers disproportionate to the size of the Jewish population and included prominent, almost emblematically Jewish assailants of apartheid such as Suzman and the Liberal party’s Leslie Rubin, both of whom were perceived in the Afrikaans press as thorns in the side of the positive forces upholding white supremacy.

The frequent appearance of Jewish names in periodical government gazettes listing persons banned or restricted in various ways led to resentful criticism and thinly veiled threats in the Afrikaans press. One particularly comprehensive list was issued in 1962. It contained 437 names of persons who were suspected of being former office-bearers, members, or active supporters of the banned Communist party; of the 132 whites listed, 62 bore Jewish-sounding names.²⁷

Indeed, it was in the radical opposition that the prominence of Jews was most marked. Throughout the first two decades of National party rule, Jewish names were continually to be found on the lists of “named” Communists and persons banned from all public activity, and among those detained without trial or placed under house arrest. In the courts, they appeared in disproportionate numbers as defendants or as counsel for the defense, and they were prominent among those who fled the country to evade arrest or unbearable harassment. The public prominence of Jewish names was particularly noted in the course of the epic treason trial that captured the attention of the news media throughout the second half of the 1950s. In a concerted effort to crush the anti-apartheid resistance, the police had dramatically swooped down upon dozens of “suspects” in an alleged plot to overthrow the government and replace it with a Communist regime. In the end, 156 individuals were brought to trial. Of these, the overwhelming majority—105 persons—were black, but there were also 21 Indians, seven coloreds and 23 whites. More than half of the whites were Jews, a fact that received a good deal of public attention.²⁸

During the lengthy trial, which began in December 1956 and lasted until March 1961, Jews were also prominent among the defendants’ legal counsel. At the trial’s most critical stage, the defense counsel was led by Israel Maisels, a prominent leader in both the Jewish Board of Deputies and the Zionist Federation; he was assisted by Sydney Kentridge, the son of Morris Kentridge, who in earlier years had been a notable parliamentarian and Jewish communal leader. Meanwhile, the prosecutor was none other than a former self-declared pro-Nazi and antisemite, Oswald Pirow. The juxtaposition was striking and quite invidious from the vantage point of the Jewish community’s public relations work: Maisels, the Jew, defending those accused of seeking to overthrow white supremacy; opposed by Pirow, the militant Afrikaner nationalist, defending white supremacy. In the end, the prosecution finally dropped charges—a great victory for Maisels.

In response to the near total suppression of nonviolent opposition after the tragic Sharpeville massacre in March 1960 (in which the police opened fire on black demonstrators, killing 67 and wounding 186), three main underground liberation organizations came into existence. The major organization, Umkhonto we Sizwe (The Spear of the Nation) was an offshoot of the African National Congress in cooperation with the underground Communist party. The second, Poqo (“pure” or “alone”), was

founded at about the same time by the (black power) Pan-Africanist Congress. The third, the African Resistance Movement, was an amalgamation of some incipient non-Communist groups. Although aspiring to be multiracial in membership, this last group consisted almost entirely of whites, both leftist radicals (notably the ex-Hashomer Hatzair Trotskyist, Baruch Hirson) and liberals, many of them young students, who had despaired of the legal opposition's efficacy. During a three-year period beginning in December 1961, a wave of more than 200 acts of sabotage hit South Africa. Among the main targets were communications and electrical power lines and government offices; the aim was to undermine public order as a strategic prelude to anticipated eruption of guerrilla warfare, popular uprising, and the ultimate overthrow of white supremacy. The government reacted with emergency legislation and police measures of an even more drastic nature than had previously been the norm. By 1965, the state had successfully repressed all underground opposition. Many members of the underground had fled the country; others had been arrested, tried, and sentenced; and yet others had been neutralized by various forms of detention and bans.

The conspicuous involvement of individual Jews in these movements came most to the fore in the dramatic circumstances surrounding the "Rivonia arrests." On July 11, 1963, the police raided the home of Arthur Goldreich in Rivonia, near Johannesburg. Goldreich was a former Zionist youth activist who had lived in Israel and then returned to South Africa, where his home became a secret headquarters for the Umkhonto we Sizwe underground. On the day of the police raid, most of the underground's leadership cadre was, by chance, present. Thus, 17 people were arrested, including Walter Sisulu and Ahmed Kathrada (leaders, respectively, of the banned African and Indian Congresses), both of whom were in hiding from the police. Five of those arrested were whites, all of them Jews.²⁹

At this time, Umkhonto's major leader, Nelson Mandela, had already been arrested and was being held in jail. Those arrested at Rivonia, together with Mandela and other white and black prisoners, were charged with high treason and faced a possible death sentence. In the dock, Mandela made his now famous indictment of the apartheid regime—which, he charged, had outlawed every form of peaceful opposition, leaving its victims no alternative other than violent resistance. In the end, Mandela and seven of the accused were found guilty of sabotage (rather than high treason) and were sentenced to life imprisonment. Mandela and the other black condemned were taken to Robben Island prison, where Mandela was to be incarcerated for 27 years.

From the Jewish community's point of view, it was significant that the public prosecutor, Dr. Percy Yutar, was an Orthodox Jew. He was the deputy attorney general of the Transvaal province and was well known and regarded within the Jewish community. Thus, on one level, the trial's proceedings highlighted the strikingly disproportionate role of Jews in the attempted subversion of white Afrikaner domination and apartheid. But on another level, and with a twist of historical irony, the trial pitted the demonstratively patriotic Jewish prosecutor, Yutar, against a defense team headed by Abram (Bram) Fischer, scion of a famous Afrikaner family, grandson of a Boer prime minister of the Orange River Colony, and son of a judge-president of the Orange Free State supreme court. It was only a few years later that Fischer's secret identity as leader of the underground Communist party came to light. It was the impression of close observers of the trial that Yutar's zealous comportment seemed to

be motivated not solely by professional duty but also by genuine identification with the state's case, abhorrence of the motives and actions of the accused, and, not least of all, by a passionate desire to offset the negative image of Jewish disloyalty to white South Africa.³⁰

The drama of the Rivonia arrests was exceeded only by its sequel: while detained in a Johannesburg prison cell, four men made a spectacular escape on August 12, 1963. Of them, two were white—and Jewish. Although desperately hunted by the security police, Arthur Goldreich and Harold Wolpe managed to get out of the country. Wolpe settled in London, Goldreich in Israel. The escape, particularly that of Goldreich, exacerbated the invidious public image of the Jews that reverberated in the conservative Afrikaans press: the Jew as disrupter of white supremacy from within and as fugitive to Israel (the ungrateful betrayer of South Africa) from without. From the point of view of the Board of Deputies, perhaps the most disturbing headline of the 1960s was that published in September 1965 in *Dagbreek*: “Where Does the Jew Stand in the White Struggle for Survival?” The newspaper's editor, Dirk Richard, submitted that, in Afrikaner eyes, the Jew was under suspicion: “The view of the average Nationalist is that the Jews are not well disposed to this party and its policy of separate development, that they are even hostile to it . . . so that he cannot rely on the Jew at a time when his country has to be defended to the last ditch.”³¹

In summation, it is important to draw a clear distinction between two facets of Jewish political behavior that characterized the Jewish experience in South Africa. On the one hand, the extraordinary prominence of Jewish individuals in the liberal and radical streams of political opposition to the apartheid system; on the other, the avoidance of association with these streams on the part of the vast majority of Jews, alongside their tendency to cluster around a position in the white political spectrum somewhat to the left of center. While it is true that many white liberals and radicals were Jews, it is equally the case that not many Jews were liberals or radicals.

The Radical and Liberal Critique of the Jewish Community

Although the Jewish Board of Deputies' policy of noninvolvement in politics—and the compliance with this policy on the part of almost all of the rabbinate—undoubtedly enjoyed a broad consensus of support among South African Jews, it did not go entirely unchallenged. This policy greatly aggravated the disaffected attitude already characteristic of most Jewish radicals and many active Jewish liberals. In turn, high-profile Jewish activists in the struggle against apartheid, especially if they were known to have (or suspected of having) Communist affinities, were shunned by most Jews, ignored by Jewish organizations, and sidelined by the Jewish press, unless they functioned legally.³² Fear certainly caused many Jews to distance themselves from such persons, but disapproval probably was no less a factor. Be that as it may, the experience of most radicals was of being treated as pariahs by the Jewish community and public.³³

Several prominent activists in the struggle against apartheid penned cogent indictments of the Jewish community's stance. One of the sharpest critics was Ronald Segal, editor-publisher of the acerbic anti-government journal *Africa South* until both he and the magazine were banned in 1959 under the Suppression of Communism Act

(although Segal was not a member of the Communist party). His passport having been withdrawn, Segal left the country illegally in 1960 during the state of emergency declared after the Sharpeville tragedy. From London, he continued to play a major role in galvanizing world opinion against apartheid and in pressing for economic sanctions against South Africa. Brought up in what he described as “a passionately Jewish home,” both his parents having been prominent leaders of Cape Town’s Jewish community, Segal was sharply critical of the political inaction of South African Jewry *qua* community. “South African Jews are forever conscious of injustice that they alone are made to suffer,” he wrote. “How can this one-eyed morality be defended?”³⁴

To be sure, throughout the apartheid years, all the contentions of the liberal or radical critics had been thrashed out in numerous debates within the councils of the Jewish Board of Deputies. However, others speaking with equal conviction presented an opposing viewpoint. In the records of the Board’s congress debates on public relations, there is abundant evidence to indicate that, even had its elected leaders ever unanimously accepted the premises of critics such as Segal, the Board’s plenum would have rejected them. Political opinion and personal party allegiance varied considerably; as has been seen, the consensus was that the Jewish community’s only feasible policy was political noninvolvement. Although a number of the Board’s leading figures believed that there was a moral imperative, from the Jewish standpoint, to oppose apartheid, they did not necessarily agree that if discrimination prevailed, Jews would inevitably fall among its victims. On the contrary, in the eyes of most Jews who were squarely identified with their community, the logic of South African race relations pointed in quite the opposite direction: if anything was likely to precipitate antisemitism and discrimination against Jews, it was precisely the collective adoption of a liberal political position that flouted government policy.

The contentions of liberal and radical Jewish critics were thus doubted. Moreover, their motives were mistrusted. Detached as they generally were from organized Jewish communal life, they were suspected of being concerned less with fulfilling the moral imperatives of Judaism than with using the Jews for political (albeit worthy) ends. Hence, critics such as Segal had little credibility in the eyes of most Jews actively involved in communal life; this was even more the case when those critical of the government were known to be Communists or anti-Zionists.

Far more acceptable—and representative—were those Jewish public figures who, upholding the policy of the Board of Deputies, combined firm Zionist and communal commitment with private action on behalf of the liberal cause. An example was Dr. Ellen Hellmann of the Institute of Race Relations, who had been an active member of the Zionist Socialist party in the 1940s and who served on the Board of Deputies’ executive council and public relations committee for part of the period under review. Hellmann saw no contradiction between her primary commitment to liberal activism, on the one hand, and her association with the Jewish Board of Deputies and its policy of noninvolvement, on the other.³⁵ Hellmann’s views were shared in all essentials by a host of other prominent Jewish personalities known to be political liberals. The example set by Israel Maisels, the celebrated legal champion of the accused in the epic “treason trial,” was particularly significant, since at various times he held high positions in both the Board of Deputies and the Zionist Federation. But the most famous role model for Jewish liberals was Helen Suzman. It is noteworthy

that, with regard to Jewishness and the Jewish community, Suzman always maintained an unselfconscious and nonjudgmental attitude. Questioned in a post-apartheid era interview about the policy of the Jewish Board of Deputies, she was only moderately critical, recognizing in retrospect that it was “just dead scared to bring the Jews under the beady eye of people like Dr. Verwoerd, who were outspokenly antisemitic, and they were not going to subject the small minority Jewish population to any strictures which the Nat government might have brought on them.”³⁶

Reformed Apartheid and the Jewish Community

Although the maintenance of white minority supremacy remained the irreducible basis of apartheid ideology and policy throughout the 46 years of National party rule, its racist implications underwent considerable modification over time. The proponents of apartheid pitched their case increasingly in terms of necessity and rational strategy for white survival in South Africa: the sole answer to the bogey of Communism and the danger of liberalism (which was portrayed as Communism’s unwitting handmaiden). Afrikaner ideological discourse not only subordinated its racist motifs to considerations of white survival as a morally defensible right, but also proceeded to claim that apartheid embodied a progressive aspiration for the cultural and political self-expression of all the racial groups said to constitute South African society.

Such visionary pretensions of apartheid ideology were fed by economic, social, and intellectual changes within the Afrikaner public. A division began to emerge in the late 1960s between two main ideological factions, which came to be loosely labeled as *verkrampies* (narrow-minded, literally “cramped”) and *verligtes* (enlightened). The *verkrampie* politicians doggedly upheld rigid Afrikaner national exclusiveness and domination of the South African polity and thus resisted modification of the apartheid system in accommodation to criticism from abroad. *Verligtes*, too, were not about to forgo the National party’s control of the state. Nor did they contemplate dispensing with the fundamental division of the population into the four statutory groups: white, Bantu (African), colored, and Asian (Indian). They did, however, tend to favor relinquishing a measure of Afrikaner exclusivity for the sake of more white unity, and they evinced an open-minded attitude toward modifications of apartheid that, while not substantially altering long-term goals of “separate development,” would soften its harsh image.³⁷

The transformed rhetoric of apartheid influenced the English-speaking white public and, within it, the Jews. It raised hopes, or wish-fulfilling illusions, that the crude racist elements of apartheid were being repressed by the governing National party, paving the way for substantive structural reforms of the system and a much longed-for softening of world censure of South Africa. The new mantra propagated by the government headed by Pieter Willem Botha (who became prime minister in 1978) was “healthy power-sharing” between the four separately developing racial groups. Although the country’s common affairs were to remain controlled by the whites, internal “own affairs” were to be left to each separate race group. The lynchpin of the

new model of “reformed” apartheid, instituted in 1983, was the tricameral parliamentary system, which replaced the Westminster model of parliament that had been in existence since the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Separate parliamentary chambers were created for the coloreds and the Indians, and an advisory President’s Council, whose appointed members represented all the race groups, was established. This ostensible step toward political power-sharing was fundamentally flawed, however, not only because the white chamber had superior legislative powers but—even more importantly—because the black African majority of South Africa’s population was excluded from parliamentary representation. The channel for black political expression was still relegated to the various “homelands,” four of which had by then accepted independence, while others were described as self-governing.

Largely in reaction to this reformed apartheid strategy, which was manifestly aimed at the preservation of white supremacy by means of co-opting the Indian and colored race groups, a new alignment of opposition movements known as the United Democratic Front (UDF) sprang into existence in August 1983. This alignment soon had a multiracial following estimated at some two million people, who belonged to a wide variety of trade unions, civic and students’ organizations, sports clubs, religious groups, and the like. A great groundswell of black popular resistance such as had erupted in the Soweto riots of 1975 exploded once more in 1985, but this time showed no signs of abating. The government responded with a renewed state of emergency that facilitated massive repression of opposition, including the deployment of army troops in the townships. By the time President Botha resigned reluctantly in 1989, after suffering a heart attack, it was clear that the viability of the apartheid regime, irrespective of its reforms, was in a grave state of crisis—both embattled from within and bombarded from without by international condemnation and sanctions.

Intracommunal Effects of Israel-South Africa Cooperation

Meanwhile, a new and discomfoting factor complicated the Jewish situation in South Africa: the increasing levels of cooperation between the Israeli and South African governments. This development was the outcome of Israel’s bitter disappointment with the African states’ sudden severing of diplomatic relations in the wake of the Yom Kippur War.³⁸ Israel’s post-Yom Kippur War government, which took office in 1974 under Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Minister of Defense Shimon Peres, reacted sharply. It embarked on a course of pragmatic and expedient self-interest with regard to South Africa.³⁹ Moreover, Israel’s former restraint regarding the upgrading of diplomatic relations fell away: in 1974 and 1975, Israel and South Africa raised their diplomatic representation to ambassadorial level. Finally, Israel agreed to receive an official visit by Prime Minister John Vorster in April 1976, the first by a South African prime minister since Dr. Malan’s private visit in 1953. Vorster was received with full honors and, while in Israel, signed a number of wide-ranging trade and technical cooperation agreements. With this, the two governments were set on a path that resolutely fostered bilateral relations on all levels of mutual interest—in particular, military-related trade and cooperation. The precise nature and scope of Israeli-South

African military trade will become known only if the defense and security archives of either country ever become available. However, there can be no doubt that, even by 1977, both governments attached enormous importance to it.

The cooperative relationship between the Israeli and South African governments in military-related spheres stood in shameful contrast with Israel's frequently reiterated censure of apartheid in the international forum, and it was a source of acute embarrassment for liberal-minded Jews, especially Jewish university students. Moreover, many of the active Jewish student association members were also members or ex-members of the Habonim Zionist youth movement, which identified strongly with the Zionist Left in Israel. They were therefore acutely ashamed of the military connection and were critical in general of Israeli government policy, which ran counter to their conception of Zionism and their idealized image of Israel.

Consequently, the focus of intracommunal dissonance—mainly generated by students—shifted from criticism of the Board of Deputies' policy of political noninvolvement to a critique of the growing cooperation between Israel and the South African government.⁴⁰ It is true that internal Jewish dissonance was more than counterbalanced by the excesses of Muslim "anti-Zionism" on the campus, which had the effect of galvanizing Jewish students—especially those who were members of Zionist youth movements—in defense of Israel. Over time, however, Israel's increasingly controversial image led to erosion of its status as a primary anchor for the Jewish identification of students. Secular Jewishness was gradually displaced by a turn to religiosity, and in that context, Zionist sentiment began to be subsumed by national-religious Orthodoxy.

Black Perceptions of the Jewish Community

It is characteristic of the immersion of Jews within the dominant white segment of South Africa's caste-like society that, throughout the era of apartheid, concern for their own public image remained limited to monitoring the attitudes of other whites.⁴¹ Indeed, the only reasonably scientific data ever to come to light on the attitudes of *blacks* toward Jews derived from a 1971 survey of secondary school matriculation pupils in the black township of Soweto, adjacent to Johannesburg. This survey, authored by Melville L. Edelstein, at the time the chief welfare officer in the townships, examined the pupils' attitudes toward various categories of whites. Its findings showed that the sense of "social distance" experienced in relation to Jews was greater than that felt toward English-speakers in general and was exceeded only by that felt toward Afrikaners.⁴² Edelstein himself, no less than the Jewish community's leaders, thought this a most unexpected and disturbing finding. Although accounting for this finding did not fall within the scope of his research, he did note that the respondents had only the barest of contacts with Jews and that there appeared to be some correlation between antipathy toward Jews and membership in white-sponsored churches, which, he suggested, may have fostered the transmission of anti-Jewish stereotypes found in the New Testament.⁴³

Another expression of black attitudes toward South African Jews is found in English-language literary works by South African blacks. Marcia Leveson, a professor of literature at the University of the Witwatersrand, has written a sensitive study dealing

with the mixed or ambivalent stereotyping of Jews found in such works.⁴⁴ Jews most often appear as shopkeepers or as landlords; less frequently, they are lawyers, teachers, journalists, or social workers. On the one hand, the Jew is depicted as somewhat more compassionate and liberal than other whites in relation to blacks—a trait often explicitly attributed to the historical experience of Jews as a persecuted minority. On the other, negative stereotyping inherited from European models abounds, such as the correlation of ugly physical features with debased moral attributes (for instance, Shylock-like money-grubbing and guile). In publicist writing by black journalists and political personalities throughout the apartheid years, there is a paucity of reference to Jews. This, no doubt, reflects the fact that black perceptions did not generally make a distinction between Jews and other English-speaking whites.

In fact, most of the specific references to Jews are found in interviews initiated by the Jewish media. Those interviewed generally are critical of the Jews for not siding en bloc with the blacks in their struggle; nonetheless, they evince some understanding for the Jewish community's sense of vulnerability and consequent dilemma of conscience. They are also appreciative of the conspicuous role played by individual Jews in opposing the iniquities of the South African system. For example, the writer Bloke Modisane, asked by the *Jewish Quarterly* (published in London) to contribute his reflections, wrote (in the early 1960s) that the African did not expect the Jew to fight his battles for him, but did expect him to speak out in condemnation of the government's racial policies on religious and moral grounds. At the same time, Modisane felt that "there exists a bond, a kind of affection for the Jews on the part of the Africans." He thought that prejudice had bound them together and noted that "Africans in South Africa would rather work for Jews—they are less mean than the English, less brutal than the Afrikaners; and even though they may exploit African labour like the rest, there is a quality about them which has earned them this preference." Displaying a measure of empathy that even some Jewish critics might consider underserved, Modisane declared that

the presence of the Jew in South Africa is a tragedy; either way his values are not sure. If he remains silent, then in the eyes of the Africans he is included among the enemies of their cause. If he speaks denunciations against apartheid, then by this very act he might arouse the dormant wave of anti-Semitism.⁴⁵

Spontaneously generated comments relating to Jews as a distinctive category of whites usually echoed Modisane's solicited views. The well-known expatriate writer Lewis Nkosi, for example, wrote appreciatively in 1963:

If one was foolhardy enough to have girl friends across the colour line, they were likely to be Jewish; if one had white friends of any sort they were most likely Jewish; almost eighty percent of white South Africans who belonged to left-wing and liberal organizations were Jewish; whatever cultural vitality Johannesburg enjoyed was contributed by the Jewish community.⁴⁶

In the mid-1980s, however, a darker picture emerged in a series of extensive interviews conducted by Alan Fischer and Tzippi Hoffman with leading South Africans from a broad spectrum of political and ethnic groups. Not all of the interviewees were aware that Fischer and Hoffman were Jews, and their candid answers to a number of probing questions cast new light on the prevailing attitudes among major political ac-

tivists. Although some appreciation for the prominence of Jewish individuals in liberal and radical opposition to apartheid was evident, this sentiment was overshadowed by a generalized hostility toward the Jewish community. The declared object of this hostility was “Zionism,” but anti-Jewish undertones were conspicuous.⁴⁷

The first explicit statement of ANC views regarding the Jewish community was elicited in early 1986 by leaders (some of them Jewish) of the National Union of South African Students. Defying pro-government public opinion, they went to Harare, Zimbabwe and met with ANC leaders in exile. One of the questions they raised concerned Zionism and the PLO. The students reported that “the ANC distinguishes between the religious manifestation, with which it has no problems, and the political manifestations of Zionism, which they argue, has denied the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people to independence.” At the same time, the ANC leaders claimed to be opposed to antisemitism, as to any form of racism, and were not antagonistic to the Jewish community in South Africa, which “had offered up many white democrats who actively opposed apartheid.”⁴⁸

Amplification of this attitude was provided in Hoffman and Fischer’s interview with Neo Mnumzama, the ANC’s chief spokesperson stationed at the United Nations. Recognizing the “different political colours” of South African Jews, he said that the ANC regarded “in a positive light” those Jews who belonged to the broad struggle against apartheid. However, it disapproved of those members of the community who had Zionist affiliations. Claiming that there was a distinction between antisemitism and anti-Zionism, Mnumzama said that “Zionism as an ally of apartheid is certainly an accomplice in the perpetration of the crimes that Pretoria commits against the South African people.” He said that Israel, like South Africa, was based on the “uprooting and dispossession of the indigenous majority population.” Hence, he averred: “You cannot struggle against apartheid and still adhere to Zionist positions.”⁴⁹

The worst manifestations of hostility toward Jews, at first equaling and soon exceeding the residual antisemitism of Afrikaner radical right-wingers, emanated from politicized groups in the Muslim community. According to South African census data, an estimated 553,584 Muslims (1.4 percent of the total population) were living in South Africa in 1996.⁵⁰ In one of the above-mentioned interviews conducted by Hoffman and Fischer, Farid Esack, the foremost intellectual of the important Islamic resurgence group, Call of Islam, characterized the relationship between the Jewish and Muslim communities as “one of seething antagonism.” With blunt candor, he provided an enlightening, insider’s analysis of this situation, which left no doubt that deep-seated anti-Jewish prejudices were at the root of Muslim antagonism. On the one hand, Esack explained that the Arab-Israeli conflict greatly influenced Muslim attitudes and generated vehement “anti-Zionism.” Yet, on the other, Esack submitted: “If one is honest about the question, then the Muslims of South Africa are not anti-Zionist. They are anti-Semitic.” He confided to his interviewers that they would not find any other Muslim theologian who would venture to admit this, because “these things are kept within our own ranks.” Asked the question: “For any Jewish body to be accepted by the Muslim community, will it have to renounce all recognition and support of Israel?” Esack replied: “Nothing that the Jews do will be enough for Muslims”—so deeply rooted were their prejudices and hostility.⁵¹

The rhetoric of crude antisemitism in its purportedly “anti-Zionist” form was all

too evident in leaflets, posters, and slogans brandished at public demonstrations in support of the Palestinian cause. The university campus was the frontline of encounters and even physical clashes, as attempts were made to vilify Israel and stigmatize Zionism as “racism.” Throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, there were tensions and sporadic clashes between Muslim and Jewish university students, usually triggered by Muslim demonstrations on what was called the annual Al Quds day.

Changes in the Jewish Community's Stance

In the 1950s and early 1960s, it will be recalled, very few Jews supported the National party government, and the handful who demonstratively joined that party had done so at the cost of evoking an embarrassed if not disdainful response from fellow Jews. In the 1970s, there were signs of a change.⁵² In the 1977 general election, the National party sponsored the candidacy of a Jew, Abe Hoppenstein, in a Johannesburg constituency (Bezuidenhout) known to have a considerable Jewish population. Although his defeat meant that there was still no Jew on the National party benches in Parliament—whereas five Jewish candidates for the Progressives took their seats in the Parliament of 1977—Hoppenstein's candidacy and close miss were a sign that supporting the National party was no longer out of the question for the average Jew. An illustration of the change was the view of Israel Pinshaw, who was both a positively self-identified Jew and an active member of the National party. In the Jewish press he was reported as stating:

I sincerely believe that the philosophy of the National Party has completely changed over the years As a Jew I find bigotry and discrimination repulsive and I believe that through the efforts of the National Party accommodation can be achieved amongst our various race groups . . . and as a Jew I will endeavour to see that the decisions to which I am a party will be so designed that they are equitable, just and fair.⁵³

The transformation of apartheid's ideological rhetoric and the introduction of reforms in its implementation also had the effect of extending the boundaries of public moral criticism permitted by the white consensus. This is the key to understanding the changes in the policy of the Jewish Board of Deputies. In the 1970s, it became possible for the Board to vent views that would have been regarded only a decade earlier as disloyal, if not treacherous. Incrementally more outspoken, yet venturing only ever so slightly beyond the norm of the government's own *verligte* rhetoric, resolutions of the Board's congresses in the early 1970s called for the elimination of “unjust discrimination so that all, regardless of race, creed or colour, be permitted and encouraged to achieve the full potential of their capabilities and live in dignity and harmony.”⁵⁴

Meanwhile, a growing body of executive opinion was advocating that the Board of Deputies should cease conceiving of itself purely as a Jewish defense body and a passive reflector of the Jewish public. Instead, it was argued, the Jewish representative body should be interpreting the Jewish conscience of the community and leading and shaping Jewish opinion. Accordingly, the Board's public relations work began to be punctuated with sporadic statements and interventions of a kind that earlier had been deemed patently political and therefore taboo. In 1981, it made appeals

against specific evictions of blacks and pass-law arrests; in 1982, it criticized detention without trial. In unacknowledged contrast to the Board's silence on innumerable specific acts of apartheid policy a decade earlier, it began to invoke Jewish values and historical experience in support of such interventions.⁵⁵ Finally, in 1987, apartheid was explicitly rejected. At the Board's congress that year, a series of unequivocal resolutions included the following:

Congress recognizes that apartheid is the principal cause of political violence in South Africa and that continued oppression under that policy exacerbates the climate of political unrest, and believes that apartheid and racial prejudice are in complete contradiction to the teachings of Judaism.⁵⁶

Yet there was a converse side to this turn toward increasing political involvement. On the highly charged question of international sanctions against South Africa, which reached a crescendo in the mid-1980s, the Board of Deputies took an unequivocal stand: it resolutely opposed sanctions and took active steps to make this known to other Jewish communities. In so doing, the Board was simultaneously in accord with the pro-government consensus as well as safely in the company of many important white opponents of apartheid, including major Jewish political progressives such as Helen Suzman and Harry Schwarz. In opposing sanctions, the Board had to confront the fact that the state of Israel, under pressure from the United States, was one of the countries currently considering such measures. At stake was the flourishing cooperative relationship between South Africa and Israel, with all the accruing benefits to South African Jewish organizations. Thus, in sharp contrast to the equivocation that had characterized the Jewish leadership's treatment of Israel's participation in the international anti-apartheid chorus of the early 1960s, both the Board of Deputies and the Zionist Federation stood firm in their opposition to international sanctions.⁵⁷

The Rabbis and Reformed Apartheid

In the period of reformed apartheid, more rabbis became outspoken in their criticism of the ruling order. In most cases, they eventually decided to leave South Africa, motivated at least in part by the conviction that it was unconscionable to continue participating in the apartheid society. Among them was the South African-born Orthodox rabbi Abner Weiss, a protégé of Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz, the chief minister of the Orthodox congregations in Durban from late 1969 until late 1976. Weiss was also a professor of Hebrew and Jewish studies at the University of Natal. Although he made a point of using his pulpit for sharp criticism of the social evils and injustice of the South African political system, it was primarily through his university association that he had been drawn into anti-apartheid activity in the early 1970s—on a scale far beyond that which had been practiced by Rabinowitz.

Other rabbis who condemned apartheid were British-born David Rosen of the Sea Point congregation in Cape Town; his South African-born successor, Selwyn Franklin; and Richard Lampert, also South African-born, of Johannesburg's Progressive Temple Emmanuel. In 1985, Ady Assabi came from Israel to bolster the declining Progressive Jewish following in Johannesburg. From the outset, Assabi took part in

protest actions. Moreover, by dint of his engaging personality, he enjoyed considerable exposure in the general press—a fact that did not endear him to all Jews.

None of these rabbis, however, was as politically activist as Ben Isaacson, the charismatic, maverick rabbi who, as has been seen, had been an outspoken antagonist of apartheid from the start of his career in 1958. The course of Ben Isaacson's checkered career had included aliyah to Israel in 1965, where he took up work in education. However, the narrow-minded and publicly coercive mode of the Orthodox religious establishment in Israel was not to his liking, and he began to take an interest in Progressive Judaism. This led to his being invited back to South Africa in 1974 to serve as a Progressive rabbi. Soon, however, another round of disillusionment set in, resulting in his defection in 1982 to form an independent congregation named Har-El, which loosely followed the model of American Conservative Judaism.

From his base in the new Har-El congregation, Isaacson intensified his opposition to the apartheid regime, explicitly in the name of Jewish religious values. He took part in a variety of protest activities, such as the "Release Mandela" and the "End Conscription" campaigns. He also worked closely with Bishop Desmond Tutu and the Reverend Beyers Naudé, the "renegade" Afrikaner cleric who had become secretary general of the South African Council of Churches. Isaacson tongue-lashed the Jewish communal leadership for failing in their moral duty, and he castigated Jews at large for tacitly enjoying the evil fruits of the apartheid system. Balking at the consensus of the communal leadership, he persistently advocated international sanctions against South Africa and opposed compulsory military conscription. Isaacson's tempestuous style was frowned upon by most other rabbis and Jewish communal leaders. Finally, in mid-1987, after making an anti-apartheid lecture tour in the United States together with a black clergyman, the Reverend Zachariah Mokgoebo of Soweto—in the course of which Isaacson was reported to have disparaged his own congregants along with South African Jews in general—the lay leaders of Har-El served him notice and disbanded the congregation.⁵⁸

A contrasting approach to societal issues, cautious and temperate, was practiced by Rabbi Norman Bernhard, who had served the important Oxford Street synagogue in Johannesburg since 1963. In 1980, Bernhard established the Oxford Synagogue Social Action Committee (OSSAC), which launched a social action program aimed at improving the quality of life of black domestic workers living and working in that area. Social and recreational facilities, adult education, and insurance plans were provided. Distinctive of Rabbi Bernhard's stance was his repeated insistence on an optimistic prognosis for the future of South Africa. His source of inspiration in this regard was the Lubavitcher rebbe, Menachem Schneerson, whom Bernhard revered as one endowed with *ruah hakodesh*, the gift of divinely revealed insight and foresight. The rebbe had repeatedly urged that Jews not leave South Africa and had expressed optimism that the country would ultimately provide a bright and prosperous future for all its peoples. Echoing Schneerson, Bernhard pointed approvingly to the reforms implemented by the South African government and averred that there was still a great reservoir of goodwill among the different races.⁵⁹

In sum, throughout the period of reformed apartheid, moral objections to the system in general, and to specific iniquities in particular, reverberated within the walls

of several major synagogues. The strong constraints of the 1950s and early 1960s had greatly receded, but much seems to have depended on the style of protest adopted by the individual rabbi. For many a Jew, the young in particular, the outspokenness and actions of at least a few rabbis somewhat redeemed Judaism's image in the troubled South African scene. At the same time, the rabbinate's overall record was far from satisfying the expectations of already alienated Jewish radicals or liberals still in exile, or of those deeply immersed in the liberation struggle that was spearheaded after 1983 by the United Democratic Front's various affiliates. Their bitterness concerning the rabbinate began to be allayed only in 1988, after the arrival from England of Rabbi Cyril Harris to assume the pivotal position of Chief Rabbi of the Orthodox Union of Hebrew Congregations.

Jewish Social Action

Throughout the apartheid period, Jews were conspicuously active in a variety of civic spheres of activity, in which they worked to alleviate the iniquities of apartheid. Foremost was the legal sphere, where liberal anti-apartheid proclivities often found expression in the course of the routine work of lawyers and judges.⁶⁰ Richard Goldstone, for instance, was described on one occasion by colleagues as "an outstanding commercial lawyer who had shrewdly and inventively applied the law to secure justice in politically controversial and human rights cases."⁶¹ After practicing law in this spirit throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Goldstone was appointed a judge in the Transvaal province in 1980. In a crucially important case, Goldstone set aside an order to evict a "non-white" woman from her home in a white area by ruling that a person convicted under the Group Areas Act could only be evicted if alternative accommodation was available—a decision that frustrated a good deal of the government's "group areas" segregation prosecutions. In the transition period that followed the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990, President F.W. de Klerk appointed Goldstone to head the important Standing Commission of Inquiry into Violence and Intimidation. In 1994, he was appointed to the new Constitutional Court.

A particularly important site of legal anti-apartheid activities in the latter period of apartheid was the Legal Resources Centre, which was established in 1979. The center provided desperately needed legal services for thousands of victims of the apartheid apparatus. It offered employment to selected law graduates in a fellowship program, ran training programs for young black law graduates, and equipped paralegal personnel with the elementary legal skills needed to contend with the maze of apartheid laws that governed the lives of blacks. The moving spirit behind this enormous legal-aid enterprise was Arthur Chaskalson, who left a brilliant private practice at the Johannesburg bar in order to dedicate himself to this work.⁶² Chaskalson had never been a political activist. But together with several colleagues at the bar, he had placed his formidable legal ability at the disposal of victims of the repressive political system in a series of trials in the 1960s—among them the Rivonia trial, the trials of Bram Fischer and of African Resistance Movement members, and the trial of Benjamin Pogrund, a journalist at the *Rand Daily Mail* who had written an exposé concerning the harsh conditions endured by black South African prisoners. The Legal Resources Centre was the pinnacle of his career. By 1990, it had more than 100 full-time em-

ployees operating throughout the country, mostly paralegal assistants and administrators, alongside some 40 fully qualified lawyers.

Chaskalson's work demonstrated a form of activity that, probably even more than direct political involvement, characterized the endeavors of Jewish individuals in numbers quite disproportionate to the size of the community. Born into the privileged status of whites, such individuals were prompted by moral conscience to dedicate themselves, within the parameters of what was legally possible, to the alleviation of indignities, deprivations, and repression caused by apartheid. At the same time, their efforts formed part of the broader struggle to obstruct, resist, and ultimately abolish that system. Chaskalson's work was accorded high recognition by the political leadership of post-apartheid South Africa. In the transition to democracy of the 1990s, he played an important role in the drafting of the new constitutional order; in June 1994, President Mandela appointed him the first president of South Africa's newly established Constitutional Court.

Measured against the past record of the organized Jewish community, the most innovative development with regard to Jewish social action was the emergence in late 1985 of several groups specifically dedicated to a collective Jewish expression of opposition to apartheid. One such group, based in Cape Town, was known as Jews for Justice; in Johannesburg, a similar group called itself Jews for Social Justice. The combined enrolled membership of these groups was small—only a few hundred—but their public meetings attracted hundreds more. Significantly, the Board of Jewish Deputies did not oppose their actions, even though they flouted the Board's official policy.⁶³

After Apartheid: Consequences of the Jewish Community's Stance

In 1990, President de Klerk released Nelson Mandela from prison and inaugurated the remarkable negotiation process that eventually led to the elections of 1994, which at last transformed South Africa into a nonracial democratic society.⁶⁴ What were the consequences of the Jewish community's record regarding apartheid for the position of the Jews in the new South Africa? At the time of writing, barely a decade later, it is arguably too soon to provide an adequate evaluation. So far, however, it appears that South African Jews have suffered few, if any, negative consequences that can be directly attributed to their collective behavior or political stance during the apartheid era. Together with all whites, they have benefited from the spirit of reconciliation—exemplified, above all, by the remarkable statesmanship of Nelson Mandela—that has marked the entire process of change in South Africa. Specifically with regard to the Jews, Mandela set the example for an appreciative evaluation of their contribution to the struggle against apartheid, essentially crediting the community as a whole for the disproportionate role played by a small minority of Jewish liberals and radicals.⁶⁵ Indeed, Mandela's frequently repeated public statements in this vein stand in sharp contrast to the disaffection still felt by many Jews who had put themselves at risk during the apartheid years.

No less than the community as a whole, Jews as individuals have been profoundly affected by the transformation of South Africa. Some of the effects have been nega-

tive: above all, their sense of physical security has been undermined by a longstanding “crime epidemic” that has engulfed the country. On the one hand, this factor, in conjunction with both a certain decline in standard of living and affirmative action disfavoring whites, has motivated emigration, which in turn has decreased the viability of some Jewish communal institutions. On the other, religious life and institutions have been strengthened by a phenomenal turn toward greater religiosity. Furthermore, the community is now liberated from the chronic moral dilemma over apartheid that troubled its conscience for more than four decades. And finally, not only has there been absolutely no infringement of civic equality for Jews, but more Jews than ever before are now occupying positions of importance in the government and public sectors. The list of names includes the aforementioned members of the new Constitutional Court, Arthur Chaskalson and Richard Goldstone, as well as their colleague Albie Sachs, a hero of the ANC struggle. At the time of writing, Ronnie Kasrils is a government minister, whereas Tony Leon leads the major opposition Democratic party—a successor to Helen Suzman’s Progressive party, which, with historical irony, now garners much of its support from Afrikaners who formerly supported the one-time antisemitic National party.

All of these changes are independent of the Jewish community’s record during the struggle against apartheid. The only aspects of change that may be attributed to that record are the disturbing growth of Muslim hostility toward Jews, ostensibly on the grounds of their affinity to Israel, and the distinctly unsympathetic attitude toward Israel of the new South African political leadership. In part, this is a negative legacy of the former military cooperation between Israel and South Africa, and is not attributable to the Jewish community as such. In addition, given an a priori Third World hostility toward Israel, it is unlikely that the prevailing attitude within South Africa today would be different had Israel maintained its activist anti-apartheid policy of the 1960s.

For the Jewish community, the current anti-Israel atmosphere and attendant antisemitic manifestations mark the most obviously distressing inversion of its situation since the reconstruction of South Africa. Overall, however, it appears that Jews to date have not suffered retribution for the collective stance adopted by their communal leadership (both lay and rabbinical) during the apartheid era. This is not to say that there has been no internal self-criticism. The atmosphere of white soul-searching that was sparked by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) also reverberated within intellectual circles in the Jewish community.⁶⁶ In 1997, for example, Claudia Braude, a young Jewish journalist who had been brought up in an observant Jewish home, challenged the communal conscience in a scathing article submitted to *Jewish Affairs*. When the journal’s editorial committee (of which Braude herself was a member) rejected the article on the grounds that it contained possibly libelous statements, she resigned and proceeded to publish her views in the general press.⁶⁷

Braude’s protest was triggered by her viewing of a television documentary that, among other things, showed Mandela in amiable conversation with Percy Yutar—the state prosecutor in the Rivonia trial that had resulted in Mandela’s imprisonment on Robben Island for 27 years. Mandela’s characteristically conciliatory and forgiving gesture failed to allay Braude’s pain and anger regarding “what Yutar did in the name of Jewish communal interests.” In Braude’s view, Yutar’s behavior epitomized the

shameful complicity of the organized Jewish community in apartheid; complicity rooted in cowardly fear of reprisals on the part of the awesome Afrikaner nationalist regime. Yutar, she charged, was never criticized by the Jewish community; if anything, the Jewish press coverage was characterized by a thinly disguised relief that the prosecutor, in his patriotic zealotry, served as a counterweight to the embarrassing prominence of Jews among the ranks of the accused.

Only a small minority of South African Jews shared Braude's judgmental posture. A more representative position of the community's feelings was the finely balanced exposition authored by Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris (whose tenure, it will be recalled, had begun in 1988, when apartheid was close to its demise). In his official capacity, Harris was obliged to submit a statement to the religious communities' section of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in November 1997. This statement must be appreciated in the context of others representing the Christian majority. All of the churches made contrite apologies for what was described as "strategies of disengagement" that had contributed to a climate in which human rights abuses were allowed to take place. Some admitted that by evading involvement in politics, they had given tacit support to the status quo. Others expressed contrition over their failure to give sufficient support to anti-apartheid activists in their midst, or even for suppressing their own dissidents. However, no church group apologized for active complicity in human rights abuses or for having actively supported the policies of apartheid as they were actually implemented by the state. Even the Dutch Reformed Church, although confessing to having "misled" its flock "on apartheid as a biblical instruction," maintained a distinction between "bad" apartheid, as it were, and "good" apartheid benignly applied with justice and "Christian love."⁶⁸

In his submission on behalf of the Jewish "faith community," Harris characterized the record of the Jewish community in these words:

The Jewish community did not initiate apartheid. Many in the Jewish community did not agree with apartheid. Almost everyone in the Jewish community had a kind of awkward tension about apartheid. But most members of the Jewish community benefited in one way or another from apartheid.

Hence, he acknowledged, "in that the Jewish community benefited from apartheid an apology must be given to this commission." Harris added that the Jewish community also confessed to a collective failure to protest against apartheid, especially since "the entire thrust of Jewish moral teachings, together with the essential lesson of Jewish historical experience," should have commanded them to do so. By way of explanation, he suggested that desensitization and the stifling of conscience was one of the evil effects of apartheid itself. Cowardice was also involved: "Fear played a very large part—it shouldn't have done, but it did." Harris also called attention to the fact that the post-Holocaust generation in South Africa remembered the country's prior record of antisemitism and feared that antisemitism might again be aroused should the Jews become too bold in their opposition.

Harris did not, however, treat this explanation as a basis for exoneration. Nor did he stage a facile appropriation for Judaism of the universally acknowledged fact that there were proportionately more opponents of the system from among the Jews than among whites as a whole. The chief rabbi admitted that "these individuals were not

all practising Jews,” although he did suggest that “they were moved by either Jewish and more often than not, humanitarian motivations, to speak out.” Notwithstanding, Harris did not vindicate the Jewish community as a collective. Rather, he averred that, whatever the circumstances, “distancing one’s own interests can never be morally justified,” and he concluded with a declaration of contrition: “Because of the evil of indifference which so many in the Jewish community professed, we confess that sin today before this Commission and we ask forgiveness for it.”⁶⁹

Judging by the strenuous efforts he had to muster in order to promote a positive response of the Jewish public to the new South African social order, the chief rabbi’s admissions of Jewish moral culpability probably went beyond what most ordinary Jews felt. Nevertheless, Harris’ statement stands as a balanced and eloquent evaluation of the Jewish community’s record in the context of that of other religious groups in South Africa.

Some Comparative Observations

Jews were not the sole white minority ethnic group in South Africa. There were also communities of Germans, Dutch, Greeks, Italians, and Portuguese. However, little can be learned from comparative examination of their behavior vis-à-vis apartheid, since none of these groups was as cohesively organized and consistently salient as the Jewish community. Only the Portuguese exceeded the Jews in numbers, being roughly estimated at more than half a million by the 1990s. However, as late as 1961, there were only an estimated 10,000 Portuguese in South Africa. The growth in their number is thus very recent, dating mainly from the withdrawal of Portuguese colonial rule from Angola and Mozambique in 1975.⁷⁰ Similarly, the Italian community reached significant proportions much later than the Jewish community, numbering only a few thousand until the Second World War, after which a considerable number of former prisoners of war settled in the country. The number of Italians was estimated at 41,300 in 1970 and was believed to be about 72,000 in 1993.⁷¹

Of all other minority communities, the Greeks are probably the most comparable to the Jews, displaying a nearly complete congruence of ethnicity and religion (in this case, Greek Orthodoxy). Like the Jews, the Greeks had their own newspapers and a school; unlike the Jews, they had no particular prominence within the South African context. In 1916, there were only 2,292 members of the Greek Orthodox church (at about the same time there were about 59,000 Jews), and their numbers had reached no more than an estimated 40,000 by 1971.⁷² It is noteworthy, however, that the Greek (Hellenic) community was careful to take no collective stand against the apartheid policy of the government.

A far more instructive basis for comparative examination of Jewish minority group behavior in the political sphere is provided by studies of the Jews in the United States. The behavior of South Africa’s Jews with relation to apartheid certainly bears comparison with that of Jews in the American South during the civil rights struggle of the 1950s and 1960s.⁷³ There, too, fear of provoking anticipated retribution overwhelmed the impulse to take a brave stand against the prevailing white consensus.⁷⁴

Exactly what Jews had to fear differed according to the variant macrocosmic situ-

ation of the two communities. In the South African case, it was provoking the wrath of the powers that stringently controlled and regimented the polity as a whole. In addition, there was the highly problematic complication of Israel's vacillating relations with South Africa. The Jewish community's capacity to stand up to the anticipated ire of both the government and the pro-government public was further eroded by its being hostage, in a sense, to Israel's foreign policy. In contrast, the Israel factor figured not at all in the concerns of southern Jews. In the 1960s, their major fear was that the actions of national Jewish organizations and northern civil rights activists would cause all Jews to be identified with the integrationist movement, thereby activating the antisemitic potential of their southern white neighbors. Interestingly, it appears that southern Jews judged themselves to be in a position comparable to that of South African Jews. It may be the case that, in defending their passivity from northerner criticism, they drew encouragement from the example of South African Jewry's apparent success in coping with similar dilemmas of conscience.⁷⁵

Most historical writing on southern Jews in the United States confirms the view that, overall, the Jews conformed to the norms of the white population and complied with the southern system of discriminatory race relations.⁷⁶ As in the case of South African Jewry, the assessment that the average Jew was significantly more liberal-minded than members of other white ethnic or religious groups is plausible, although the evidence for this is not empirically conclusive. Moreover, even if southern Jews acknowledged, more than others, the principle or the inevitability of equal civil rights and integration, most favored only gradual and controlled change. It was northern rather than southern Jews who were a visible presence in the civil rights movement, in numbers disproportionate to the size of the U.S. Jewish community. Whereas the disproportionate number of Jewish activists is common to both communities, there can be no doubt that the role of individual South African Jews in the struggle against apartheid—across the spectrum from liberal parliamentary opposition to Communist agitation and underground resistance movements—exceeds by far the record of resistance evinced by southern Jews.

This point of contrast extends as well to the prominence of individual Jews who were actively identified with the *reactionary* political camp: far more of these were to be found in the U.S. South. Whereas a number of southern Jews achieved political prominence within the pro-segregation camp, South African Jewry had only a few active political advocates for apartheid, and these individuals had marginal significance. No Jewish defenders of apartheid were comparable to Charles Bloch, who applied to great effect his sharp legal expertise in the political battle against desegregation in the state of Georgia. Nor did South African Jewry produce a fervent opponent of integration as prominent as Solomon Blatt, the speaker of the house in the South Carolina legislature of the 1960s, or Sol Tepper, a major advocate of continued segregation in Selma, Alabama.⁷⁷ Overall, the situation and behavior of southern Jews may most appropriately be likened to that of the relatively small segment of South African "country Jews" who lived in close economic and social proximity to Afrikaner farmers and small townspeople. Their perceived vulnerability—not only to defamation, ostracism, and overt hostility but even to violent injury to their livelihood and their persons and homes—far exceeded that of urban South African Jews, who lived in a mainly English-speaking and moderately liberal social environment.

In comparing the two cases qua communities, one important difference is that American Jews of the South had no central representative organization equivalent in authority and function to the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. Hence, whereas in South Africa one may speak of a specific, authoritative communal policy with respect to apartheid, this is not quite applicable in the case of southern Jews. Regarding the rabbinate, however, comparison may well be more pertinent. Although more recent historical research on southern U.S. Jewry has modified earlier accounts that depicted the rabbis as being universally conformist and compliant, the mixed record of their behavior appears to be much the same as that of their South African counterparts.⁷⁸ The composition of the rabbinate, it should be noted, was very different in the two communities. Of the estimated 200 rabbis who occupied southern U.S. pulpits at the time of the segregation crisis, more than half were Reform,⁷⁹ whereas South Africa had less than a dozen independent Reform (Progressive) congregations. Among the ranks of southern U.S. Jewry, moreover, Reform rabbis stood almost alone in combating segregation.⁸⁰ Overall, the record of their brave opposition to the dominant public consensus against civil rights was not matched by the South African rabbis of Progressive Judaism—or, for that matter, by Orthodox rabbis. In accounting for this difference, it must again be noted that South Africa's rabbis were subject to a more centralized and representative communal authority. At the same time, they could not benefit, as did southern U.S. rabbis, from national rabbinical and secular Jewish organizations based elsewhere (in this case, in the North), which might support and boost their moral fortitude.

Conclusion

On balance, if one is to indulge in moral judgment, the minority group behavior of South African Jews was certainly no worse than that of American Jews of the South. More specifically, the cautious *modus operandi* adopted by South African Jewry's representative bodies seems, in retrospect, to have been essentially responsible and sagacious—despite the heavy price paid in terms of moral values. As noted, the strategy of refraining from direct collective opposition to the apartheid government did not incur retribution after the old regime was swept away. Nor can it justifiably be said that the Board's policy was an absolutely unqualified moral failure. After all, it did criticize racial discrimination and all the related evils that were the inherent ingredients of the apartheid system, even if it did so timorously. That its statements constituted an implicit rejection of all that apartheid signified was obvious to Jews and pro-government circles alike. It was not unreasonable of the Board's leadership to assume that it could go no further than this without risking self-damaging consequences, thereby betraying its basic responsibility to protect the Jewish community.

Moreover, after the mid-1970s, as the process of reformed apartheid unfolded and the restraints on public criticism loosened, the Board did in fact sharpen the focus of its statements, eventually (by the mid-1980s) condemning apartheid outright. Arguably this shift could have been made earlier and more boldly without endangering the Jewish community, especially given both the improvement of relations between Israel and South Africa, and the intensification of the international opposition to the South

African government, which would likely have made penalization of the Jewish community a politically risky move. It may also be the case that the Board of Deputies failed to maintain consistently its own avowed principle of defending the right and duty of the individual Jew to act politically in accordance with Jewish ethical values. By adding to its policy formula a rider to the effect that this duty should be performed with “a due sense of public responsibility,” the Board introduced an unmanageable ambiguity and marred the defensibility of its policy.

It is undeniable that the Board, and even more so the majority of the community’s rabbis, not only actively disassociated themselves from radical Jews (who were mainly, although not only, Communists) but also preferred to obscure the visibility of every form of active resistance to apartheid by Jews. This stood in stark contrast to the conventional celebration of Jewish prominence in all walks of life that conformed with the status quo—not to speak of the lionization of the pantheon of Jewish resisters after the demise of the apartheid regime. In the 1990s, the Jewish press abundantly featured interviews with Jewish radical returnees to South Africa, and a highly impressive exhibition on “Jews in the Struggle for Democracy and Human Rights in South Africa” was put on display in 1998 at the University of Cape Town’s Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies.⁸¹ In a sense, the Jewish Board of Deputies’ present commitment to an advocacy role (rather than confining itself to serving as a defensive communal caretaker) would seem to be an implicit indictment of its own past record.⁸²

Notes

I would like to thank the University Press of New England/Brandeis University Press for permission to draw upon the manuscript of my recently published book, *Community and Conscience: The Jews in Apartheid South Africa*.

1. Although Jews are known to have been among the earliest circumnavigators of the Cape, only Protestants were allowed to settle there during the rule of the Dutch East India Company (1652–1795). In the brief period of Batavian rule (1803–1806), Jews were allowed in, and this continued to be the case under British rule. See Gustav Saron and Louis Hotz (eds.), *The Jews in South Africa: A History* (London: 1955); Milton Shain, *Jewry and Cape Society* (Cape Town: 1983); Markus Arkin (ed.), *South African Jewry: A Contemporary Survey* (Cape Town: 1984).

2. Well into the period of apartheid, all of those who were not white were labeled “non-Europeans.” In more recent times, the designation “blacks” has come to be used equally comprehensively. By 1946, the census estimates showed a total population of 11,416,000, of which 2,372,000 were “Europeans” and 9,045,659 were “non-Europeans,” comprising 7,831,915 Natives (Bantu), 928,484 Coloreds, and 285,260 Asiatics. See *Official Yearbook of the Union* 1948, no. 24 (Pretoria: 1949–1950), 1078, 1086.

3. See Gideon Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism: The South African Experience* (Cape Town: 1980).

4. Jews in the South African Republic, which lost its independence after its defeat in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902, did suffer from civic disabilities as part of the *uitlander* (alien) population. See Saron and Hotz, *The Jews in South Africa*, 179–212; Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism*, 61–65.

5. A convergence of legislation that might have discriminated against Jews as well as Indians occurred in 1902, 1911–1913, and 1924. See Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism*, 76–80, 90. On immigration legislation and the Jews, see Edna Bradlow, “Immigration to the Union, 1910–1948: Policies and Attitudes” (Ph.D. diss., University of Cape Town, 1978).

6. See Milton Shain, *The Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa* (Charlottesville: 1994).

7. See Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism*, 97–168; Patrick J. Furlong, *Between Crown and*

Swastika: The Impact of the Radical Right on the Afrikaner Nationalist Movement in the Fascist Era (Johannesburg: 1991); Albrecht Hagemann, "Very Special Relations: The 'Third Reich' and the Union of South Africa, 1933–1939," *South African Historical Journal* 27 (1992), 127–147.

8. South African Jewry has always been numbered among the most organized Jewish communities in the world. The Jewish Board of Deputies, modeled on the British organization of the same name, comprised a wide variety of Jewish organizations, societies, and synagogue congregations.

9. Archives of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Johannesburg (henceforth: BD), Report of Executive Council, April 1958 to August 1960, 9.

10. See, for example, BD, Report of Executive Council, September 1962 to June 1965, 9.

11. See, for example, BD, Address of Arthur Suzman, Chairman of the Public Relations Committee, to 24th Congress of the Jewish Board of Deputies, June 24–27, 1965, public relations files.

12. See Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism*, 305–353.

13. See, for example, BD, Report of Executive Council, April 1958 to August 1960, 10.

14. See Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport (eds.), *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social and Cultural History* (Cape Town: 1999), 135–172.

15. Letter from A.M. Spira, Chairman of the local Board of Deputies to Gus Saron, 1 August 1955, BD, public relations files.

16. Statement of Eastern Province Committee of the S.A. Jewish Board of Deputies, BD, public relations files. See also *Port Elizabeth Evening Post*, 14 Dec. 1956, and *Oosterlig*, 18 Dec. 1956.

17. Rabbi Rabinowitz made these statements in March 1958 in the course of a sermon at the Great Synagogue that was attended by delegates to the Board of Deputies' 21st Congress; see BD, biographical files.

18. See Gerald Mazabow, *To Reach for the Moon: The South African Rabbinate of Rabbi Dr. L.I. Rabinowitz* (Johannesburg: 1999), 172.

19. *Jewish Chronicle* (London), 22 Sept. 1961.

20. Mimeographed text of Rabbi Rabinowitz's Yom Kippur sermon, October 1959, BD, biographical files.

21. Ben Isaacson, "What is Wrong with S.A. Jewry: An Outspoken Article by a Local Minister Who Has Gone on Aliyah," *Jewish Times*, 5 Oct. 1965.

22. H. Lever and O.J.M. Wagner, "Ethnic Preferences of Jewish Youth in Johannesburg," *The Jewish Journal of Sociology* 9 (June 1967), 34–47; Henry Lever, *Ethnic Attitudes of Johannesburg Youth* (Johannesburg: 1968). Other research indicating that Jews were less prejudiced than other whites includes that of T.F. Pettigrew, "Personality and Sociocultural Factors in Intergroup Attitudes: A Cross-National Comparison," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 2 (1958), 29–42; idem, "Social Distance Attitudes of South African Students," *Social Forces* 38 (1960), 246–253.

23. The quotations are from a mid-1960s statement by the United party leader Sir de Villiers Graaff: "The United Party's Policy of Race Federation," in N. J. Rhoodie (ed.), *South African Dialogue* (Johannesburg: 1972), 211–226.

24. See, for example, Helen Suzman, "The Progressive Party's Programme for a Multi-Racial South Africa," in Rhoodie, *South African Dialogue*, 228–244.

25. The Black Sash was an organization of white women founded in 1955. Its members stood in silence in public places carrying placards and wearing white dresses crossed by broad black sashes, a symbol of mourning for the government's violations of civil rights.

26. On the Liberal party, see Randolph Vigne, *Liberals against Apartheid: A History of the Liberal Party of South Africa, 1953–68* (London: 1997).

27. Quoted in *Daily Dispatch*, 17 Nov. 1962.

28. See Anthony Sampson, *The Treason Cage* (London: 1958); Lionel Forman and E.S. Sachs, *The South African Treason Trial* (London: 1956). See also David Y. Saks, "The Jewish Accused in the South African Treason Trial," *Jewish Affairs* 52, no.1 (Autumn 1997), 43–47.

29. See Muriel Horrell (ed.), *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa* (Johannesburg:

1963), 54, 55; H.H.W. de Villiers, *Rivonia: Operation Mayibuye* (Johannesburg: 1964); Miles Brokensha and Robert Knowles, *The Fourth of July Raids* (Cape Town: 1965); Hilda Bernstein, *The World That Was Ours* (London: 1967).

30. See Joel Joffe, *The Rivonia Story* (Cape Town: 1995), 181. The author was the attorney who not only orchestrated the defense team at the Rivonia trials but, going far beyond the call of legal duty, selflessly provided every form of succor to the defendants and their families.

31. Dirk Richard, "Waar Staar die Jood in Blanke Bestaansryd," *Dagbreek en Sondagnuus*, 26 Sept. 1965; BD, Report to South African Jewry, 1965 to 1976, 5, 6.

32. See, for example, the sympathetic personality profiles of the Liberal party activist Leslie Rubin in the *Jewish Times*, 11 March 1955 and 15 March 1959.

33. See, for example, Baruch Hirson, *Revolutions in My Life* (Johannesburg: 1995), 56; Immanuel Suttner, *Cutting through the Mountain: Interviews with South African Jewish Activists* (Johannesburg: 1997), 392, 510.

34. See, for example, *Jewish Chronicle* (London), 22 April 1960, 26 April 1963; "Apartheid and South African Jewry—An Exchange," *Commentary* 24, no. 5 (Nov. 1957), 424–428.

35. Author's interview with Ellen Hellmann, Johannesburg, 18 June 1971; see also her reported statements in *Sunday Express*, 31 Jan. 1954; *Jewish Times*, 10 Feb. 1961; *Zionist Record*, 3 March 1961.

36. Interview in Suttner, *Cutting through the Mountain*, 431.

37. On these changes in the Afrikaner sector, see Herbert Adam and Hermann Giliomee, *The Rise and Crisis of Afrikaner Power* (Cape Town: 1979), 104–127, 217–221; idem, "Apartheid, Verligtheid, and Liberalism," in *Democratic Liberalism in South Africa: Its History and Prospect*, ed. Jeffrey Butler, Richard Elphick, and David Welsh (Middletown, Conn.: 1987), 363–383.

38. See Susan A. Gitelson, *Israel's African Setback in Perspective* (Jerusalem: 1974); Ron Kochan et al., "Black African Voting Behavior in the U.N. on the Middle East Conflict 1967–1973," in *Israel and the Third World*, ed. Michael Curtis and Susan A. Gitelson (New Brunswick: 1976), 289–317.

39. See Joel Peters, *Israel and Africa* (London: 1992).

40. *Strike* [Cape Town Jewish students magazine] (April 1987).

41. See Henry Lever, *South African Society* (Johannesburg: 1978), 182–206.

42. See Melville L. Edelstein, *What Do Young Africans Think?* (Johannesburg: 1972); idem, "The Urban African Image of the Jew," *Jewish Affairs* 27, no. 2 (Feb. 1972), 6–8.

43. Several years later, Edelstein, who had selflessly devoted himself to welfare work in Soweto, lost his life as an innocent victim of random violence in the midst of the 1976 riots there.

44. See Marcia Leveson, *People of the Book: Images of the Jew in South African English Fiction, 1880–1992* (Johannesburg: 1996), esp. 208–215.

45. Bloke Modisane, "An African Writer Looks at the Jew in South Africa," *Jewish Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (39) (Winter 1963–1964), 38–41.

46. Lewis Nkosi, *Home and Exile* (London: 1983), 17.

47. See Tzippi Hoffman and Alan Fischer (eds.), *The Jews of South Africa: What Future?* (Johannesburg: 1988).

48. BD, report on meeting between the National Union of South African Students and the African National Congress, 31 March to 2 April 1986, in Harare, Zimbabwe, 28.

49. Quoted in Hoffman and Fischer (eds.), *The Jews of South Africa*, 71–79.

50. "The People of South Africa: Population Census 1996, Primary Tables—The Country as a Whole, Report Number 03–01–19 (1996)," *Statistic South Africa* (Pretoria: 1996), 44.

51. Quoted in Hoffman and Fischer (eds.), *The Jews of South Africa*, 122–133.

52. See Allie A. Dubb, *Jewish South Africans: A Sociological View of the Johannesburg Community* (Grahamstown: 1977), 141.

53. *Jewish Herald*, 27 Nov. 1984; author's interview with I. Pinshaw, Sept. 1986.

54. Resolution adopted at the Jewish Board of Deputies' 29th biennial congress, May 29–31, 1976, cited in BD, Report to South African Jewry 1976–78, 10; also see *Jewish Affairs* 31, no. 5 (May 1976), 12.

55. These developments are fully described in Atalia Ben-Meir, "The South African Jewish Community and Politics, 1930–1978, with Special Reference to the South African Jewish Board of Deputies" (Ph.D. diss., University of Natal, 1995), 450–465.

56. See the resolutions adopted at the 34th National Congress, April 1987, in *Jewish Affairs* 42, no. 4 (April 1987), 28–29.

57. See BD, Management Committee minutes, 19 March and 29 Sept. 1987; National Executive Council minutes, 1 Nov. 1987; *ibid.*, *Report to South African Jewry 1985–1987*, 9.

58. See, for example, "South African Jews are Called 'Sick' by Johannesburg Rabbi," *Jewish Floridian*, 6 March 1987.

59. See "Call for Calm and Confidence," *Jewish Times*, 20 Sept. 1985; *Herald Times*, 10 Oct. 1986.

60. See the special issue "Jews and the Law in South Africa," *Jewish Affairs* 55, no. 2 (Winter 2000).

61. See *Star*, 23 April 1990.

62. See BD biographical files (containing, *inter alia*, Rex Gibson's profile in *Optima* 34, no. 1 [March 1986], 32–35).

63. See, for example, *Jews for Social Justice Newsletter* (Nov. 1985).

64. See Patti Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle: The End of Apartheid and the Birth of the New South Africa* (London: 1997); Adrian Guelke, *South Africa in Transition: The Misunderstood Miracle* (London: 1999).

65. See, for example, Passover message from Mandela, 13 April 1992, BD, public relations files.

66. See "The Truth Commission: Jewish Perspectives on Justice and Forgiveness in South Africa," *Jewish Affairs* 51, no. 3 (Spring 1996), 30–39.

67. See *Mail and Guardian*, 27 March–3 April, 1997, 22.

68. See James Cochrane, John de Gruchy and Stephen Martin (eds.), *Facing the Truth: South African Faith Communities and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Cape Town: 1999), esp. 32–39.

69. TRC Religious Community Hearings: "Oral Submission by Chief Rabbi C. K. Harris to TRC 18/11/1997 and Questions and Answers that Followed," BD, public relations files.

70. See Allistair James McDuling, "Language Shift and Maintenance in the Portuguese Community of Johannesburg" (Master's thesis, University of South Africa, 1995), 8, 139–140, 194. McDuling cites immigrant figures of Portuguese persons from Portugal and Madeira from 1961 to 1992 as, respectively, 34,218 and 5,931. He also describes the Portuguese minority as lacking in cohesion, without even a single community school of its own comparable to the Deutsche Schule or the Greek SAHETI, not to speak of the Jewish King David schools.

71. See G. Sani, *History of the Italians in South Africa 1489–1989* (Johannesburg: 1992); David D. Saks, "South Africa's Italian Community," *Africana Notes News* 30, no. 5 (March 1993), 178–185.

72. Author's interview with Mr. Lagoudis, chairman of the Hellenic Community of Johannesburg, in Johannesburg, April 1971. On the early development of the Greek community, see Evangelos Anastasios Mantzaris, "Class and Ethnicity: The Politics and Ideologies of the Greek Community in South Africa, Circa 1890–1924" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cape Town, 1982).

73. For a more detailed discussion of the case of Jewry in the U.S. South, see Hasia Diner's essay, "'If I Am Not for Myself'/'If I Am Only for Myself': Jews, the American South, and the Quandary of Self-Interest," in this volume, pp. 50–69.

74. See Clive Webb, *Fight Against Fear: Southern Jews and Black Civil Rights* (Athens, Ga.: 2001), 218.

75. See Adam Mendelsohn, "South African Jews Also Face Racial Crisis: American Jewish Newspapers on Apartheid South Africa During the Civil Rights Era," *Jewish Affairs* 56, no. 3 (Spring 2001), 19–23.

76. See particularly the seminal study by Leonard Dinnerstein, "Southern Jewry and the Desegregation Crisis, 1954–1970," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (1973), 231–241; *idem* and Mary Palson (eds.), *Jews in the South* (Baton Rouge: 1994).

77. See Webb, *Fight Against Fear*, 114–146.

78. See Mark K. Bauman and Berkley Kalin (eds.), *The Quiet Voices: Southern Rabbis and Black Civil Rights, 1880s to 1990s* (Tuscaloosa: 1997).

79. Ibid., 9–10.

80. See Webb, *Fight Against Fear*, 169–215.

81. See the photographic catalogue: *Looking Back: Jews in the Struggle for Democracy and Human Rights in South Africa*, compiled by Milton Shain et al. (Cape Town: 2001).

82. The Jewish Board of Deputies' adoption of an advocacy role after 1994, as well as other aspects of the present essay, are more fully discussed in Gideon Shimoni, *Community and Conscience: The Jews in Apartheid South Africa* (Hanover, N.H.: 2003).

“If I Am Not for Myself”/
“If I Am Only for Myself”:
Jews, the American South, and
the Quandary of Self-Interest

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In *Souls of Black Folk*, his slim and elegant work of 1903, W.E.B. DuBois offered America and the world the idea of the African American’s “two-ness.” According to DuBois, the wrenching split into American and Negro halves involved the existence of “two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideas in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.”¹ More than 90 percent of all African Americans lived at that time in the South, the region most thoroughly associated with slavery, racial segregation, and racial violence. Understanding with poignant clarity the national dimensions of the African American dilemma, DuBois sought to explicate how the southern region had created this double consciousness.

The African American encounter with America was at once complex and painfully simple. After all, for the first 250 years of their history in North America, black people had been forced migrants and forced laborers; during the next 130 years, they endured political, economic, educational, and residential deprivation. The active role so often played by the state in the subjugation of American blacks was a decisive factor in how they lived, thought, and interacted with the world around them. Limited in their options by the oppressive nature of the surrounding white society, African Americans found ways to accommodate and resist, to go along with the dominant status quo while at the same time seeking to subvert it on their own terms. In recent times, of course, changing historical circumstances, which they in part helped to bring about, have increasingly shortened the distance between the two halves of the African American “soul.”

Jews in the American South also experienced a conflict between two sets of demands. They too found themselves “torn asunder” by irreconcilable expectations, and an inner war shaped their behavior and their attitudes. But theirs constituted a different kind of doubleness from that of African Americans. Jews found themselves caught

between the desire to live well and the demands imposed upon them by American Judaism, which emphasized social justice as an essential element of their tradition.

How are we to understand the Jews' doubleness in the heartland of slavery and the seedbed of racial segregation? How did Jews experience their particular kind of bifurcation? How did their Jewishness and their southernness pull them in opposite directions, which forced them, too, to live "within the veil"?² How, despite their prosperity and acceptance, did they cope with having to be constantly on guard lest they disrupt the very status quo that made possible their success?

At first glance, the experiences of no two groups could be so utterly dissimilar as that of African Americans and Jews in the South, and offering DuBois' comment on the tragedy of black people in America as an introduction to thinking about southern Jews may seem to border on the absurd, or even the obscene.

For one thing, African Americans were an enormous portion of the southern population. In some counties and regions, they even constituted the majority—although, except during the brief interlude of Reconstruction, they enjoyed none of the benefits of numbers. Jews, in contrast, were a minuscule entity in the South. They created nodes of Jewish life in the larger cities of the post-Civil War region (Atlanta, Nashville, Richmond, Memphis, Charlotte, New Orleans, and Birmingham), as well as in smaller communities in the deep hinterlands of the rural South, where a few Jewish families would cluster near each other, each operating a "Jew store," as these shops were called.³ But their numbers were always insignificant. As of 1878, the largest southern Jewish community was that of New Orleans, with 5,000 Jews; followed by Louisville, Kentucky, with 2,500; Montgomery, Alabama, with 600; Atlanta, with 525; and Norfolk, Virginia, with 500. By 1927, these numbers had risen to 12,500 in Louisville; 11,000 in Atlanta; 9,000 in New Orleans; 7,800 in Norfolk; and 3,000 in Montgomery.⁴ Percentages add drama and meaning to these figures: as of 1927, Jews made up 0.5 percent of Alabama's population; 0.36 percent of Mississippi's; 0.28 percent of North Carolina's; and 0.73 percent of Georgia's. Ten years later, the proportions had dropped, to 0.42 percent, 0.23 percent, and 0.21 percent—only Georgia's Jewish presence went up slightly, to 0.77 percent. In that year, as measured by the *American Jewish Yearbook*, the southern state with the largest concentration of Jews was Florida—but even there, the percentage (1.27) was negligible.⁵

More important than their numbers, Jews were white; and unlike blacks, they arrived in the South, from the 18th century onward, because they *chose* to go there. Since the law never recognized them as a "class," their options were not limited, nor were they deprived of or restricted in their rights of citizenship.⁶ In a society based on the fundamental goal of preserving "white domination," Jews, as phenotypically white, had a reasonable chance to blend in from the outset.⁷

Early on, Jews in the South were elected aldermen, state legislators, mayors, and representatives to Congress. Jewish men sat on juries and decided the fate of their Christian "peers." They met and socialized with their Christian counterparts in social clubs and lodges. No laws specifically pertained to them or circumscribed their options for living, learning, and working as they chose. They never felt the sting of the whip, nor did the chains of bondage or peonage weigh them down as they planted themselves in "this happy land," as Rabbi Gustav Poznanski characterized Charles-

ton, South Carolina in 1841.⁸ They never confronted schools, water fountains, public bathrooms, or lunch counters with the word “Jews” emblazoned upon them as stigmas of inferiority.

As individuals, Jews came into and moved about the South as they pleased. Indeed, Jewish peddlers and merchants were welcomed as the bearers of needed and desired goods. The presence of Jews also signified economic progress and upward mobility in a region characterized by a notoriously low standard of living. The *Atlanta Daily Herald*, an organ of the “New South,” a movement bent on upgrading the region and making it part of the juggernaut of the nation’s economic development of the late 19th century, glowed with pride over the fact that some Jews had settled in the city. “We congratulate ourselves,” read an editorial in the paper, “because nothing is so indicative of a city’s progress as to see an influx of Jews who come with the intention of living with you and especially as they buy property and build among you, because they are a thrifty and progressive people.”⁹ Similarly, as the state and region were licking the wounds of defeat in 1866, the *Richmond Whig* noted that the Jewish influx into the South might be seen as a harbinger of hope and recovery. “We hail their presence in the Southern States as an auspicious sign,” the newspaper proclaimed, adding that

a more industrious . . . class of the population does not exist. They interfere with no one, mind their own business, observe their religious ceremonies, and pursue their peculiar enjoyments and indulgences. We hope they may never leave us. When they do, we shall begin to fear that we are giving over to ruin.¹⁰

To be sure, there were also the familiar cadences of jealousy and resentment. Chronicling the ways in which the region recovered from the humiliation of defeat, historian Robert Somers observed in 1871 that in the post-Civil War South, “much of the shop keeping business is conducted by sharp, active young men of Jewish aspect,” who made a profit of 100 or even 200 percent by selling to the once regal and now impoverished planters.¹¹ Anti-Jewish sentiments were expressed mainly in times of economic or social crisis.

For most of their residency in the South, Jews indeed earned more and lived better than average. Many had arrived as relatively new immigrants from Europe and began quite humbly, but most achieved a degree of prosperity. Even the poorest of the small-town Jewish shopkeepers, the owners of tiny, ramshackle dry goods stores, never sank as low economically as the majority of southerners, white or black. While Jews never joined the ranks of the planter and landowning elite, they enjoyed a comfortable existence and never shared in the endemic poverty that was “a continuous and conspicuous feature of southern existence.”¹²

Overall, then, the Jews’ position in the socioeconomic order was not far from those with the most resources who held the reins of political power. Before the Civil War, Jews were slave-owners: according to the 1820 census, nearly 80 percent of 223 southern Jewish households included at least one slave.¹³ In the following century, a number of community studies demonstrated the close proximity of Jews to the local elite. Allison Davis’ co-authored work *Deep South*, for instance, described an era when “the wholesale merchants . . . who once rivaled the banks as credit agencies

for planters were, with one exception, Jews."¹⁴ John Dollard, writing about Mississippi in the 1930s, noted that the "most vigorous competition which the white southern merchants experience is from Jews entering the community."¹⁵ The pseudonymous community of Kent in John Morland's study of 1958 uncovered a strata of Jewish mill owners, while Liston Pope recounted how the mills of Gastonia, North Carolina annually produced tons of cotton that was spun in factories owned and managed by Jews.¹⁶

Southern society, then, welcomed the Jews and offered to them a set of political and economic options that made them among the best-off, most integrated, and widely accepted Jews in the world. Not surprisingly, this minority did little to disturb the prevalent status quo, racial or otherwise. They went out of their way to praise the region—"our beloved country," as intoned by New Orleans' Rabbi James K. Gutheim during the Civil War, for which about 3,000 southern Jews took up arms.¹⁷ With the loss of the war and the right of white people to own slaves, southern Jews were among those who participated in a frenzy of memorializing the "lost cause." The daughters and sons of Israel contributed their share to the creation of a mythic history of a genteel and noble slave-owning civilization destroyed by the rapacious Union army. Consider, for example, Moses Ezekiel, scion of a distinguished Richmond Jewish family and a well-known sculptor. He took heed of the words of Robert E. Lee, who told the young artist that he had a responsibility to "prove to the world that [even] if we did not succeed in our struggle, we were worthy of success."¹⁸ Ezekiel went on to create a series of monumental statues. In 1903, his statue *Virginia Mourning Her Dead* (reminiscent of "Rachel Mourning Her Children") was dedicated on the campus of his alma mater, Virginia Military Academy, and in 1913, President Woodrow Wilson, the first southern-born president since before the Civil War, dedicated Ezekiel's monument to the Confederate war dead at Arlington National Cemetery.

After the Civil War, most Jews who lived in the South went along with the evolving racial system that, by the 1890s, saw the beginning of the "strange career of Jim Crow."¹⁹ In the main, they ran their stores, made a comfortable living for themselves and for their children, and associated with other Jews in the synagogues and B'nai B'rith lodges that sprang up wherever groups of Jews clustered. What they thought about the racial system we cannot know with any degree of certainty. They made few statements that indicated discomfort with the rigid segregation of life and the unequal distribution of rights and resources. We have no stirring stories of southern Jews attempting to snatch African Americans away from lynch mobs, nor do we know of Jewish passengers on southern streetcars who demanded that black women and men enjoy the right to sit wherever they pleased. Jewish owners of department stores, a sizable group in the southern cities, maintained the same segregated lunchrooms and rest rooms as did non-Jews. By the 1950s and 1960s, according to Eli Evans, a historian of southern Jewish life, synagogue search committees typically asked prospective rabbis what their stance was on civil rights. "I will do nothing to endanger the Jewish community," Evans asserted, was the only correct answer. Evans also quoted Rabbi Charles Martinband (who went on to take a deviant and courageous stand in the 1960s), composer of the following ditty:

Come weal,
Come woe,
My status is quo.²⁰

In short, Jews active in their community made no common cause with African Americans, nor did they cast their lot with them in the very long struggle against racism.

Jewish homes, moreover, employed beves of black servants—slaves before the passage of the 13th Amendment, “help” afterwards—who lived at the beck and call of their employers, engaged in laundering, cooking (including kosher foods prepared in conventional East and Central European Jewish styles), and raising children. Sheila Suberman, who grew up in Concordia, Tennessee, where her father ran a “Jew store,” has recorded her memories of life in the family kitchen, dominated both by her mother, who attempted to maintain the dietary laws, and by Lizzie Maud, the cook. As Suberman recalled, Lizzie Maud was always available, and “my mother actually had it over New York Jews (those who cared about it, at any rate) in one way: Lizzie Maud’s wood-and-coal stove stayed banked and glowing at all hours on all days and my mother would therefore need no *Shabbos goy*” to keep the home fires burning.²¹

No Jewish newspapers published in the South—with the notable exception of Harry Golden’s semi-humorous *Carolina Israelite*—editorialized against the ubiquitous denial of life, liberty, and property that regularly plagued African Americans. Such publications as *Jewish South* (1877–1879, Atlanta); *Jewish Enquirer* (1894, New Orleans); *Jewish Sentiment* (1896–1901, Atlanta), and the *American Jewish Review* (1913–1916, Atlanta) took no stands against prevailing practices. Southern Jewish public officials evinced no attitudes that betokened a different kind of consciousness about race, and in nearly every measurable way, Jews conformed to the norms and etiquette of daily life.

Some individual southern Jews went so far as to speak passionately for the white South. Edwin Moise and H.H. De Leon, for example, joined the Red Shirts, a Reconstruction-era organization dedicated to restoring the Democrats to their rightful place in control of southern governments.²² Others helped to construct the southern racial system; by definition, any Jew who sat in a southern legislature, city council, board of education, mayor’s office, or judge’s bench helped to make the edifice of segregation possible.

In the desegregation crisis that began in the 1950s, some Jews joined the defiantly racist White Citizens’ Councils. Historians who have documented this phenomenon have noted that those Jews who joined did so, by and large, out of fear of economic retribution or harassment, and thus maintained only a token affiliation. But a few—Al Binder in Jackson, Mississippi; Solomon Blatt, at one time the speaker of the house in the South Carolina legislature; Sol Tepper of Selma, Alabama; and Georgia’s Charles Bloch, a close confidant of arch-segregationist Senator Richard Russell—have been appropriately labeled “Jewish segregationists.” Clive Webb, the historian who has studied most thoroughly the issue of southern Jews in the context of racial segregation and the struggle against it, commented that “what is perhaps more significant” than the existence of passionate Jewish segregationists is the fact that “they were so few and far between.”²³

It did not escape the attention of black southerners that Jews in the South enjoyed the benefits of whiteness. After all, African Americans shopped in stores owned by Jews, worked for Jews as domestics and sometimes as clerks, and took note of how Jews had entered the region poor and had subsequently prospered.²⁴ They also heard from their own clergy and educators about how the once-despised Jews were now reaping the rewards of hard work, education, thrift, and (usually left unsaid) their white skins.²⁵ The black press abounded with articles about Jews, their economic prowess, their group loyalties, and their penchant for clean living and business acumen. From the outside, it seemed to blacks that southern Jews had traveled the long road from (biblical) slavery to freedom with tremendous success and, in a short time in the South, had achieved everything they had wanted.

Yet there was a price tag attached to the Jews' achievement: the maintenance of a low profile. In their general silence and occasional public acts of ardently embracing the rhetoric of racism, Jews behaved very much like members of other "tolerated" minority groups in the South, including the Italian, Greek, Slavic, and Syrian-Lebanese immigrants who began to trickle into the region in the post-Civil War period.²⁶ Like the Jews, these immigrants and their children took advantage of the lack of a strong retail infrastructure in the South, eventually occupying their own specific economic niches. They too generally prospered and earned the basic respect of their native-born, white Protestant neighbors. Whereas Wilbur J. Cash, in his classic *The Mind of the South*, linked the spread of the "restaurants of the Greeks" with the "stores of the Jews"—both institutions being noticeable for the alien status of their owners "even when their fathers had fought for the Confederacy"²⁷—he documented little evidence of overt hostility against either group. In her ethnographic study of "Cottonville" in the 1930s, Hortense Powdermaker noted the striking similarities in behavior exhibited by all of the 40-odd foreign-born residents of a small town in the Mississippi Delta: along with a few Italians and Chinese merchants, Russian Jews sought to conduct their business without drawing attention to their non-native origins.²⁸ Likewise, Lewis Killian, in a 1985 study, *White Southerners*, discerned great similarities between the Jews and Catholics of the South, both of whom he labeled "marginal white southerners."²⁹ These religious communities took on what yet another historian has called a "protective cultural coloration."³⁰

In common with Sicilian Catholics or Greek Orthodox immigrants, Jews felt no call to challenge the basic structure of everyday life in the region that had made a place for them in its economic order. They voted, enjoyed the basic protection of the law, and went about their business, rarely noticed for where they came from or what language they spoke behind closed doors. Their children went to school as white youngsters, and they had full access to all the public accommodations reserved for whites. Indeed, like their co-immigrants from steerage, Jews could hide behind the mask of their whiteness. While at various times individual southerners claimed that Jews (or Greeks, or Italians) lacked some of the basic attributes of white people, the lack of any concerted effort to lower their status was significant. White southerners made no real attempt to strip any of these groups of the privileges that went with the right skin color.

The case of the Chinese in the South offers yet another case of a foreign group that planted itself in the region where color mattered more than anything. Here too we can

discern the power of the black-white chasm, which so helped Jews to become accepted and prosperous members of the South. The history of the Chinese in the Mississippi Delta and in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Alabama demonstrates that a group of people who were stigmatized by most Americans for their lack of whiteness could, under southern conditions, effectively make claims for it.

The earliest Chinese immigrants came to the South in the aftermath of the end of slavery. Southern cotton plantation owners were in need of a labor force to replace the freedmen, many of whom were abandoning their old homes in search of independent economic opportunities. A few thousand Chinese laborers were brought to the South from California. By and large, however, the experiment did not work, and many Chinese laborers drifted away.

But those who stayed, particularly in the Mississippi Delta, found a slot for themselves in the local economy. They opened grocery stores, primarily in small towns, where they sold almost exclusively to African American customers. The Chinese-owned grocery trade persisted from the end of the 19th century well into the latter half of the 20th, and in towns along the levees such as Greenville and Cleveland, and in the counties of Bolivar, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Yazoo, and Quitman, small Chinese-owned stores became familiar markers of the local landscape. According to one study, the “Mississippi grocer has been more successful than his Northern counterpart.”³¹

Over time, the Chinese of the Delta came to be accepted by local whites as exemplary citizens: solid businessmen who contributed to the common good. In 1965—a year during which Mississippi considered itself a battleground of black-white racial strife—John Wing, a Chinese grocer in Jonestown, was elected mayor. During the long, hot era of racial conflagration in the 1960s, Chinese men received a warm welcome into various local Junior Chambers of Commerce and Rotary Clubs.³²

According to one elderly informant interviewed by Robert Seto Quan: “We Chinese just wanted to make it in the Delta. We didn’t try to bother nobody. We just wanted to make a living and to be accepted, that’s all.” Being accepted, however, meant being “treated different from the *Lo Mok* [blacks].”³³ Some kind of affirmative behavior was required in order to achieve these goals, particularly given the fact that the Chinese historically had been excluded from entry into the United States by virtue of race and had, in some parts of the country, endured hostility, segregation, and violence.

Thus, the Mississippi Chinese made a series of decisions that effectively resulted in their aligning themselves with the white side of the regional racial equation. First, recognizing the power of Protestantism in the region, the Chinese transformed themselves into Christians. The Chinese Baptist Church of Cleveland, founded in 1930, became the chief locus of Chinese communal life in the region. Although at various points in their history they attempted to create and sustain other kinds of social and cultural venues, churches and Christian institutions came to overshadow all others.³⁴ By building their communal life around a Baptist church, the Mississippi Chinese demonstrated their desire to adopt at least the outward forms of regional respectability.

James Loewen notes that the Chinese in Mississippi “conspicuously structured” their communal practices “to replicate their white counterparts.” They also con-

sciously depicted themselves in ways that highlighted their difference from blacks. They consistently emphasized their hard work, thrift, high standards of sexual strictness, and the educational diligence of their children. According to one ethnographic account, "in the presence of whites, the [Chinese] grocer would joke about blacks, telling whites of the Cantonese term for 'nigger' and relating amusing requests of illiterate sharecroppers."³⁵

Their organizations and associations, moreover, assiduously avoided forging political alliances with African Americans. In the main, the Chinese stayed away from politics, finding no reason to make common cause with their black customers and neighbors. Particularly in the stormy years after the Second World War that culminated in the freedom struggles of the 1960s, Chinese men and women, and the clubs and churches that they maintained, stayed on the sidelines of a crisis that was making headlines around the world. Although Itta Bene, Clarksdale, Cleveland, Greenville, Greenwood, and Grenada were all Delta places whose names became part of the history of the "freedom summer" of 1964, the small Chinese communities there remained aloof from the struggle for desegregation.³⁶

For the Mississippi Chinese, the attempt to be "as white as possible" proved successful, whereas in much of the United States—California, in particular—it was not.³⁷ Until the 1940s, federal law denied individuals born in China the right to become citizens. In Mississippi itself, the Chinese had one direct and painful confrontation with the way that color and rights coincided. The state constitution of 1890 mandated that white children and those of "colored races" (in the plural) could not attend school together. Although the Chinese at the time were too few in number to have motivated this policy (in all likelihood, they barely registered in the consciousness of the lawmakers), the reality of the law presented a quandary to Chinese parents in the Delta. Clearly one solution would have been for Chinese children to attend the "colored" schools side by side with the African Americans. But most Chinese parents rightly considered the black schools, which were barely funded by the state, to be woefully inadequate; of equal importance, they did not want their children incorporated into the world of black Mississippi, with all the accompanying stigma of inferiority.

In some towns such as Rosedale and Louise, Chinese children went to white schools. Where their numbers were particularly minuscule, the apparent breach of the law caused no problems. Seeing this loophole, some Chinese families started sending their children to live with friends and kin in those communities that had ignored the distinction between Chinese and whites. But when the number of Chinese students in the white schools reached what local officials considered to be the tipping point, the practice was halted and the youngsters were sent away.

In the fall of 1924, a Chinese grocer from Rosedale named Gong Lum went to court and sued for the right for his daughter to attend the white school. The case eventually went to Mississippi's supreme court, with lawyers arguing, among other things, that the state had provided no facilities for "the education of children of Chinese descent." Notwithstanding, Gong Lum lost his case and later moved with his two daughters to Elaine, Arkansas. In a few isolated places, for brief periods of time, separate Chinese schools received state funding. Other Delta Chinese reacted as did Gong Lum by relocating (some of them to Memphis, a southern community that, at least for educa-

tional purposes, considered the Chinese to be white). In some Mississippi communities, Chinese children continued to attend white schools, whereas in others, they basically had no formal education.³⁸

The history of the Chinese in the Mississippi Delta demonstrates how the region demanded that “others” take sides. In order to be southerners, to live in peace, and to achieve some economic comfort, Jews, Italians, Lebanese, and Chinese outsiders had to find ways to announce their whiteness. The region made no room for ambiguity, and it made clear every day, year in and year out, what being black and white meant in terms of resources and rewards. Although it took the Chinese several decades to reap the full benefits of whiteness, they eventually did so. Any criticism of the status quo, however, could have jeopardized their slow and steady progress. Thus, for the Chinese, the benefits of going along with white mores far outweighed any moral points to be scored by speaking out.

The example of the Chinese offers a powerful lens through which to see the history of southern Jews. While the two groups certainly had a different past, there were a number of instructive parallels. Jews were allowed to live undisturbed, and indeed were encouraged to rise into the lofty rungs of the economy, so long as they respected and honored the fundamental divisions in the social order.

Like the Chinese and all other outsider groups in the South, Jews had to find ways to go along with southern ideas about identity in general, not just racial identity (central though that was). The Chinese, as noted, turned the corner in their quest for whiteness in the 1930s by becoming Baptist, henceforth bringing their various social and cultural activities into the church setting. Jews too could be understood, at least in part, as a piece in the South’s relatively unvariegated mosaic by having their identity presented through the medium of religion rather than through organizations and associations emphasizing peoplehood or ethnicity.

Although in the period prior to and during the American Revolution the South had been a hotbed of deism and disbelief, by the time regional lines became indelibly drawn around the slavery question, it had been transformed into a bastion of evangelical Protestantism. By the middle of the 19th century, it was not just solidly Democratic (which it would remain until the last quarter of the 20th century) but also solidly Protestant, usually of a fundamentalist and evangelical nature. According to one historian, there were many counties in the South where no known non-Protestant had ever lived.³⁹

H.L. Mencken went to an extreme when he described the South as the “bunghole of the United States, a cesspool of Baptists, a miasma of Methodism, snake-charmers . . . syphilitic evangelists,”⁴⁰ but he was correct in locating much of the region’s identity in religion. *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, a more nuanced source than Mencken, made essentially the same point: the South was “a religious region,” and biblical literalism pervaded much of local culture.⁴¹

The religious rubric into which Jews, like the Chinese, had to fit was a kind of behavioral contract. Jews could gain the respect of their neighbors by acting out their culture in temples and synagogues. They could invite their neighbors to dedications of sanctuaries and other kinds of public events, in this way demonstrating how very little separated them from one another. In fact, one of the first books written by an American Jew to explain Judaism to Christians was written by a Memphis rabbi,

Simon Tuska, and titled *Stranger in the Sanctuary* (1854). Squeezing Judaism into a purely religious channel gave southern Jews a way of fitting in without drawing the attention of their hosts to other aspects of their differentness.

Consequently, far more than their sisters and brothers in the North, southern Jews showcased who they were through the aegis of houses of worship. Rather than creating a wide range of Jewish institutions (most of which, in the North, existed outside of the religious sphere), southern Jews made everything ancillary to formal, synagogue-bound religion. They were loath to express ideas that emphasized Jewish peoplehood or that celebrated Jewish ethnicity. Southern Jews had higher rates of synagogue membership than other American Jews, and their sanctuaries provided them with *the* way to be Jewish. Missing in southern Jewish life were the contentious but creative debates that riveted the rest of the Jewish world: peoplehood versus religion, culture versus ritualized worship. Of necessity, Jews in the South became one-dimensional Jews—members of a religious denomination, pure and simple.

In a dominant culture that understood religion to be the only way in which difference (other than the black/white dichotomy) could be tolerated, tacit concurrence with the racial etiquette of the region was a *sine qua non*. Since the era of the American Revolution, the South had made the defense of the region and its "peculiar institution" a prerequisite for toleration; over time, all acts and words came to be judged according to how they helped or harmed the white southern way of life. The region, its institutions, and its cultural practices were designed to filter out voices that even obliquely questioned an arrangement of life that was based on the superior status of whites vis-à-vis blacks.

Preservation of this way of life was built on a number of key principles. For one thing, words were defined as both powerful and dangerous: what people thought was less important than what they said. Individuals with dissenting opinions learned that the South demanded, if not loyalty, then at least silence. In the pre-Civil War era, southern legislatures placed bounties upon the heads of northern abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison and the Tappan brothers, threatening to arrest them should they cross state lines. The South Carolina legislature offered rewards to anyone apprehending individuals who distributed Garrison's *Liberator* or David Walker's *Appeal*. Mobs broke into post offices and seized abolitionist newspapers, burning them in public bonfires. Southern postmasters went through the mail, tossing out offending publications; women and men who were known to be opposed to slavery were made to leave their homes, lashed in public, or even murdered.⁴²

In the post-Reconstruction South, the suppression of free speech and the stifling of dissent continued unabated. Books, magazines (and, by the turn of the 20th century, movies) were judged by how far they deviated from standards and how profoundly they threatened regional mores. Efforts to suppress the flow of "outside" ideas became particularly intense in the early decades of the 20th century, as African Americans began to move north. The opening up of economic opportunities in New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit, Newark, and other northern cities set in motion a great migration.⁴³ Once settled in the North, black migrants encouraged the further migration of friends and family still in the South. The gap between conditions of life in the two regions became the stuff of family and community discussion.

Exacerbating the threat was the northern black press. Newspapers such as the *Chicago Defender* depicted life in the Illinois metropolis as replete with political and educational opportunities and abounding in heretofore unimaginable material goods. The cycle of violence and discrimination visited upon black people in the South was also scrupulously covered. Both of these journalistic thrusts were perceived as endangering southern stability. The fear was that the white South would lose a good part of its labor force through migration, with those blacks who remained no longer accepting the racial status quo. Accordingly, in some southern communities, law enforcement officials kept lists of black subscribers to the *Defender*, and copies of the newspaper were seized and destroyed. In July 1919 in Longview, Texas, an angry white mob tried to grab an African American teacher who had sent an article to the *Defender* that had chronicled a gruesome lynching of the previous month.⁴⁴

While African Americans were clearly the chief targets of white southern efforts to suppress free speech and stifle dissenting ideas, white people, particularly “marginal” whites, also had to beware. In 1947, to cite one of many examples, a South Carolina judge ruled that the South Carolina Democratic primary could not exclude blacks. He was not only denounced statewide as a traitor to the region, but he and his family suffered social exclusion—and threats—in their hometown of Charleston.⁴⁵

Notwithstanding, a small class of southern white liberals did emerge in the early 20th century. Notable for their tiny numbers, they tended to come from the most elite and well-established families. Among them were some college presidents and newspaper publishers, a few elected officials, and a handful of writers. They were shielded to a degree by virtue of their high social positions, but they had only a minimal impact on local politics and practice. With regard to all other “newcomers” to the South—Jews among them—dissent would not be tolerated. C. Vann Woodward, considered to be the greatest of southern historians, described the South in 1953 as an isolated region.⁴⁶ Others noted the South’s “limited option culture,”⁴⁷ and more recently, Joel Williamson has seen in the 20th-century South a pervasive “paranoid style,” in which any “agitation on the part of black people was not the result of local conditions, but rather of alien agents.”⁴⁸

For Jews, then, giving voice to any passionate and overt critique of the southern way of life was tantamount to putting their comfort or even safety in jeopardy. Should they criticize the system, there was a real possibility that their neighbors would brutally turn on them—as in fact happened on a number of occasions, especially in the years following the Civil War. During the war itself, Jews were sporadically accused of shirking their duty to the Confederacy and of conniving as war profiteers to impoverish the region. “Will the government leave us helpless in the hands of all these Jews,” the *Richmond Enquirer* asked rhetorically during the war.⁴⁹ “Us”—the citizens of the city, state, and region—presumably did not include the Jews who lived there as well. During this period, anti-Jewish rhetoric resonated in the South as the fighting brought about civilian distress and shortages of goods.

Indeed, throughout the history of the South, an inextricable bond existed between the presence of anti-Jewish talk and downturns in the region’s economic vitality. The populist crusade of the late 19th century, spurred in great part by the devastation of the Panic of 1893, played its part in making Jews aware of the contingency of their acceptance. In the 1890s in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana (all states hard hit

by the depression), Jewish merchants were not merely accused of raping the region but were also subject to acts of terrorism and violence as "night riders" burned Jewish property and destroyed homes and stores.⁵⁰

The Leo Frank affair stands as the premier act of violence visited upon southern Jewry. The false arrest for the murder of 13-year-old Mary Phagan, the rigged trial, the guilty verdict, and finally the lynching of this young northern Jew in 1915 sent a collective chill down the spines of southern Jews. Frank's Jewishness automatically marked him in the Christian South, as did his status as a factory manager in a region that had gone kicking and screaming into the industrial revolution of the early 20th century. His being a city man (New York and then Atlanta) did not help, either. All in all, according to the minister of Mary Phagan's church, Frank was "a victim worthy to pay for the crime."⁵¹

Decades later, antisemitic rhetoric once again resounded. In the late 1940s, for instance, the Confederate Daughters of America circulated a letter claiming that "nearly all the Communists in America are Jews, and . . . most of the funds and agitators used in stirring up your Southern Negroes are Jewish in origin."⁵² The White Citizens' Councils, formed in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1954 that declared segregated schools unconstitutional, regularly passed out anti-Jewish literature.⁵³ In each southern community affected by the civil rights tumult, someone issued a pamphlet, mimeographed a broadside, or gave a speech that made it clear that Jews were the culprits who had destroyed the white South's comfortable way of life.

Examples of anti-Jewish rhetoric in the South of the 1950s and 1960s could fill several books. "Jews behind Race Mixing," proclaimed a circular put out by the Christian Anti-Jewish Party, a splinter group founded in Atlanta in the 1950s. *Thunderbolt*, a widely circulated broadside, claimed in 1961 that "the Jews have long believed that they would have to integrate Atlanta before they could integrate the rest of the South," while a pamphlet appearing in Little Rock, Arkansas during the school desegregation crisis of 1957 informed readers that "Mr. Jew does not have the guts to do his own fighting, but through sly and insidious agitation, is trying to stir up the gullible Negro to do the dirty work for him."⁵⁴ Words, moreover, sometimes evolved into deeds. In 1956, Rabbi Stanley Brav of Jackson, Mississippi was assaulted for having testified that Mississippi's powerful Senator Theodore Bilbo—a well-known antisemite—had launched a campaign of intimidation against black voters who tried to participate in the 1946 Democratic primary.⁵⁵ The following year, a rash of synagogue bombings began, which lasted for close to a decade as the civil rights movement gained momentum.⁵⁶

To be sure, southern antisemitism was episodic. It never emerged as a dominant factor of life, nor was it ever manifested as institutional discrimination. Rather, it loomed as a specter of potential violence, made real just often enough to persuade Jews not to break any of the well-established racial taboos. Lewis Killian commented in 1985 that "there has been enough latent anti-Semitism in the South to make good southerners out of many Jews."⁵⁷ A southern Jewish woman, four generations in the region, made a similar comment in the 1950s: "Anti-Semitism is always right around the corner."⁵⁸

The profile of the Jews as good southerners who saw no evil, heard no evil, and spoke no evil was not universally true. Not all Jews were absolutely obedient at all

times. Notably, a number of southern rabbis, from the end of the 19th century, found ways to speak out. In 1899, for instance, Rabbi Joseph Silverman of Richmond condemned lynching and called for a congressional investigation of the growing practice.⁵⁹ Max Heller and Emil Leipziger of New Orleans, and David Marx of Atlanta, among others, exerted the moral leadership that they believed Judaism to have imposed upon them. The biographies of such southern rabbis as Emmet Frank, David Ben-Ami, Charles Martinband, Perry Nussbaum, Jacob Rothschild, and Julian Feibelman offer revealing insights into Jewish life in the context of the oppressive South.⁶⁰

Personal anguish and soul-searching preceded the activities of maverick southern rabbis. Almost universally, they came from the ranks of Reform—the dominant form of southern Judaism—which, having dispensed with halakhah as inappropriate for the modern age and having declared the idea of the Jews as a separate nation meaningless in a democratic society, focused instead on the teachings of the Prophets. The three arms of the Reform movement, Hebrew Union College, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, all concurred that Judaism excelled over all other faiths in its ethical vision of making the world a better place, and that this notion of repairing society gave Jews the right to consider themselves a chosen people. David Einhorn, a rabbi and active abolitionist who helped lay the philosophic groundwork of Reform, declared in 1869 that the “Messianic goal of Israel is not the restoration of the old Jewish state . . . but the union of all men as children of God.”⁶¹ The Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 stated:

In accordance with the spirit of Mosaic Legislation which strives to regulate the relation between rich and poor, we deem it our duty to participate in the great task of modern times, to solve on the basis of justice and righteousness the problems presented by the contrasts and evils of the present day organization of society.⁶²

This declaration having been established as central to Reform Judaism, some southern rabbis felt called upon to act. They understood, however, that given the nature of white southern society, they would be perceived as speaking not just for themselves but for their congregations as well. The men and women whom they married, buried, led in services, and otherwise ministered to were, in the main, quite ordinary people whose basic goal was to be left alone. Yet when rabbis such as Nussbaum or Martinband declared their support of civil rights to be a private view and not that of their congregants, their disclaimers were interpreted by white southern Christians as disingenuous. As clergymen, rabbis by definition were considered to be the voice of their temples; hence they implicated the Jewish community as a whole in their statements and actions.

Both the outpouring of anti-Jewish rhetoric and the synagogue bombings made it clear to the rabbis that their words affected their congregants quite directly. Taking an oppositional stand meant not only the expression of moral sensibilities or political principles but possibly putting an entire congregation in harm's way. Thus, while a number of rabbis eventually condemned lynching, decried the poll tax, called for an end to legalized segregation, or merely accepted the inevitability of Supreme Court decisions, they were torn by the need to safeguard their congregants' security, as opposed to the Prophets' imperative to “do right.”

Ironically, because southern society venerated religion, the rabbis actually possessed a bit more space in which to operate than did department store owners, mill managers, or grocers. To some extent, rabbis could wrap themselves in the cloth of their religiosity and derive a degree of protection from their status as clergymen. Similarly, a number of Jewish women in the South, enjoying the benefits of both color and gender, could challenge the status quo in ways that their husbands, brothers, and fathers could not. In a society that venerated white women as the symbol of sexual purity and gentility, some Jewish women used their privileges to help bring about change.

Women's activities were generally dismissed as frivolous and purely voluntary. Neither taken too seriously nor defined as political actors, women were able to engage in acts that transgressed the edifice of racial segregation and oppression. For instance, low-key interracial efforts involving black and white women often grew out of activities aimed at nurturing children, which appeared to be unthreatening and therefore somewhat acceptable. Gertrude Weil of Goldsboro, North Carolina, organized a Bi-Racial Council in 1963, while Myra Dreifus of Memphis created a special program to provide meals for poor black children who were suffering from chronic malnutrition.⁶³

From the 1940s, individual southern Jewish women stood in a kind of regional vanguard against segregation, disenfranchisement, and racial violence. The Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching, founded in 1936, had a number of active Jewish members.⁶⁴ Rebecca Gershon of Montgomery was a leader of the Southern Interstate Conference, another group that took up the crusade against lynching.⁶⁵ Similarly, Jewish women's organizations, including the regional and local chapters of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods and the National Council of Jewish Women, took up the anti-lynching cause.

What would have happened if a majority of southern Jews—not just a handful of rabbis and women activists—had applied the words of Isaiah and Micah to the racial situation in which they lived and from which they benefited? Would violence against Jews really have escalated had more southern Jews been outspoken? Such questions, of course, cannot be answered. Nor can we say with any certainty how the history of Jews in the South would have developed had the South and its racial practices not been the object of *northern* Jewish concern for almost the entire 20th century.

For more than six decades, northern Jewish organizations, journals of public opinion, and individual northern Jews had singled out the South as a viper's nest of racism and a place in need of radical reform. Also taking up the cause was the American Jewish press, both in Yiddish and in English. With its passionate rhetoric concerning the "human beasts" of the South and "blood-thirsty slave-mongers" who were "worse than Cossacks" and whose behavior brought shame to America, the Yiddish press may have been annoying to southern Jews.⁶⁶ However, written in a foreign language, it was far less threatening than the English-language press. Among the publications taking up the campaign against southern racism was the widely-read *Israelite*, founded by Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise of Cincinnati. In one editorial published in 1919, the recently passed Prohibition amendment provided the springboard for an all-out attack on Southern racial violence:

The burning of “niggers,” who by the way, are just as much American citizens as their fellow white countrymen, or hanging and shooting them, without “due process of law,” guaranteed by the national constitution is surely as grave an offense as making or selling whisky. Our national legislative body could find a way to establish prohibition, why can it not do so much for the protection of the lives of American men and women from murderous mobs?⁶⁷

Another northern Jewish magazine, *Opinion* (New York), noted in 1933 an “especial pride” in the fact that a Jew was the chief counsel of the “Scottsboro boys” (nine black youths accused of raping two white girls). “Both as a member of such a group and as an inheritor of his own tradition,” the magazine noted, “it is inevitable that the Jew should take active and leading parts in all such struggles.”⁶⁸ For most southern Jews, however, the fact that the chief counsel’s name was Leibowitz was more a cause for concern than a source of pride.

The degree to which northern Jews were perceived in the South as troublemakers, agents of change, and disturbers of the peace caused southern Jews a good deal of anxiety. In dramatic contrast to Italian, Greek, Slavic, and Chinese southerners, the Jews felt their position to be compromised by co-ethnics from the North who seemed bent on changing the course of American race relations. Northern Jewish interference, they believed, only jeopardized the equilibrium they lived in—and, in any event, accomplished nothing. This view was shared by others, including sympathetic Christians both white and black. When Hortense Powdermaker embarked on her ethnographic field work in Mississippi, for instance, two black sociologists, Charles Johnson and E. Franklin Frazier, advised her not to reveal her Jewishness to potential informants. Local whites would be suspicious of her because she was a Yankee intellectual woman—but were it to be known that she was Jewish, they would at best refuse to talk to her and at worst could make her life quite unpleasant.⁶⁹

The role played by those Jewish college students and northern rabbis who flocked to the South in the early and middle 1960s is well known. The image of three murdered civil rights workers, Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, and James Chaney, buried in a shallow grave in the Mississippi Delta, became part of the iconography of the 1960s; both Goodman and Schwerner were Jewish northerners. Another well-known image depicted the philosopher Abraham Joshua Heschel participating in the march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama together with Martin Luther King. For white southern Christians at the time, such images confirmed a suspicion that northern Jews had invaded their communities with the intention of bringing their way of life to an end.

Historians and other commentators have come to question the existence of a black-Jewish “alliance” in the 1960s, but there is no doubt that Jews were overrepresented among whites in the civil rights movement. John Dittmer’s recent book, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi*, reads like a kind of Jewish “who’s who” of those who “went South” to participate in voter registration programs, freedom rides, freedom schools, and marches: Bella Abzug, Allard Lowenstein, Paul Cowan, Howard Zinn, Marshall Ganz, Barney Frank, Dorothy Miller, William Kuntzler, Joseph Rauh, Polly Greenberg, Tom Levin, Florence Howe, Mendy Samstein, Emanuel Bloch, and Theodore Bikel.⁷⁰ Indeed, the Jewish presence was so

great that another study had enough material to focus specifically on northern Jewish women who had made the trek down South.⁷¹

With the seemingly endless flow of northern Jews into their communities, southern Jews experienced their greatest era of crisis. Obscurity was no longer possible, and they could no longer continue to distance themselves from the plight of African Americans. The case of the 4,000 Jews who lived in Birmingham during the early 1960s is instructive. In 1963, as national attention was riveted on the city (where police officers met demonstrators with dogs and fire hoses), a contingent of rabbis flew in to express their solidarity with the struggle for equal rights. Movement leaders welcomed them at the airport. But two representatives of the local Jewish community, William Engel and Abe Berkowitz, met with them as well, in an attempt to persuade them to return home. Their pleas went unanswered, and the rabbis became a visible presence at rallies and prayer meetings. Rabbi Richard Rubenstein, for instance, taught the words to "Hineh mah tov" ("how good and pleasant it is for brothers to sit together") to an interracial crowd at the New Pilgrim Baptist Church. The audience, the rabbis among them, stood and linked arms as they sang the familiar Jewish summer camp song.

Birmingham Jews found themselves caught in the vise they had long dreaded. The civil rights movement had launched a boycott of downtown department stores, demanding that facilities—dressing rooms, bathrooms, lunch counters—be desegregated. Jews owned a number of these stores. As they reasoned, if they gave in (partly at the behest of the rabbis), they would engender the ire of their fellow merchants. Yet if they did not accede, business would suffer as customers, both black and white, stayed away from the embattled stores. In May, following weeks of demonstrations and picketing, the Jewish merchants became the first department store owners to desegregate—whereupon what they had feared came to pass. Participants in a Ku Klux Klan rally held on the edge of the city threatened retaliation against those stores that had "sold out our community." At the end of the rally, a brick went through the plate glass window of Emil Hess' Parisian Department Store.⁷²

The southern Jews' concern that their white Christian neighbors would confuse them with northern Jewish "agitators" actually had a history that long predated the active phase of the civil rights struggle. One of the most memorable Jewish figures in early 20th-century southern history was Julius Rosenwald, the president of Sears Roebuck, who embarked on an ambitious campaign to bring public education to southern black children. By the time he died in 1932, the Chicago businessman had made possible the construction and staffing of more than 5,000 schools. In Mississippi alone, 89 percent of all school property that educated black children originated from Rosenwald projects. Rosenwald money also went to provide libraries in black communities (the public libraries were, of course, limited to whites) and to endow black colleges and other institutions of higher learning.⁷³

Most southern jurisdictions at the time refused to provide any education to black children, in line with the belief that learning was dangerous to social and racial stability. Thus, the Rosenwald schools (as they were always referred to) challenged conventional practice and wisdom. Beyond this, however, the particular manner in which Rosenwald made his contributions had a distinctly disruptive effect: he made his

grants only when states agreed to provide matching funds. By his very offer, he forced southern communities into acknowledging that they had an obligation to educate African American youngsters. In some cases, state and local officials refused to go along, and in general, outside observers were struck by the level of hostility manifested toward the school projects. Writing in the 1930s, John Dollard noted that "in some cases there is quite active fear of northern interference. It was reported that in this county [in Mississippi] a number of planters refused to accept Rosenwald money . . . because they feared the money would be followed by attempts at outside influence."⁷⁴

Indeed, it is remarkable how many southern whites who expressed liberal ideas about race became involved in Rosenwald projects. Hortense Powdermaker recalled, for instance, that a lone liberal white school superintendent in Indianola had spent time in the North under the aegis of a Rosenwald fellowship. This man was known in the town as something of a maverick, and it was widely assumed that he had been corrupted by the Rosenwald influence.⁷⁵

Similarly, a small group of German Jewish refugee scholars who went to teach in southern black colleges in the 1930s and 1940s succeeded in shaking up local practices while raising the specter of outside Jewish interference. Ernst Borinski was one of these scholars. Trained as a lawyer, Borinski fled Germany in 1936 and subsequently did a graduate degree in sociology. America's racial dilemma moved him greatly, so much so that he wrote his dissertation on "The Sociology of Judge-Made Law in Civil Rights Cases." In 1947, Borinski accepted a job at Tougaloo College, just outside of Jackson, Mississippi. Settling in the community, he became an activist in the cause of bringing together black and white students (the latter studied at nearby Milsaps College). In the many meetings, seminars, and classes he conducted, Borinski served as a "bridge . . . between the blacks and whites." Not surprisingly, he also earned the opprobrium of state legislators, local officials, journalists, and others who considered him a Communist and troublemaker. Officers of Mississippi's State Sovereignty Commission parked themselves outside the gates of Tougaloo and recorded the license plate numbers of those attending Borinski's integrated "social science forums." He also received numerous death threats. In the end, he ceased conducting his experimental meetings.⁷⁶

Rosenwald as philanthropist and Borinski as teacher offer just two examples in a long line of Jewish activists who, from outside the region, felt compelled to bring about greater racial justice and equality in the South.⁷⁷ What is clear is that these northern Jews vastly complicated the southern Jews' desire to make a living without having undue attention drawn to themselves. We do not really know to what extent the Jews of the South agreed with their co-religionists that lynching, Jim Crow public accommodations, political disenfranchisement, and harsh economic and educational discrimination against African Americans was morally wrong. Nor do we know to what extent, if any, they internalized the message that Judaism compelled sympathy, and indeed empathy, with those who suffered. For the most part, southern Jews kept quiet about everything connected with the South's particular way of life.

So long as racially oppressive practices dominated southern life, so long as southern law and social convention kept race-based structures in place, and so long as southern white Christians demanded acquiescence to the status quo, southern Jews

had no choice but to participate, either directly or indirectly, in the culture of oppression. Going along with the region's racial rules amounted to fulfilling their primary responsibility to look out for themselves and their families. Free to leave the region, some of them undoubtedly did. But those who remained found themselves in a kind of moral straitjacket, with no real means to effectively reconcile the conflicting demands being made of them as southerners and as (mostly) Reform Jews. For their situation to change, the South itself had to be transformed, as it eventually was by the civil rights revolution.

Notes

1. W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: 1903), 11.
2. W.E.B. DuBois, *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* (New York: 1920).
3. See Sheila Suberman, *The Jew Store: A Family Memoir* (Chapel Hill: 1998); Elliott Ashkenazi, *The Business Jews in Louisiana, 1840–1875* (Tuscaloosa: 1988).
4. See Lee Shai Weissbach, "The Jewish Communities of the United States on the Eve of Mass Migration," *American Jewish History* 78, no. 1 (Sept. 1988), 79–108.
5. Tables based on *American Jewish Yearbook* data appear in Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Dale Palsson's *Jews in the South* (Baton Rouge: 1973), 22.
6. In North Carolina, however, "non-Christians" were not allowed to hold office until 1868. Outside of the South, New Hampshire and Vermont also had similar laws until 1876. See Morton Borden, *Jews, Turks, and Infidels* (Chapel Hill: 1984), 42–52.
7. There is an enormous literature on the struggle for white domination as a key to southern history. For one recent formulation, see Jane Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, and Bryant Simon (eds.), *Jumpin' Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights* (Princeton: 2000), 3.
8. Quoted in James William Hagg, *This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston* (Tuscaloosa: 1993), 236.
9. Quoted in Stephen Hertzberg, *Strangers in the Gate City* (Philadelphia: 1978), 34.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Robert Somers, *The Southern States since the War, 1870–1871* (New York: 1871), 151. The adjectives "sharp" and "active" could, of course, be interpreted in a neutral or positive sense, but making a staggering profit off the suffering of others sounds much more pejorative.
12. C. Vann Woodward, *The Burden of Southern History*, 3rd. ed. (Baton Rouge: 1993), 14.
13. See Clive Webb, *Fight Against Fear: Southern Jews and Civil Rights* (Athens, Ga.: 2001), 2.
14. Allison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner, *Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class* (Chicago: 1941), 264.
15. John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (Garden City: 1957), 128. The first edition of this book appeared in 1937.
16. See John Kenneth Morland, *Millways of Kent* (Chapel Hill: 1958), 187; Liston Pope, *Millhands and Preachers: A Study of Gastonia* (New Haven: 1942), 145, 319.
17. On the difficulty of tallying the actual number of Jewish Confederate soldiers, see Robert N. Rosen, *The Jewish Confederates* (Columbia, S.C.: 2000), 161–162.
18. Quoted in *ibid.*, 367–368.
19. The phrase is, of course, that of the great southern historian C. Vann Woodward in his book of the same name (New York: 1957).
20. See Eli Evans, *The Provincials* (New York: 1973), 96.
21. Suberman, *The Jew Store*, 87.
22. On the Red Shirts, see Alfred B. Williams, *Hampton and His Red Shirts: South Carolina's Deliverance in 1876* (Charleston: 1935).
23. Webb, *Fight against Fear*, 114–146.

24. See Arnold Shankman, *Ambivalent Friends: Afro-Americans View the Immigrant* (Westport: 1982), 116–123.
25. *Ibid.*, 114–116.
26. See the various entries on immigrant groups in the South in Charles R. Wilson and William Ferris, *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (Chapel Hill: 1989).
27. Wilber J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: 1941), 305.
28. See Hortense Powdermaker, *After Freedom: A Cultural Study of the Deep South* (New York: 1939), 7.
29. Lewis M. Killian, *White Southerners* (Amherst: 1985), 69.
30. John Shelton Reed, *The Enduring South: Subcultural Persistence in Mass Society* (Lexington, Mass.: 1972), 62–63.
31. James W. Loewen, *The Mississippi Chinese: Between Black and White* (Prospect Heights, Ill.: 1971), 36.
32. For other works on the Chinese in the American South, see Lucy M. Cohen, *Chinese in Post-Civil War South: A People without a History* (Baton Rouge: 1984); and Robert Seto Quan, *Lotus among the Magnolias: The Mississippi Chinese* (Jackson, Miss.: 1982).
33. Quoted in Quan, *Lotus among the Magnolias*, 43–44.
34. Loewen, *The Mississippi Chinese*, 84.
35. *Ibid.*, 79.
36. On the absence of a Chinese presence in, and reaction to, the civil rights struggle in Mississippi, see John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana: 1994).
37. See Victor Nee and Bret Nee, *Longtime Californ': A Documentary Study of an American Chinatown* (Stanford: 1986).
38. See Quan, *Lotus among the Magnolias*, 66–68.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Quoted in Reed, *The Enduring South*, 57.
41. Wilson and Ferris, *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, 1270.
42. See Clement Eaton, *Freedom of Thought in the Old South* (Durham: 1940).
43. See James Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners and the Great Migration* (Chicago: 1989).
44. See John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans* (New York: 1947), 481.
45. *Ibid.*, 616–617.
46. C. Vann Woodward, "The Irony of Southern History," *Journal of Southern History* 19, no. 1 (Feb. 1953), 13.
47. Wilson and Ferris, *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, 1269.
48. Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: 1984), 464, 474.
49. Quoted in Webb, *Fight against Fear*, 11. See *ibid.*, 228 for citations noting other examples of how Confederate distress led to anti-Jewish talk.
50. See William F. Holmes, "Whitecapping: Anti-Semitism in the Populist Era," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (March 1974), 244–261.
51. Quoted in Leonard Dinnerstein, *The Leo Frank Case* (New York: 1968), 140; see also C. Vann Woodward, *Tom Watson, Agrarian Rebel*, 2nd. ed. (Savannah: 1973), 176–177, 187–189.
52. Quoted in Leonard Dinnerstein, *Anti-Semitism in America* (New York: 1994), 188.
53. See Pete Daniels, *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950's* (Chapel Hill: 2000), 196.
54. Quoted in Webb, *Fight against Fear*, 51.
55. See Stanley Brav, *Dawn of Reckoning: Self-Portrait of a Liberal Rabbi* (Cincinnati: 1971), 169–181.
56. See Mark K. Bauman and Berkley Kalin (eds.), *The Quiet Voices: Southern Rabbis and Black Civil Rights, 1880 to 1990s* (Tuscaloosa: 1997), 173–174, 269–271, 277.
57. See Killian, *White Southerners*, 81.
58. Quoted in Dinnerstein, *Anti-Semitism in America*, 193.

59. See Webb, *Fight against Fear*, 171.

60. See Bauman and Kalin (eds.), *Quiet Voices*.

61. Quoted in Abraham Karp, *Haven and Home: A History of the Jews in America* (New York: 1985), 92, 93.

62. On the Reform argument concerning "chosenness" and its linking the idea of Israel's election with the movement for social justice, see Arnold Eisen, *The Chosen People in America: A Study in Jewish Religious Ideology* (Bloomington: 1983), 19–21, 53–72.

63. Their stories, and those of other southern women, are told in Webb, *Fight against Fear*, 147–168.

64. On the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching, see Jaqueline Dowd Hall, *Revolt against Chivalry: Jesse Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign against Lynching* (New York: 1979).

65. Webb, *Fight against Fear*, 147–168. In his chapter on "female reformers," Webb claims that the number of southern Jewish women who dared to take unpopular stands was quite high.

66. Quoted in Hasia R. Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915–1935* (Baltimore: 1995), 75.

67. *Ibid.*, 96.

68. *Ibid.*, 114.

69. See Hortense Powdermaker, *Stranger and Friend: The Way of an Anthropologist* (New York: 1966), 139–140, 145.

70. See John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana: 1994).

71. See Debra L. Schulz, *Going South: Jewish Women in the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: 2001).

72. See Glenn Eskew, *But for Birmingham: The Local and National Movements in the Civil Rights Struggle* (Chapel Hill: 1997), 300.

73. See Jeffrey Sosland, *A School in Every County: The Partnership of Jewish Philanthropist Julius Rosenwald and American Black Communities* (Washington, D.C.: 1985); on Mississippi and the Rosenwald schools, see Neil R. McMillan, *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow* (Urbana: 1989), 84, 102.

74. See Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, 45.

75. See Powdermaker, *Stranger and Friend*, 137.

76. See Gabrielle Simon Edgcomb, *From Swastika to Jim Crow: Refugee Scholars at Black Colleges* (Malabar, Fl.: 1993), 124; Webb, *Fight against Fear*, 207.

77. For one example of a liberal northern Jew who moved to the South to try and bring about change, see Marvin Caplan, *Farther Along: A Civil Rights Memoir* (Baton Rouge: 1999).

Finding a Balance in a Dual Society: The Jews of Quebec

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Contemporary Quebec is the product of a long historical evolution that begins with the “discovery” and exploration by the French of the Saint Lawrence Valley and North American continent.¹ These explorations led to the founding of the first permanent settlement in Quebec City in 1608. The establishment of a French population in North America remained a slow and difficult process throughout the period of New France. From the actual founding of this territory until the end of the French regime in 1759, only 10,000 French nationals crossed the Atlantic and settled in the area that would become known as Canada: not only the Saint Lawrence Valley proper, but also parts of the region known today as the Canadian Maritimes, and more marginal settlements in the Great Lakes and upper Mississippi region.

Following the battle of Quebec City in September 1759, New France fell to the British. About 40,000 French nationals lived in the huge territory now controlled by the British, and the great majority either did not possess the means or else had no desire to return to France. In the course of some 150 years, Francophone inhabitants of the Saint Lawrence Valley had become North Americans in their own right.² Separated from the mother country by an enormous distance and by vastly different conditions of life, these *Canadiens* had managed to develop a separate culture that was well adapted to their physical environment. They had also gained a great measure of cultural autonomy from France, establishing a collectivist society very unlike the highly hierarchical structures of the mother country. The French-speaking majority that the Montreal Jewish community would encounter in the Province of Quebec nearly two centuries later is descended from this small population of early colonial settlers in the 17th century.

The military collapse of New France in 1759 (later confirmed by the Treaty of Paris in 1763) did not directly affect the capacity of French-speakers to subsist and maintain their locally dominant demographic position.³ It did, however, seriously affect their social status vis-à-vis the victors. Abandoned by the ruling class in France, perceived as enemy aliens, and for a time deprived of any form of legal recognition, the

Canadiens became a political minority in their own country. This sudden turn of events was to have a lasting influence on the development of French Canada in the following centuries.

For many decades, the British conquest did not result in a massive influx of English-speaking people to Canada, and Francophones clearly maintained their position throughout the 19th century as the majority of the Quebec population. Except for a short period from the 1840s to the mid 1860s, Francophones were prominent demographically even in Montreal, Canada's only metropolis at the time.⁴ Nonetheless, French Canadians could not gain access to the real centers of political power in Canada, nor could they exercise much control over the economic and institutional forces that determined their destiny. Now integrated into the British empire, Francophones were to some degree forced by circumstances into their own social and cultural domain—although this, of course, also enabled them to resist assimilation into the English-speaking and Protestant spheres.

Thus there emerged in 19th-century Quebec a unique form of social dualism whereby Francophones and Anglophones lived side by side, but without much cultural or personal interaction. The fact that almost all French Canadians professed the Roman Catholic faith, whereas the British population surrounding them belonged to various Protestant denominations (with the notable exception of the Irish immigrants in the mid-19th century), increased the distance between the two groups. This bipolarism of Quebec identity was nowhere more apparent than in Montreal, where Catholics and Protestants attended separate school systems, founded their own institutional networks, and often did not share the same neighborhoods. The signing of the British North American Act in 1867 further deepened the chasm between Francophones and Anglophones in Quebec by adding legal weight to the compartmentalization already present in everyday life.⁵ This pact, which gave birth to the Dominion of Canada, also created a province, Quebec, where Francophones would be the demographic majority, would have control of a provincial parliament, and would see their Catholic institutions officially recognized. More importantly, the constitution of 1867 legally placed the administration of Quebec's public school system under the direct control of the Roman Catholic and the Protestant churches.

When East European Jews began to migrate en masse to Montreal early in the 20th century, there existed in the city two distinct cultural and linguistic entities that rarely overlapped or shared much in common, except perhaps a general set of legal principles necessary for the conduct of civil society. French-speakers in Montreal amounted in 1901 to roughly 60 percent of a total population of 203,000 individuals. By and large, they formed an underprivileged class of manual laborers, many of whom had recently immigrated from the surrounding rural areas.⁶ Less educated than their compatriots of British origin and confined to less attractive neighborhoods in the eastern part of the city, French Canadians supplied the low-cost manpower for many of the emergent industries in the city. Not only was the social status of Francophones in Montreal generally inferior to that of persons of British origin, but their language and culture carried the stigma of economic marginality. In the last decades of the 19th century, while the numerical weight of French Canadians was overcoming that of Anglophones, the French language remained of little significance in large businesses and at

the level of federal politics. In fact, up until the end of the Second World War, public signs in the city were almost exclusively in English, and large retail stores often did not offer French-language services to their clientele.

The basically colonial attitude of British Canadians to their Francophone counterparts did not impede the gradual consolidation of a numerically small but influential French Canadian elite that emerged at the turn of the 20th century out of the ranks of the Roman Catholic Church. By 1900, this group of well-educated French-speakers had created a number of periodicals, several institutions of higher learning, and various intellectual and artistic circles that maintained very close contacts with the Catholic clergy. Writers, poets, historians, and artists attempted to define a French Canadian identity that was different in tone and perception from the rest of the country. A number of ideologues, insisting that a specific historical destiny awaited Francophones in North America, began to express in political terms the cultural and linguistic aspirations of their community. Finally, a more aggressive form of nationalism surfaced that sought to negotiate a new pact between Francophones and Anglophones—one that would eliminate the two-tiered system whereby French Canadians were treated as second-class citizens.

Because of its intimate association with the church, this emergent French-speaking intelligentsia drew its inspiration largely from socially conservative and politically right-wing thinkers in France and in the Vatican. Often it espoused models of thought that were inspired by the *ancien régime* and by prerevolutionary social notions such as those proposed by Joseph de Maistre and Frédéric Le Play. This tendency was encouraged by the fact that, because of the British conquest, French Canada had not participated in or sympathized with the French Revolution of 1789, nor did it identify with any of the social upheavals that punctuated French history during the 19th century. For the same reason, it remained largely untouched by the liberal and democratic ideals that inspired the American Revolution to its immediate south.

Because of their empathy with conservative trends in France, French Canadian intellectuals of the early 20th century, both clerical and lay, eventually came in contact with the intellectual antisemitism often propounded by political reactionaries and the Roman Catholic Church. Works by Louis Veillot, Alphonse Daudet, and Maurice Barrès all expressed, albeit to varying degrees, a visceral hostility to Jews generally and to a Jewish presence in France in particular—as did, in an even more extreme manner, the works of writers such as Édouard Drumont and Charles Maurras. Although, as will be seen, the arguments of these antisemites did not apply directly to French Canada, their message nonetheless influenced a certain group of educated Francophones in Quebec. Even clearly liberal personalities such as Henri Bourassa (who founded the nationalist Montreal daily *Le Devoir* in 1910 and who espoused the cause of dialogue with the Montreal Jewish community after 1925) received an early education in the Quebec Catholic milieu that put him in contact with *La France juive* and other judeophobic literature common at the time. Relatively few people in French Canada read such works, however, both because they were available only in certain very limited clerical milieus and because they were far beyond the comprehension of the uneducated Francophone masses. Indicative of this is the fact that the Dreyfus affair had very little impact in French Canada. By every measure, the clash of the Drey-

fusards and the anti-Dreyfusards rocked France to its very foundations, but in French Canada the issue was merely discussed among a handful of intellectuals who followed events in France closely, and it never became an issue in any of the important political debates of the period.

The history of the various Jewish migrations to Quebec is a major factor in understanding the situation of Jews throughout the 20th century in that part of Canada. During the French regime, the colonial authorities in Paris had forbidden the emigration of Protestants or Jews, since the colony was intended to remain a monopoly of Catholic merchants closely affiliated with the monarchy. Apparently this embargo was enforced with enough consistency that a young Jewish woman named Esther Brandeau, who arrived in 1738 disguised as a boy, was not permitted to remain in Quebec City for more than a few months.⁷ It is quite possible that a number of Marranos could have settled in New France without having their true identity disclosed; after all, a wealthy Jewish merchant from Bordeaux, Abraham Gradis, was instrumental in providing supplies to the colony when it was under direct military threat from the British forces to the south.⁸ The fact remains, however, that the first identifiable Jews to settle in Quebec and to establish a formal Jewish presence in the Saint Lawrence Valley were immigrants arriving on the heels of the British army. Perhaps Aaron Hart, who was a supplier to General Jeffrey Amherst as he was marching on Montreal in the spring of 1760, may deserve the title of being the first Jew to reside permanently in the new British colony. Hart, who died in Trois-Rivières in 1800, bequeathed the foundations of a commercial empire that was enlarged by his descendants.⁹ In some ways, this coincidental association with the nascent British regime did have the effect of later identifying Jews, in the minds of some French Canadians, with the Anglo-Protestant forces that brought an end to New France.¹⁰ In the following decades, when Jews recently emigrated to Quebec assimilated more readily to English than to French, the notion was revived among certain Francophones that Judaism had allied itself with the dominant British population of Canada.

During the last decades of the 18th and during most of the 19th century, Quebec Jews resembled their forebear Aaron Hart in many ways.¹¹ Except in Montreal (where they tended to concentrate), most settled in small communities, which made it difficult for them to practice Judaism assiduously; this, in turn, made them less noticeable. The first Jewish congregation, Shearith Israel, established in Montreal in 1777, was comprised mostly of Ashkenazic Jews praying according to the Sephardic ritual. It was not until 1846 that a second synagogue, Shaar Hashomayim, was founded in the city.¹² In 1832, with the support of Francophone nationalists who sought to gain the same advantages for Catholics, Jews were granted full civil rights in Canada—almost a quarter of a century earlier than in Great Britain. Most Jewish immigrants during this period came from Great Britain and belonged to well-established families, some of them having settled in London as early as the 17th century. Those who came to live in Montreal considered themselves to be an integral part of Anglophone society in Montreal. They were Orthodox in their religious tradition (although not, for the most part, in their practice) and often earned a living in commerce and manufacturing. One notable exception was Abraham de Sola, rabbi of the Shearith Israel congregation and a professor of Hebraic studies at McGill College from 1848 to 1882.¹³ That de Sola was well received in Montreal's British institutions and milieus—as

were his coreligionists in general—is all the more ironic, given the fact that McGill University, as it later became known, would one day adopt an aggressive policy of limiting the number of Jewish applicants.

At the time of the Canadian confederation in 1867, there were about 1,000 Jews in all of Canada, most of them living in Montreal (where, as noted, they were hardly distinguishable from their Anglophone counterparts). In a matter of a few years, events taking place in the far-off Russian empire would completely alter the situation. The flow of immigration from Eastern Europe to Canada, starting as a mere trickle in the 1880s, became a massive influx by the beginning of the 20th century. Two factors would combine to bring Jews in large numbers to Canadian shores. First, in 1896, Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier established a national policy welcoming immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe for the purpose of populating the Canadian West.¹⁴ Second, the Kishinev pogrom of 1903, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, and the brutal repression of the Russian revolution of 1905 all served to “liberate” Jews living in the Russian Pale of Settlement. In the period from 1901 to 1910, East European Jews constituted only 3 percent of the total flow of immigrants to Canada from the Old World.¹⁵ In concrete terms, however, the number of Jews in Quebec jumped from 7,600 in 1901 to 30,648 a decade later, and doubled again in the next 20 years to reach the figure of 60,087.¹⁶ This Jewish immigration, it should be noted, did not spread itself evenly over the territory of Quebec or even Canada as a whole, but rather concentrated in the largest cities—Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg.

In Montreal, where roughly one third of the Jewish immigrants settled, a visibly Jewish neighborhood appeared for the first time. By the end of the 1920s, Yiddish was the third most widely used language in the city, after French and English, and an area of the city known today as le Plateau Mont-Royal had become unquestionably identified with Jewish immigrant life. Not only did the influx of Yiddish-speakers completely alter the perception that the Gentiles had of Jews, it also shifted the balance of power within the Jewish community. As a historian of the Canadian Jewish labor movement put it:

The migration of East European Jews intensified in the last decade of the nineteenth century. These Jews came directly from the old continent, many of them first passing through the United States. The newcomers found employment in various domains in businesses owned by well-established Jews. But a major social barrier appeared at the same time within the community, driving a wedge between the wealthy and the poor, between those residing in the country for many years and those who had recently migrated.

The immigrants did not find old-stock German Jews here in Canada, as would have been the case in the United States. [But] rich Canadian Jews, notably in Montreal, did in many ways resemble American *Yahudim*; they detested to a certain degree the ideas, aspirations, and manners of their recently arrived coreligionists. Furthermore, these wealthy Jews, or uptown *Yahudim*, as they were often called, wished to impose their will on Jewish life and tried by every means available to repress all attempts by the immigrant masses to express themselves independently. . . .

As the number of these older residents was very small, they feared being submerged when the East European immigration manifested itself fully. It was as though these more established Jews were struggling for their very survival, fearing complete submersion at the hands of the newcomers.¹⁷

This new Montreal Jewish community, composed almost exclusively of recent immigrants (save for a few hundred families that had arrived in the previous century), could hardly play a key role in the shaping of Quebec society. It was also powerless to modify the well-entrenched power relationship between the Francophone demographic majority and the dominant Anglophones. These newcomers were almost entirely dependent either on jobs in the garment industry or on highly vulnerable peddling activities, and they knew little about their adopted country or its political system. In his memoirs published in Yiddish in 1947, Montreal journalist Israel Mendres reminds the reader of the extent to which the migrants from the great wave of 1905–1914 came into the country with virtually no prior understanding of the society they were entering:

Before the appearance of the *Keneder Odler* (1907), immigrant Jews [in Montreal] read newspapers from New York that printed nothing about Canada. Newspapers from the old country also contained little information about Canada except the fact that it was a far-away land. Consequently the immigrants knew little about Canada.

The *Keneder Odler* served as their window to the land and its people. They discovered that they had settled in a vast country, one of the largest in the world, and that the country was divided into provinces just as Russia was divided into *guberniia*. They learned that there were other large cities in Canada where Jews lived besides Montreal, such as Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, Halifax, and Winnipeg. . . . Canada, they discovered, was so immense that to traverse it by train from sea to sea required several days. In Canada, all citizens could freely choose any occupation they wanted. Every kind of business and industry existed here, where young people who wished to study could graduate as doctors, lawyers, engineers, and so on.¹⁸

Even as late as 1931, 99 percent of Montreal Jews claimed Yiddish as their mother tongue, and 55 percent of them had been born abroad, mostly in the Russian empire. During the first half of the 20th century, Montreal Jews came to constitute a third community. Rather than progress in a straightforward way toward complete integration into one single sociocultural model, as would have been the case in a city such as New York or even Toronto, Montreal Jews had to take into account the existence of two quite separate and independent entities. Because the numerically dominant French Canadians and the economically powerful Anglo-Protestants resisted outside influences in order to maintain their entrenched positions within the city (and in Quebec as a whole), Jews could not really progress rapidly on either front. In fact, for many decades, Jewish immigrants could learn English (and possibly French) and use the language fluently in their life outside the community without making significant contact with the Anglo-British elite. The result of this situation, unique in North America, was the emergence of a Jewish community in Montreal that was endowed with a large network of institutions covering every field of endeavor: Jewish education, charity, culture, kashruth,¹⁹ social justice, and industrial trade unionism. Largely unwelcome in the institutional network controlled by the Catholic or Protestant churches, Montreal Jews took the initiative to establish their own communal institutions.

The urge to build institutions parallel to those of the Catholics and Protestants can also be attributed to the influence of the Labor Zionists (Poale Zion) in the community. The Russian revolution of 1905 and its aftermath had forced many young Jewish

idealists to leave the Pale of Settlement. Wherever they went, these revolutionaries took with them their dream of a Jewish Palestine imbued with the doctrine of socialism. Once in Montreal, the Labor Zionists argued that Jews needed to seize control of their own affairs as much as possible in order to establish a vibrant, left-wing Zionist movement bent on supporting the emergence of a socially progressive Jewish homeland. By the end of the First World War, the Labor Zionists were largely responsible for the creation in Montreal of a network of Yiddish secular schools, a public library designed to educate adult immigrants, and a myriad of other organizations and intellectual circles conceived to offset the forces of assimilation into mainstream Canadian society. This program was conducted against the expressed will of the well-entrenched but numerically very small Jewish elite that had become anglicized at a time when Montreal Jewry had numbered only a few hundred souls.²⁰

The marginalization of Montreal Jews was nowhere more apparent than in the public school system as it existed in the city at the beginning of the 20th century. Education had been a very sensitive area in the negotiations that Francophone Catholics and Anglophone Protestants undertook at the time of the signing of the British North American Act, and as a result had been the subject of a major compromise. The solution had been to preserve the deeply seated religious values of each community by entrusting the administration of public schools directly to the Catholic and Protestant churches. In a period when Jews were an insignificant minority in Canada, this legal arrangement could hardly be viewed as antisemitic, but rather reflected the profound suspicion that dominated relations between the two founding communities of the country. After the beginning of the great East European migration early in the 20th century, however, this agreement posed a major problem to the rapidly growing Jewish community: under article 93 of the British North American Act, access to the public schools of Quebec was reserved exclusively to followers of the Catholic or Protestant faiths. Seeking to rectify this situation, the Quebec government, which possessed exclusive jurisdiction over education, passed a law in 1903 specifying that Jews in the Montreal area would be considered Protestants in matters relating to public school attendance. The consequence of this legislation was to hasten the assimilation of Montreal Jews to the English language, a fact that some Francophones would later read as a form of hostility to French Canadians.

By 1916, the influx of Yiddish-speaking Jews was such that in Montreal, 44 percent of the students of the Protestant school commission—close to 10,000 pupils—were Jewish.²¹ Excluded from the Catholic system, Jewish children now sparked a crisis in the Protestant system. At the beginning of the 1920s, administrators of the Anglo-Protestant schools threatened to apply strictly the denominational provisions of the constitution (which overrode provincial law) in order to expel all Jews from their institutions. Negotiations were then begun that lasted for most of the decade; eventually, in April 1930, the Quebec government led by Premier Louis-Alexandre Taschereau passed a law creating a Jewish school commission modeled on the already existing Catholic and Protestant systems.²² However, it soon became clear that the law could not be implemented because of the opposition of almost all parties involved—Catholics, Protestants, and the so-called “uptown Jews,”²³ who felt that a separate Jewish school system would be an obstacle to the integration of the children of immigrants in the fabric of Canadian society. A new law (known as the David bill,

after the secretary general of Quebec, Athanase David) was passed in the following year, which reestablished the status quo. In that year, 11,310 Jewish children attended Protestant schools, representing 31 percent of all pupils in the system. The collapse of the Jewish school commission was a setback to the legitimate grievances of the Jewish community. Jewish children, legally speaking, were merely tolerated in the public schools (in theory, they could be expelled at any time), and their parents could neither vote nor run for office in the elections held at regular intervals for the Protestant school commission.²⁴ Montreal Jews would have to wait until 1971 for the Protestant school commission to grant them equal rights in the election of school board seats.²⁵

Meanwhile, albeit in a less systematic way, Montreal English-language universities worked to limit the entry of Jews. McGill University, established in 1813 by an Anglo-Protestant merchant, James McGill,²⁶ began in the late 1920s to impose higher standards of admission on Jewish students than on their Christian counterparts. This policy (which always remained confidential) succeeded in reducing the proportion of Jewish students at McGill from 25 percent in the 1925–1926 school year to 12 percent a decade later; in the faculty of medicine, the quota was set at 10 percent. The obvious purpose of these measures was to protect the Protestant monopoly on English-language professions in Montreal, a sphere that was increasingly under pressure from Jews.²⁷ Meanwhile, the Francophone equivalent of McGill, l'Université de Montréal, which operated under the aegis of the Catholic Church, admitted only 69 Jews, or 4.4 percent of its student body, in 1935–1936. An additional obstacle was the university's requirement that all students, regardless of religious affiliation, attend courses in Catholic moral teaching.²⁸

Cultural dualism and linguistic bilingualism remain to this day the major characteristics of Montreal. This was even more the case at the beginning of the 20th century, when immigration had not yet profoundly altered the social fabric of the city and when persons of British origin still made up one third of its total population.²⁹ In this period, as indicated, Anglo-Protestants and Franco-Catholics developed different forms of antisemitism, each related to their respective socioeconomic situation and religious heritage. In a sense, Jews in Montreal before the Second World War had to confront two very different forms of hostility based on widely divergent perceptions. Francophones generally discussed the issue of the Jewish presence in Quebec openly in various newspapers and periodicals and refused Yiddish-speaking immigrants access to their institutions. Until 1960, the Catholic schools, universities, hospitals, and benevolent societies of Quebec were, with few exceptions, barred to Jews. At the same time, the quiet reluctance of British Montrealers to allow Jews unlimited access to Anglophone institutions of higher learning meant that Jews would be shut out from major centers of economic decision-making. Notwithstanding, these obstacles do not appear to have seriously hampered Jewish economic advancement in the Montreal region and beyond, although it did force Jews to enter specific fields of endeavor and not others. In fact, some observers have remarked that discrimination against Jews in Quebec led to the emergence of a parallel (but flourishing) Jewish subeconomy that persists to this day.

As one might easily surmise, antisemitism in Quebec was not limited to the institutional sphere. The appearance early in the 20th century of a visibly Jewish immi-

grant life also triggered a reaction among the common folk. Here it should be stressed that Yiddish-speaking Jews in the first part of the 20th century came into contact mostly with French Canadians while rarely encountering British Montrealers. This situation was due in large measure to the way the city had developed spatially in the previous century, with migrants from Europe moving primarily into an area that served as a divider between the two dominant linguistic groups.³⁰ Along a street that ran in a north-south direction called Boulevard Saint-Laurent (known more popularly as “the Main”),³¹ Jews formed an enclave that, in its institutional completeness, resembled a transplanted East European shtetl.³² At the time, English-speaking Montrealers lived on the western slopes of Mount Royal (notably in a neighborhood known as the Golden Square Mile) and seemed very remote to the people living in the Boulevard Saint-Laurent area. But French Canadians could be seen and heard daily on the Main, since the densely Francophone working-class zones began just a few blocks east of that area. Moreover, although one community was made up essentially of newcomers and the other not, Montreal Jews and French Canadians shared a similar position on the social scale. This analogous point of reference vis-à-vis the economically dominant Montrealers of British origin was the source of an ambiguous and covert sympathy between the two communities that has been well described by novelist Mordecai Richler:

If the Main was a poor man’s street, it was also a dividing line. Below, the French Canadians. Above, some distance above, the dreaded WASP. On the Main itself there were some Italians, Yugoslavs and Ukrainians, but they did not count as true Gentiles. Even the French Canadians, who were our enemies, were not entirely unloved. Like us, they were poor and coarse with large families and spoke English badly.

Looking back, it’s easy to see that the real trouble was there was no dialogue between us and the French Canadians, each elbowing the other, striving for WASP acceptance.³³

In understanding the position of East European immigrant Jews in Montreal before the Second World War, one must keep in mind that the French Canadian majority was not monolithic in its approach to the “Jewish Question.” The clerical elite, it will be recalled, was educated in the doctrine of the church and well informed concerning the way this issue was dealt with in Western and Eastern Europe. This group, accordingly, saw Jews as permanent foreigners on Canadian soil and as staunch opponents of the conservative social values espoused by Catholicism. Before 1960, however, historical circumstances did not grant a highly significant role to this intelligentsia outside of very specific circles, and its opinions and writings on Judaism did not really influence the perceptions of the vast Francophone underclass that was then emerging in Montreal. On the contrary, the relationship between Yiddish-speaking immigrants and French Canadians at the street level was often friendly and included areas of mutual influence, such as small-scale trade, unionization in the garment industry, and municipal politics.³⁴ Jewish testimonies dating from this period frequently mention the threat of doctrinal antisemitism to the community, but also express the reality of respectful relationships in social environments where learned opinions or rigid ideological positions did not exist. In May 1944, for instance, following the partial destruction by fire of the Quebec City synagogues by proto-fascist thugs,

Maurice Pollack, chairman of the building committee, noted that although such incidents were extremely painful, Jewish history was filled with anti-Jewish attacks throughout the ages, throughout the world. Jews had to have faith in God and not lose their trust in French Canadians, who were fundamentally honest, hard-working, God-fearing, and hospitable. The antisemitic thugs who mouthed Hitler's words were speaking a foreign tongue in an alien spirit, not the language and spirit of French Canadians.³⁵

Such circumstances explain how levels of physical violence between Jews and French Canadians remained low throughout the 20th century, violent incidents consisting mainly of inconsequential and spontaneous street brawling or exchanges of insults.³⁶ Pollack's comments also help to explain how the perception of Jews by Francophones evolved when a new form of Québécois nationalism surfaced at the onset of the 1960s. Fundamentally, even though Yiddish-speaking immigrants aspired to achieve a certain level of social mobility and, with this aim in mind, strove to learn English, they could hardly be associated with the dominant Anglo-Protestants of the interwar period. Until the 1950s or 1960s, the cultural gap between Montrealers of British origin and Askenazic Jews was still quite large, and the social distance between them was insurmountable. French Canadians, it is true, sometimes accused members of the Jewish community of serving as brokers for otherwise distant and all-powerful economic elites that operated at higher spheres.³⁷ But it appears that most Francophones who harbored antisemitic opinions before 1945 viewed Jews as a threat in themselves and as undesirable immigrants, rather than focusing on whether the Jews wished to emulate the Anglophone population. In fact, hostility to immigration, which would result in a further thinning of the Francophone population, was the main factor underlying the opposition to the further influx of Jews to Canada, as expressed in the mainstream French press of Quebec, notably in the nationalist *Le Devoir*.

There was, however, a very vocal fringe movement in Montreal in the 1930s that, through mass meetings and weekly publications, propagated a strongly negative perception of Jews. Inspired by Nazi propaganda of the type that was circulated in Julius Streicher's *Der Stürmer*, Adrien Arcand founded several pro-fascist organizations in the interwar period, including the Parti national social chrétien in 1934 and the Parti de l'unité nationale in 1938. Arcand's newspapers, *Le Goglu*, *Le Miroir*, and *Le Patriote*, liberally borrowed (via Nazism) from the anti-Judaic tradition of previous centuries, especially such enduring myths as the existence of an anti-Christian talmudic treatise and the blood libel. Mostly, though, the Québécois antisemites of the fascist variety attempted to prove both that Jewish merchants were exploiting the common folk in their commercial practices and that they were engaged in a worldwide conspiracy against Christianity. Arcand's press did not view Jews either as major players in the Canadian political arena or as influential citizens who had learned how to behave in high society, but rather as parasites of the lower order or as base cheaters who exploited the commercial naiveté of French Canadians. The Jews, for their part, succeeded in discrediting Arcand's publications to the point where membership in his organizations never rose above a few hundred people.³⁸ Ironically, the more serious threat to Jewish interests came at this time from Anglophone federal bureaucrats, who staunchly opposed any form of Jewish immigration and who suc-

ceeded in keeping victims of Nazi Germany out of the country, save for a few hundred individuals every year.³⁹

The end of the Second World War saw the launching of a social movement that led to a complete reorganization of Quebec society. Known as the "Quiet Revolution," a series of events in the 1950s and 1960s triggered the sudden and rapid modernization of French-speaking Quebec. Some observers have argued that, confronted with the dramatic events of a worldwide military conflict and later with the sudden appearance of audio-visual mass communications, Francophones chose to abandon the rural and religious institutional structures on which Quebec society had previously rested.⁴⁰ Others have suggested that the pressures of global Americanization and the utter necessity to compete on the world market forced the hands of the well-established Catholic elites, impelling them to implement a wide-ranging set of reforms. The election of Jean Lesage as premier of Quebec in 1960 signaled the beginning of sweeping changes in the administration of the province, including the creation of a ministry of education (which, among other things, supervised the Protestant and Catholic school boards), the establishment of universal health care, the opening of direct official relations with France, and the appropriation of all hydroelectric installations in Quebec. Within a few years, access to public education was dramatically improved, financial tools were created by the provincial government to gain a measure of control over the local economy, and a new form of secular nationalism came to the fore. Until the late 1950s, despite rapid industrialization, Francophones remained confined to a secondary role in their own society. Lack of formal education and a historical gap originating in the heyday of British colonialism kept French Canadians at a disadvantage even in large urban centers such as Montreal. A study carried out in the early 1960s by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism revealed, for instance, that in Montreal the Francophone community ranked among the lowest in the city in terms of per capita income.⁴¹ According to the same study, Jews occupied first place among all ethnically defined groups in the city, far surpassing the French-speaking majority. But the bold political measures adopted by the Quebec provincial government soon resulted in a reversal of this situation. By the advent of the 1980s, well-educated and bilingual Francophones living in the Montreal region had not merely caught up with their Anglophone compatriots in terms of economic affluence but had even surpassed them by a narrow margin.⁴² In the process, the cultural identity of Francophones was completely redefined and a new equilibrium appeared in Quebec political culture. Until then, the Catholic church had indirectly controlled the fabric of Francophone society, if only by the strong presence of its institutional network. This was especially true at the level of higher education, where its influence over persons in authority was especially pronounced. After 1960, however, a new independent civil service was created in Quebec, and a secular elite replaced the heretofore omnipresent clergy and religious orders in the delivery of social and educational services to the population.

In short, with the Quiet Revolution, a modern Quebec state appeared, which replaced or greatly enlarged church-oriented institutions put in place in the previous century. French-speakers saw this state apparatus as an instrument to be used for the general improvement of their social and economic conditions vis-à-vis the rest of

Canadian society. In this new context, French-Canadians ceased to perceive themselves as Catholics. Instead, they redefined their culture as resting on secular values—first and foremost, the French language. Rejecting the term “French Canadian,” which was identified with a British colonial perception of their culture, Francophones coined a new word to describe themselves: *Québécois*. Among the areas that were targeted for reform was the marginal status that had been accorded to the French language by the economically dominant Anglophones. One of the solutions proposed by the new Francophone intelligentsia was the passage of provincial laws designed to protect and enhance French—the mother tongue of 80 percent of the Quebec population. The first legislation of this kind appeared in 1969 and was quickly followed by a series of legal measures, notably one in 1974 that declared the French language the only official language of Quebec. This effort culminated in 1977 with the passage of bill 101 (also known as la Charte de la langue française) by the first government of Quebec premier René Lévesque.

Under the new linguistic regime, every aspect of language use in Quebec was examined and regulated, and specific efforts were made in the fields of immigrant integration, the workplace, and public signs. Quebec was not alone in conceiving laws designed to influence Canada’s linguistic situation. In 1969, the federal government (under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau) passed an official languages act that declared French and English to be official languages in the country and that implemented an aggressive policy of bilingualism, especially within the federal civil service. Across Canada and more specifically in Quebec, the issue of language became the object of a heated debate that persists until this day, although perhaps now with less intensity. In the 1970s, language was an issue in several Quebec provincial elections—in 1976, for instance, it was a factor in the fall of the Liberal government of Robert Bourassa, which paved the way for Lévesque’s independence movement, the Parti Québécois. In Montreal, Anglophones generally resisted the implementation of laws to protect the French language and to promote its use in the public domain.⁴³ Several court cases were initiated against bill 101; eventually, in 1988, the supreme court of Canada ruled that specific legislative measures designed to safeguard the French language were legitimate in the Canadian and Québécois context, providing they did not contain clauses to specifically ban the use of English in the public sphere. Since this decision, discussion on the topic has tended to focus on legal nuances rather than on the overall matter of whether legislation on language is acceptable.

Although many believe otherwise, the fact is that Quebec Jews in large measure welcomed the Quiet Revolution and the basic structural changes that it introduced. At the onset of the 1960s, the Jewish community clearly espoused the ideal of the modernization of Quebec. Several Montreal Jews ran for office at the provincial level during this time, spurring the Liberal party to push ahead with its reforms. Victor Goldbloom, elected in the West Island constituency of D’Arcy McGee in 1970, was the first Jew to hold a ministerial position in a Quebec cabinet. Several Jews were to follow his example, including Herbert Marx, who served as justice minister from 1985 to 1988 in the Bourassa government. Major institutions of the Montreal Jewish community were directly affected by the sweeping transformations imposed by the Quiet Revolution. In the end, most adapted to the new guidelines without resistance. Thus the Jewish General Hospital and various private Jewish schools submitted to

certain linguistic requirements in exchange for public financing. Jews viewed the emergence of the Parti Québécois movement with much less enthusiasm, however, and overwhelmingly voted against it in every election from 1968 onwards.⁴⁴ Likewise, they voted massively against the option of independence that was presented in two referenda held in 1980 and in 1995.

In the course of the Quiet Revolution, major social and economic changes that took place in Montreal contributed to the growing dominance of French—in particular, the migration of large corporations to Toronto. Beginning in the 1950s, even before the emergence of organized nationalist movements, an exodus of company headquarters (mainly to the western provinces) drained a sizable proportion of the British population in Quebec. The data reflect this transformation: in 1961, 44 percent of the well-paid jobs in Montreal were held by Francophones and 56 percent by Anglophones, whereas by 1985, the proportions had changed to 75 and 24 percent, respectively.⁴⁵ The relatively sudden departure of wealthy English-speakers weakened the Anglophone social structure in the city, notably the Protestant school system and a number of public service institutions created by British Canadians in the 19th century. A similar pattern became apparent to some extent within the Ashkenazic milieus of Montreal. Numbering 115,990 in 1971, the Jewish community declined to slightly less than 100,000 people in the late 1990s. Leaving Quebec were mostly young Jews who had been educated in English-language institutions—it is generally estimated that in a 20–30 year period, roughly 25,000 Jews left Montreal to places elsewhere in North America. This demographic downturn (also experienced by Jewish populations in the Eastern seaboard cities of the United States) cast a pall over the Montreal Jewish community that is felt to this day.

Several decades of linguistic engineering at both the federal and the Quebec levels have had a profound impact on the province, and especially on the younger population. A great majority of Montreal residents, for example, have become bilingual. According to the Canadian census of 1996, 63.8 percent of Montreal Jews knew both French and English; during that same year, more than 80 percent of the Anglophone population (including the English-speaking Ashkenazic Jewish community) also spoke French. Among immigrants living in the greater Montreal region, the figure stood at 71.2 percent, a marked improvement over earlier decades, when only a small fraction of the newcomers were initially attracted to the French language.

In the last 10 or 15 years, Montreal Jews have tended to be openly in favor of the political objective of safeguarding the language of the demographic majority in Quebec, provided that human rights in general and those of minorities in particular were also to be protected. In a recent submission to the Estates General on language held by the Quebec government in the early part of 2001, representatives of the Quebec region of the Canadian Jewish Congress declared:

Canadian Jewish Congress has consistently expressed over the years its support for initiatives promoting the French language. As Québécois, we understand the involvement of the Quebec government in this respect and the will of the Francophone majority vis-à-vis the promotion of French in every sphere of public life.

Canadian Jewish Congress has publicly supported the principle that the public face of Quebec should be predominantly Francophone. Today we reiterate our support for the

predominance of French in public life in Quebec, as long as other languages can be used as well

While supporting the promotion of the French language, Canadian Jewish Congress reaffirms its hope that this objective should be compatible with the respect of human rights ideals as enshrined in the Canadian and Quebec charters.⁴⁶

Pronounced social mobility, strong institutions, a high level of Jewish identity, and a key role in certain sections of the new Quebec economy (for instance, real estate and large retail stores) combined to give Jews a certain visibility on the postwar political scene. In fact, both French Canadians and Montreal Jews experienced a sense of empowerment and self-affirmation vis-à-vis the Anglo-Protestant elite. This phenomenon, for obvious sociological reasons, took a very different form among the numerically dominant Francophones than it did among the Jews. Still, for the first time since the great East European migration of 1905–1914, Jews and French Canadians are now coming to terms with each other without the systematic mediation of the British element of Canadian society. It was during the late 1970s that, for the first time in history, persons of British origin in Quebec were outnumbered not only by French Canadians but also by individuals of non-French origin. In 1981, the Canadian census revealed that only 7.6 percent of the Quebec population could trace its origins back to the British Isles, as opposed to 9.4 percent who did not belong to either of the so-called “founding peoples” of Canada. In the immediate region of Montreal, the data was even more telling: 11.4 percent of British origin, as opposed to 19.4 percent of “foreign” origin. The slow decline of the Anglo-Protestant community not only cleared the way for the economic and political advancement of Jews in the city but also created a situation in which half of the Anglophones living in the area belonged to a culture other than strictly Anglo-British. As opposed to persons raised and educated in the strictly British imperial tradition (who often viewed French Canadians as a negligible community), Jews tended to be more open-minded about the necessity to enter into dialogue with the Francophones.

This new climate of mutual respect was to no small measure sparked by the arrival, beginning in the late 1950s, of a large group of French-speaking North African Jews, mainly from Morocco. Once in Montreal, the Sephardim resisted assimilation into the larger Ashkenazic and East European mold and instead forced the strictly Jewish institutional network to offer services in both French and English. Today numbering some 25,000 people, or roughly a quarter of the Jewish community, the North African Jews play the same role in the Montreal Jewish community as do French Canadians in the larger Canadian mosaic—that of a significant minority whose presence commands a redeployment of available resources. They have also served as a bridge to the larger Francophone society, thereby opening channels of communications to a wide-ranging network of public institutions in Quebec that would otherwise be more difficult to penetrate.

The growing internal cultural diversity of Francophone Quebec, due largely to the integration of children of immigrants in the French-speaking public school system, has also had a massive impact on the relationship of the demographic majority with the Jewish community. As Francophone Quebec has become more complex and diverse, Jews have become less striking in their desire to maintain a somewhat separate

identity. In fact, the very term “Québécois,” which had been coined at the onset of the Quiet Revolution to describe French Canadians now liberated from the weight of the past, began to take on a new meaning: it now referred simply to people living in Quebec, regardless of their origins or religious heritage. The evolution of the notion of *Québécois* away from the historically specific identity of French Canadians has signified that newcomers and non-Christians could now be included. New uses of the terms are indicated by expressions such as *juifs québécois* or *Québécois d'origine juive*, which would have been unthinkable even two or three decades ago. At the same time, levels of antisemitism in Quebec, which had been relatively high (albeit relatively nonviolent) in the interwar period, began to decline quite dramatically, to the point that Quebec could no longer be distinguishable in this regard from other regions of Canada or North America.⁴⁷ Indeed, a majority of Montreal Jews surveyed in recent years have noted that, while they were aware of the phenomenon of antisemitism, they themselves have never experienced it.⁴⁸ Even among the hasidim, who are more easily targeted by antisemites, 49.4 percent declared in a survey conducted in 1997 that they had never been the victims of hostile behavior on the part of the majority.⁴⁹

The constant progression of Jews toward full integration in Quebec French-speaking society—without compromising their religious identity, personal linguistic preferences, or cultural uniqueness—has nonetheless been questioned by some Francophone nationalists. Political choices made by Jews in the polls, notably their opposition to independence, have been perceived by some as a form of collective hostility to Francophone Quebec and a rejection of its political coming of age. A number of incidents have taken place in the last few years in which persons holding public office or important figures have publicly questioned the “loyalty” of the Montreal Jewish community; the most notorious incident was Premier Jacques Parizeau’s comment in 1995 that sovereignty for Quebec had been voted down (by an extremely narrow margin) by the combined forces of wealth and ethnic votes. Montreal Jewish organizations countered such accusations by stating that Québécois Jews had no objection to participating equally as full citizens on all levels of political jurisdiction in Canada, including that of Quebec:

In fact, the vast majority of Jews in our community see no instance of real or potential conflict in such situations. For the most part, they are at ease with the notion of multiple identities as opposed to single identities. It is indeed possible to be at once a Montrealer, a Québécois, and a Canadian without any of these identities appearing to be in conflict and without any of them creating a problem of legitimacy. A great number of recent immigrants, along with many persons born in Quebec, have no difficulty in proclaiming a double allegiance to Quebec and to Canada.⁵⁰

Clearly the Jews’ situation in Quebec today is not analogous with that of Jews under repressive regimes in various times and locales. For one thing, although a majority of Francophones voted in favor of independence in the 1995 referendum, very few among them would describe Canadian federalism as a system that denied its citizens full political rights, regardless of ethnic or religious origins. Québécois Jews would most likely have the same opinion of the various Quebec governments led by the sovereignist forces that have risen to power in the last 25 years; some Francophone nationalist figures, such as the late René Lévesque, are revered symbols of democracy

and political fairness. Regardless of political developments, it seems likely that Jews will continue to play an important role in Quebec society, and that most members of the community will move, on their own volition, closer to the majority Francophone population.

Notes

1. See Jacques Mathieu, *La Nouvelle-France: les Français en Amérique du Nord, XVIe-XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: 1991), 254; Margaret Conrad, Alvin Finkel, and Cornelius Jaenen, *History of the Canadian Peoples*, 2 vols. (Toronto: 1993); and John A. Dickinson and Brian Young, *A Short History of Quebec* (Montreal: 2000).
2. See Pierre Anctil, "À la recherche du paradigme de base de la culture francophone d'Amérique," in *Le dialogue avec les cultures minoritaires*, ed. Eric Waddell (Quebec: 1999), 3–26.
3. See Ronald Rudin, *The Forgotten Quebecers: A History of English-speaking Quebec, 1759–1980* (Quebec: 1985).
4. See Paul-André Linteau, "La montée du cosmopolitisme montréalais," in *Questions de culture* 2 (1982), 22–53.
5. See Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher, and Jean-Claude Robert, *Quebec: A History, 1867–1929* (Toronto: 1983).
6. See Herbert Brown Ames, *The City below the Hill: A Sociological Study of a Portion of the City of Montreal* (Toronto: 1972) (1897); Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: 1993).
7. See Gaston Tisdell, "Esther Brandeau," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2 (Toronto: 1969), 95–96.
8. See Denis Vaugeois, *Les Juifs et la Nouvelle-France* (Trois-Rivières: 1968); Benjamin G. Sack, *History of the Jews in Canada* (Montreal: 1965).
9. See Denis Vaugeois, "Aaron Hart," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4 (Toronto: 1979), 331–333.
10. See, for example, Raymond Douville, *Aaron Hart: récit historique* (Trois-Rivières: 1938).
11. See Gerald Tulchinsky, *Taking Root: The Origins of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Toronto: 1992), 341; idem, *Branching Out: The Transformation of the Canadian Jewish Community* (Toronto: 1998).
12. See Altí Rodal, "Institutions et tendances religieuses jusqu'aux années trente," in *Juifs et réalités juives au Québec*, ed. Pierre Anctil and Gary Caldwell (Quebec: 1984), 171–192; Wilfred Shuchat, *The Gate of Heaven: The Story of Congregation Shaar Hashomayim of Montreal* (Montreal: 2000).
13. See Carman Miller, "Abraham de Sola," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 11 (Toronto: 1982), 253–255.
14. See Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540–1990* (Toronto: 1992).
15. See Pierre Anctil, *Le Devoir, les juifs et l'immigration: de Bourassa à Laurendeau* (Quebec: 1988), 36.
16. See Pierre Anctil, *Le rendez-vous manqué: Les Juifs de Montréal face au Québec de l'entre-deux-guerres* (Quebec: 1988), 39 (table 3).
17. Simon Belkin, *Di Poale-Zion bavegung in kanade, 1904–1920* (Montreal: 1956); the quote is taken from the French version (*Le mouvement ouvrier juif au Canada, 1904–1920*, trans. Pierre Anctil [Sillery: 1999]), 84–85.
18. Israel Mendres, *Montreal of Yesterday: Jewish Life in Montreal 1900–1920*, trans. Vivian Felsen (Montreal: 2000) (1947), 76–77.
19. See Ira Robinson, "Toward a History of Kashrut in Montreal: The Fight over Municipal

By-law 828 (1922–24),” in *Renewing Our Days: Montreal Jews in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Ira Robinson and Mervin Butovsky (Montreal: 1995), 30–41.

20. In his memoir, Simon Belkin recounts an instance in 1915 when uptown Jews in Montreal plotted to neutralize the Labor Zionist organizations that had recently been created by the Yiddish-speaking immigrants:

The adversaries of the *Folks Farband* decided to take advantage of the fact that the meeting of the Canadian Zionist Federation was supposed to take place in the middle of November 1915, by going ahead and convening a general assembly of all Jews. The leaders of the Federation did not need much prodding to act in such a manner, so convinced were they that the activism of the Jewish immigrant masses, and their will to make themselves heard in community forums, constituted a threat to Jewish interests in Canada and to Zionism in general (*Di Poale Zion havegung in kanade*, 267).

21. See Hyman Neamtan, “The Rise and Fall of Jewish Attendance in the Protestant Schools of Greater Montreal,” in *The Canadian Jewish Yearbook, 1940–41* (Montreal: 1940), 2:180–196.

22. See Arlette Corcos, *Montréal, les juifs et l'école* (Sillery: 1997).

23. At the beginning of the 20th century, wealthy and established Montreal Jews lived in the upper part of the city, as opposed to the poorer members of the community who resided close to the port.

24. See Pierre Anctil, “L'école catholique face aux immigrants juifs du début du siècle: rien de plus qu'une tolérance légale,” *Le Devoir*, 6 May 1999 (A-9).

25. See Nathan H. Mair, *Quest for Quality in the Protestant Public Schools of Quebec* (Quebec: 1980).

26. See John Irwin Cooper, “James McGill,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5 (Toronto: 1983), 527–529.

27. See Pierre Anctil, “Interlude of Hostility: Judeo-Christian Relations in Quebec in the Interwar Period, 1919–39,” in *Antisemitism in Canada: History and Interpretation*, ed. Alan Davies (Waterloo, Ont.: 1992), 135–165.

28. See Anctil, *Le rendez-vous manqué*, ch. 3.

29. See Paul-André Linteau, “La montée du cosmopolitisme montréalais.”

30. See Annick Germain and Damaris Rose, *Montreal: The Quest for a Metropolis* (New York: 2000), ch. 3.

31. See Edward Hillel, *The Main* (Toronto: 1987); Aline Gubbay, *A Street Called The Main: The Story of Montreal's Boulevard Saint-Laurent* (Montreal: 1989); Pierre Anctil, *Saint-Laurent: Montreal's Main* (Montreal: 2002).

32. See Pierre Anctil, *Tur Malka: Flâneries sur les cimes de l'histoire juive montréalaise* (Sillery: 1997), 55–74; J. Ignace Olazabal, “Entre les rues Coloniale et Saint-Urbain,” in *Bulletin d'histoire politique* 9, no. 2 (Spring 2001), 84–96.

33. See Mordecai Richler, *The Street* (Toronto: 1969), 55–56.

34. See Sylvie Tashereau, “Nouveau regard sur les relations judéo-québécoises: le commerce comme terrain d'échange, 1900–1945,” in *Juifs et Canadiens français dans la société québécoise*, ed. Pierre Anctil, Ira Robinson and Gérard Bouchard (Sillery: 2000), 33–49; Mercedes Steadman, *Angels of the Workplace: Women and the Construction of Gender Relations in the Canadian Clothing Industry, 1890–1940* (Toronto: 1997), 333.

35. Israel Medresh, *Between Two Wars*, trans. Vivian Felsen (Montreal: 2003), 86; the original version appeared as *Tsvishn tsvey velt milkhomes*, (Montreal: 1964). Other major contributions to this debate are Medresh's recollections of the Plamondon blood libel trials of 1913–1914 in *Montreal of Yesterday*, 121; and R.L. Calder, “Is the French Canadian a Jew Baiter?” in *Canadian Jewish Yearbook 1939–1940* (Montreal: 1939), 153–155.

36. See the observations made by Hirsch Wolofsky in his work of 1946, *Mayn lebns rayze: un demi-siècle de vie yiddish à Montréal*, trans. Pierre Anctil (Sillery: 2000), 132–137; see also those of Medresh in *Montreal of Yesterday*, 118–120.

37. See Everett C. Hughes, *French Canada in Transition* (Chicago: 1943).

38. See Martin Robin, *Shades of Right: Nativists and Fascist Politics in Canada, 1920–*

1940 (Toronto: 1992); Lita-Rose Betcherman, *The Swastika and the Maple-Leaf: Fascist Movements in Canada in the Thirties* (Toronto: 1975).

39. See Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many* (Toronto: 1983).

40. See Michael D. Behiels, *Prelude to Quebec's Quiet Revolution: Liberalism versus Neo-Nationalism, 1945–1960* (Montreal: 1985); Kenneth McRoberts and Dale Posgate, *Quebec: Social Change and Political Crisis* (Toronto: 1980); Alain G. Gagnon and Mary Beth Montcalm, *Quebec beyond the Quiet Revolution* (Scarborough, Ont.: 1990).

41. See *Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, 6 vols. (Ottawa: 1967–1970), 4:41 (table 4). In 1961, the average income according to ethnic origins (based on an overall average of 100) placed individuals of French origin at 98.9; Ukrainians at 92.0; Italians at 71.6; Germans at 106.8; those of British origin at 131.7; and Jews at 148.2.

42. See François Vaillancourt and Christine Touchette, “Le statut du français sur le marché du travail au Québec, de 1970 à 1995: les revenus du travail,” www.cdhowe.org/english/publications/currentpubs.html (9 March 2001).

43. See Gary Caldwell and Eric Waddell, *The English of Quebec: From Majority to Minority Status* (Quebec: 1982).

44. See Pierre Drouilly, *Indépendance et démocratie: sondages, élections et référendums au Québec, 1992–1997* (Montreal: 1997).

45. See Marc V. Levine, *The Reconquest of Montreal: Language Policy and Social Change in a Bilingual City* (Philadelphia: 1990), 197.

46. Canadian Jewish Congress (Quebec region), “Présentation du Congrès juif canadien, région du Québec, à la Commission sur les États généraux sur la situation et l’avenir de la langue française au Québec,” Montreal, 18 March 2001.

47. See League for Human Rights of B’nai Brith Canada, *2000 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents* (Montreal: 2001).

48. See Charles Shahar, *Survey of Jewish Life in Montreal* (Montreal: 1996), part 1.

49. See Charles Shahar, Morton Weinfeld, and Randal F. Schnoor, *Survey of the Hassidic and Ultra-Orthodox Communities of Outremont and Surrounding Areas* (Montreal: 1997), 14.

50. “Présentation du Congrès juif canadien,” 7–8.

French Jews and the “Regeneration” of Algerian Jewry

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The Altaras report is a document that deserves to be widely known, as it is one of the key texts in the history of Jewish emancipation.¹ It was written in November 1842 by two French Jews: Jacques-Isaac Altaras, president of the Marseilles consistory (the official Jewish community) and Joseph Cohen, a lawyer who later became the president of the Algerian consistory. Drawn up with the approval of the French state authorities, particularly the minister of war, this report is remarkably similar to Abbé Grégoire’s *An Essay on the Physical, Moral, and Political Regeneration of the Jews*, which had argued for the emancipation of French Jewry back in 1789, at the time of the French Revolution. Indeed, it could almost be titled *An Essay on the Physical, Moral, and Political Regeneration of Algerian Jews*, as both Altaras and Cohen shared with Abbé Grégoire a scorn for “decadent” cultures and dialects, alongside a firm belief that Jews must be integrated within the state. Adopting as their motto the famous axiom of Count de Clermont-Tonnerre—“everything must be refused to the Jews as a nation in the sense of an established body, while at the same time everything must be granted to Jews as individuals”—Altaras and Cohen came out against the continued existence of a “Jewish nation” in Algeria under the rule of an omnipotent leader known as the *Mekdam*. They denounced the survival of the “state within a state” that led to the Jews’ being classified as a separate entity, subject to special laws and prevented from becoming fully integrated. “Today,” they argued in their report,

when Algerian Jews are told that they are Frenchmen and an integral part of our great political family; today, when they have their rights guaranteed and they are required to fulfill the duties of citizens, is it not a real anomaly to retain a qualification that continues their subservient status by means of limiting their rights to be part of the body politic? Retaining this classification is nothing but a tradition handed down from ancient times . . .²

For Altaras and Cohen, the idea of a Jewish nation appeared to be an “anomaly” that ought to be swept away in the wake of the liberating French colonization, under which the only status to be recognized would be that of “citizens.”

Emphatically hostile to any form of separatism, Altaras and Cohen did not mince their words when attacking rabbis who lived off nothing but "superstitions"; in their eyes, the existence of the *bet din* (rabbinical court) was also to be challenged, since it was "incumbent on a great nation such as France, which in the eyes of all the world's peoples is the standard-bearer of the torch of civilization, not to allow religious judges to have any standing within it if they act in a way that is offensive to our social code."³ To expedite integration, the authors of the report proposed banning the traditional costume (an "attire of dishonor") worn by the Jews; modifying their homes to look more western; enlisting the Jews into the armed forces; and ensuring that their children would benefit from a "regenerating" form of education that would be "constantly and directly supervised by the government" in order to counteract "their native masters, rabbis or cantors . . . who bring to bear on their pupils this harmful influence that distances them from the institutions founded by French society."⁴

Pursuing their line of reasoning to its logical conclusion, Altaras and Cohen cited Napoleon's Great Sanhedrin as their authority and asked for consistories to be set up in Algeria in order to monitor the process of assimilation. In their eyes, "the men of Algeria need vigorous leadership: in a word, an authority that will not merely have the spiritual and more or less nominal power of the French consistories, but will also possess real power to act and even to apply coercion, and which will be able to guide with a firm hand the society that it needs to shape in the process of determining our political and civil status." Since there was "not one single native Hebrew" capable of running these consistories, rabbis from the Metz rabbinical school needed to be brought over from France: in compliance with French legislation, they would be paid by the state in order to be heedful of their civilizing but also colonizing vocation.⁵ Echoing the Jacobin logic that constituted the bedrock of the French Revolution, Altaras and Cohen concluded that "in the case of fallen races, administrative means often constitute the tool needed to bring about civilization."⁶ Neither Abbé Grégoire nor Napoleon would have had any objections to this rhetoric, which assigned a glorious role to the state in its mission of centralizing and standardizing a nation of citizens dissociated from their native cultures.

Like Abbé Grégoire, Cohen and Altaras were concerned with making the Jews "useful" to the French nation, assimilating them by means of altering not only their values but also their occupations—for example, by having them discover the virtues of agriculture. Assimilation would thus be nothing short of a process of "forced modernization," as Elisabeth Friedman has termed it: "Algerian Jews being colonized both by their French coreligionists and by the colonial system of government instituted by France."⁷ To use the expression that Eugen Weber originally applied to French peasants, it might be said that the French state wished to turn the Jews of Algeria into Frenchmen—something that was also a result of French Jewish lobbying. Michael Robert Shurkin notes that "the French Jews asked and were allowed to colonize the Algerian Jewish communities, and it was their intention to do so in exactly the same way as they had regenerated the Jews of Alsace," who were also viewed as "easterners" with an inferior culture.⁸ Thus, the Altaras report expressed sentiments that were widespread among French Jews—so much so that the *Archives israélites* of the period contains an article in which the author claims that "Algerian Jews are known for their excessive and relentless fanaticism . . . I have . . . gone to a number

of synagogues, of which there are vast numbers; French stables are cleaner than their temples . . . As soon as the *sefer* [Torah] comes into view, they throw themselves on it, kiss it, and make a big commotion.”⁹

While the French government of that time refrained from following all of the recommendations made by Marshal Thomas-Robert Bugeaud, the man responsible for maintaining order in Algeria and a proponent of hard-line measures (not seeing fit to hide his antisemitism, he simply proposed “expelling every single Jew from our African possessions”), it also had no intention of going along with the extreme and assimilationist prescriptions urged by Altaras and Cohen. Accordingly, when the traditional Algerian Jewish institutions disappeared and were replaced by consistories in 1845, these were not initially dependent on the Central Consistory in France. Not until 1867 was the Central Consistory granted the centralizing role that enabled it to control more closely the process of assimilating Algerian Jews within both French Jewry and the French nation.

After being on Algerian soil since Phoenician times, the Algerian Jewish community—the sum total of many successive waves of emigration, ranging from Spain to Libya—now met the “Other” not in the form of the Turkish occupier or the Arab *Dey*, but rather in the shape of metropolitan French Jews. Acting as agents of the colonizing state, the native French Jews probed and scrutinized their Algerian coreligionists. In the context of European Jewry, this was a singular occurrence, since only French Jews enjoyed full citizenship within their nation. When German Jews came face to face with their Polish or Russian brethren at about the same time (or a few years later), they could not claim to be expediting the latter’s assimilation on behalf of the German state.¹⁰ Instead, they were simply trying to facilitate the entry of these *Ostjuden* into German culture, lest they themselves be viewed as foreigners. Such concern was rarely expressed by native French Jews, deeply integrated as they were within their state.

Writing in our times, Henri Chemouilli recalls, in a mixed spirit of nostalgia and fury, the splendor of the Algerian Jewish festivals, the pilgrimages and the beliefs verging on superstition—and the contempt in which all of these were held by French Jewry. “Our festivals,” he writes, “were national festivals. In order to prepare them, part of the Jewish nation helped the other; during the festival one half of the Jewish nation visited the other half, which returned the compliment the following day. This is why our festivals are at least two days long.”¹¹ As in the Maori festivals described by Bronislaw Malinowski and analyzed by Marcel Mauss, the Algerian Jews’ festivals meticulously followed the strictest rituals.¹² As such, they had practically nothing in common with the emancipating spirit of reason advocated by French Jews and non-Jews alike. Hence, “France colonized Algeria,” as Chemouilli observes, and “French Jewry colonized Algerian Jewry. But it forced itself on us. As good Frenchmen, the Jews of France felt a distinct repugnance—not to say a manifest antipathy—for the ‘Arab Jews.’”¹³

From the French point of view, the end of the “Jewish nation” came about swiftly, between 1845 and 1871, when the Crémieux decree (of 1870), as will later be described, was promulgated. As a result of this decree, Algerian Jews were transformed into French citizens. A number of contemporaneous reports, such as that written in 1851 by Chief Rabbi Michel-Aaron Weill (at the request of the French Ministry of

Education) leave no doubt as to the strength of French Jewish prejudices at the time. The French chief rabbi was insistent in his condemnation of the "vicious education" of Algerian Jews, the "occult influences" to which they were prey, and their propensity to "exaggeration" and to "unbridled worship."¹⁴ He expressed his pleasure at the fact that the government had the "firm intention of gradually replacing the Hebrews' decrepit arrangements with the French system," particularly since the native rabbis invoked their "fanaticism to defend the ruins of the past every inch of the way."¹⁵ Only individuals riddled with "religious decadence and moral laxity" could "regret leaving Egypt"—the Exodus from Egypt to the Holy Land being likened here to the exodus from pre-colonization Algeria to an Algeria that had become French.¹⁶ Crémieux himself made a similar observation: "Egypt is Algiers, Algiers for my unfortunate brethren, the land of slavery from which they have been liberated for scarcely thirty years . . . They want to be French; they deserve to be French, and shortly they will be French."¹⁷

Those rabbis who were too close in spirit to the as yet "unregenerated" Jews," who strengthened them, as it were, in their way of life in "Egypt" (Algeria, in this case, but also Alsace as it had once been), had little chance of obtaining official employment. For instance, an application by Joseph Sebag for the position of chief rabbi of Tlemcen was rejected by both the Algiers consistory and the Ministry of War on the grounds that he was too closely identified with the customs and practices of the "African" population. Similarly, in Alsace, Chief Rabbi Salomon Klein had been attacked by both the state and the Central Consistory for being overly sympathetic to the customs of the Jews of Alsace. However, while Sebag lost his fight, Klein prevailed, mobilizing the "lower classes" and being stoutly defended by local traditionalists hostile to the Reform movement inspired by the German *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. In the face of this opposition, the Consistory was forced to give in.¹⁸

Contemporary historiography is increasingly discovering signs of resistance to the homogenizing form of assimilation on the part of certain rabbis living in the eastern rural regions of France. In 19th-century Algeria, such resistance was both more noticeable and more widespread. A genuine revolt was staged by the native rabbis, often with the support of the local population, against the consistorial rabbis sent by Paris—who, speaking in the name of reason, manifested their desire to challenge local traditions. Rabbi Abraham Meyer, for example, sparked a local scandal in Tlemcen when he queried the "Frenchness" of the native Jews, also highlighting the Arab character of their customs.¹⁹ In Oran, there was a vehement clash between Simon Kanoui (a Jewish notable and president of the Consistory who was concerned with defending the native Jews' identity) and a number of chief rabbis who had been sent from France, frequently from Alsace or Moselle. Two of these rabbis, Mahir Charleville and Moïse Netter, stood up to Kanoui, but were eventually forced to return to France.²⁰

In Oran, the "extreme slowness" of the process of assimilation into French society was manifested by a stubborn allegiance on the part of the local population to their own traditions, customs, and superstitious rituals.²¹ These continued to be observed even when synagogues were founded in accordance with French Jewish tradition by rabbis who were often, as noted, from the Alsatian Jewish community. The latter came to Algeria in order to "regenerate" the local Jewish community after they themselves

had been subject to transformation on the part of the Jews of Paris. Considered “easterners” or “Orientals” by the Parisians, these Alsatian Jews, by coming to Algeria, could finally see themselves as the bearers of western civilization. Furthermore, in Algeria, they were able to enjoy a career that would have been unattainable in France. An example is the case of a certain Rabbi Lippman of Nancy, who (instead of Rabbi Bloch of Altkirch) was given the rabbinical appointment in Constantine.²²

At the turn of the 20th century, the Alliance Israélite Universelle set up schools in Algeria with the aim of mitigating to some extent the “Frenchification” that all Algerian schools were now striving for. In Algerian schools, according to Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun and Doris Bensimon, “from elementary school up, it was the teaching about France that molded children. They admired Vercingetorix, admired Bayard, admired all the heroes who had made France . . . [T]he little Jew of Algeria admired the same heroes as the little French child of France.”²³ While the Alliance enjoyed a very firm footing in Morocco and to a lesser extent in Tunisia, it came relatively late to Algeria, where the state for many years retained exclusive responsibility for educating all French citizens. Desirous to maintain Jewish identity, albeit with an open-minded approach to modernity, the Alliance set up only a few religious education centers in Algeria. Lessons in these centers were given in French and the values of French Jewry were conveyed—again, largely by teachers from Alsace, graduates of the Colmar or Strasbourg teachers’ training colleges, who spoke either standard French or a variety of dialects with a heavy German influence. Theirs was the task of inculcating sound thinking in children who were frequently at home only in Judeo-Berber.²⁴

The Alliance’s goals were manifest: to “bring a ray of civilization into settings that had deteriorated as a result of centuries of oppression and ignorance . . . to provide Jewish youth and, subsequently, the entire Jewish population with moral education rather than technical instruction.”²⁵ In other words, the goal was still the “regeneration” of Algerian Jews. As with the rabbis imported from France, the Alliance teachers considered the state of Algerian Jewry to be deplorable: in Constantine, for example, “the work of the so-called rabbis” was deemed “sad,” because “nothing remains of what constitutes the very essence of Judaism.” Instead, “rites, words, gestures, usages, customs, make up the sum total of the religion practiced by our brethren.”²⁶ Thus, the Alliance hoped to “decommunitize” Algerian Jewry, while at the same time preserving its Jewish character. The goal was to bring it into line with the national form of French Jewry, according to which assimilation was compatible with maintaining a Jewish identity in the private sphere. This notion is aptly expressed in one of the Alliance’s key reports, dated Algiers, 1900–1901:

. . . those who were emancipated, the vigorous figures who supported the modern ideal despite the crimes committed before their very eyes in the name of civilization, had to be provided with encouragement, had to be asked to make secure their moral being by reestablishing the link with the past; to those whom the acts of violence and crimes had confirmed or returned to the old superstitions, it had to be explained that there is no Jewish religion in the absence of reason and the spirit of progress; to the desperate ones who had abandoned everything, rejecting equally the hope of faith and the promises of science, the clarion call had to go out that man cannot live unless he adheres to something eternal and immutable.²⁷

Algerian Jewry’s full admission to the French public sphere is illustrated by the growing number of Jewish town counselors in various Algerian towns.²⁸ The scope of such admission took on entirely different proportions with the issuing of the Crémieux decree, drawn up in Tours on October 24, 1870, which declared that:

The native Hebrews of the departments of Algeria are hereby declared to be French citizens; as a result, their actual and personal status shall, following promulgation of the present decree, be governed by French law; all rights acquired to date shall remain inviolable. Any legislative provisions, decrees, regulations or orders to the contrary shall be hereby abolished.

This legislative act, signed by Adolphe Crémieux (the minister of justice) and other ministerial figures, was the culmination of a series of declarations and legislative measures designed to promote Algerian Jews’ gradual acquisition of French nationality and citizenship, with their special legal institutions being eliminated one after the other. (In 1864, for example, Napoleon III had exclaimed, while on a visit to Oran, “I do hope that the Algerian Hebrews will soon be French citizens.”) As Emile Touati points out, this decree was not the result of a Jewish “conspiracy” headed by Crémieux, but was rather the outcome of a lengthy process on which the authorities had decided, so as to bring Algerian Jews under the control of the state.²⁹ French Jews, as noted, also wished to see the end of a particularism that they themselves had largely rejected, at least in the public sphere.

Under a number of previous legislative decrees, Algerian Muslims and Jews were included under the same rubric. According to a French senate decree of July 14, 1865, for example:

1) The Hebrew and Muslim natives of Algiers are Frenchmen. They are governed by their personal status, and are allowed to serve in the land and sea forces, as well as most public service jobs in Algeria.

2) They can acquire the rights of French citizens by applying [for citizenship] after they have reached the age of 21. . . .³⁰

The Crémieux decree, however, granted French citizenship to Algerian Jews collectively, whereas Muslims were given the possibility of acquiring French citizenship on the basis of individual application. Few Muslims, however, chose to change their personal status.

With the promulgation of the Crémieux decree, the status of Algerian Jews was turned on its head. Their ancient status as *dhimmi* —a protected people within a Muslim cultural and political sphere—was terminated once and for all with their admission to the French public sphere, where they became bound up with the future of the French nation and hence its presence on Algerian soil.

As had been the case with previous legislative measures, the provisions of the Crémieux decree were sometimes objected to by Algerian Jews, who did not want a system that sought to apply nonreligious laws to vital areas of their lives, such as marriage or divorce.³¹ More significantly, however, it encountered a general lack of understanding among the non-Jewish French population of Algeria. For a long time, the Crémieux decree was considered to constitute convincing proof of an alleged plot by French Jewry both to undermine the Christian nature of French society and to gain the upper hand over Algeria’s Muslims. In the end, it provoked Muslim ire, being per-

ceived as an incomprehensible act on the part of metropolitan France, one that had given an advantage to those whom they frequently despised and considered inferior. French officials posted to Algeria also protested vigorously. One such protest, by Prefect Charles du Bouzet, read as follows:

We are just a handful of Frenchmen in Algeria, facing two and a half million Muslims. Politics require us not to confront their prejudices head on, not to excite their passions, and not to hurt their pride . . . The situation is such that the mass naturalization of the local Jews is considered by the Arabs to be an insult to Muslims. The decree of October 24 is the most disastrous blow ever to French domination.³²

Should not French-style emancipation have been applied universally to Jew and Muslim alike? How could a republican state annex a territory and then leave a goodly proportion of its inhabitants outside the bounds of citizenship? From what unfathomable source did this decision derive, which led France to institute discrimination of a religious or even ethnic nature in conquered territory—a measure that would have been considered beyond the pale within its own national borders? Answers to these questions are beyond the scope of this essay. What is indisputable is that the consequence of the Crémieux decree was an extremely complex interplay of social forces between the three major social groupings in Algeria: the Muslims (hostile to French colonization and frequently criticizing the Jews for their alliance with the colonizers); the local French (extremely ambiguous in their attitudes to the Jews, themselves often professing overt antisemitism, albeit less so than the Italians, Spanish, Maltese, and other recent immigrants); and lastly, the Jews, who, while often opposed to the assimilation implemented by the state, were nevertheless largely in favor of the alliance with France.

This was the case even though, on a local level, the Jews often had genuinely warm social ties with the Muslims. As Friedman notes, “the Jews occupied a contradictory position in this colonial Algeria,” where a real barrier separated them from their Christian fellows, while at the same time they shared with the local Muslims a number of cultural features related to holiday traditions, attire, and rites of passage. Although the Jews categorized themselves as “Europeans,” they knew perfectly well that they were often vehemently rejected by the Christian Europeans. Muslims, on the group level, rejected them as well, yet there were often close relationships between individual Muslims and Jews.³³

Brandished like a red flag and distorted to such a great extent as to lose its real significance, the Crémieux decree became an essential element in the antisemitic mobilization of French circles in Algeria. Even as an unrelenting policy of assimilating Algerian Jews was being pursued in France, a portion of the French civil servants in Algeria supported the antisemitic campaign of figures such as Max Régis and Édouard Drumont, with the result that Régis was elected mayor of Algiers in 1898, while Drumont and three other antisemitic leaders were elected parliamentary representatives for the Algerian cities of Algiers, Oran, and Constantine. It might be said that antisemitism became the official ideology of French Algeria. An antisemitic campaign of fearsome intensity was launched, in which dozens of newspapers such as *A bas les juifs*, *L'Anticlérical juif*, *L'Antijuif*, *L'antijuif algérien*, *Le Clairon antijuif*, *La*

Trique antijuive, and *La Lutte antijuive* spewed out vicious antisemitic propaganda on a daily basis. As the Dreyfus affair reached a climax in early 1898, anti-Jewish riots—in which the Muslims did not take part—broke out in Algiers, Oran, Constantine, and Mostaganem, with the rioters (smoking "anti-Jewish cigarettes" and drinking "anti-Jewish absinthe") singing the "Marseillaise antijuive":

Townsppeople and colonists, Arabs and Roumis [infidels]

United, united, we'll send the Jews packing from our country . . .³⁴

In what became a daily routine of anti-Jewish violence, many Jews were injured and considerable material damage was caused. The Jewish condition became untenable, particularly in view of the fact that (as was not the case in metropolitan France) the police intervened very late, if at all.³⁵ As the president of the Algiers consistory put it:

[The Jews] are entirely barred from public boulevards and local festivities, and even worse, societies for shooting, fencing, music and singing are utterly closed to them . . .

They are barred from practically all major cafes, eateries, and restaurants . . . Lastly, the municipal councils of Algiers, Mustapha, and Saint-Eugene begin and adjourn their public sessions with shouts of "Down with the Jews!" that are taken up by the public, reverberating in the streets, public spaces, and even public transport.³⁶

In sum, the Dreyfus affair unleashed an especially virulent form of antisemitism that led to the Jews' expulsion from the public sphere, despite their status as full-fledged French citizens.

Years later, the outbreak of the First World War reduced tensions, particularly since thousands of Algerian Jews took part in the fighting. However, in the interwar period, the situation deteriorated once again with the rise of Nazism and, in reaction, the formation of the left-wing Popular Front under the leadership of a French Jew, Léon Blum.³⁷ Once again, antisemitic fliers preached unbridled hatred. In August 1934, antisemitic rioting erupted in Constantine and the adjacent region. In all, 24 Jews lost their lives, and many more were injured.

In contrast to the earlier period of anti-Jewish violence, Muslims (influenced, undoubtedly, by the tension between Arabs and Jews in Palestine) took an active role in the rioting of 1934. The situation deteriorated still further with the antisemitic campaigns run by local French Algerian leaders such as Abbé Lambert, the mayor of Oran; Lucien Bellat, the mayor of Sidi Bel-Abbès; and Emile Morinaud of Constantine. These men assumed the torch of the antisemitic struggle that had previously been held by Drumont and Régis.

The Second World War, the formation of the collaborationist Vichy government, and the enactment in October 1940 of regulations governing the status of the Jews had immediate and enormous consequences both in France and in Algeria. The prohibitions enacted by Vichy applied to all Jews, including those Algerian Jews who had chosen to settle in metropolitan France. These were to be deported to the death camps as members of the very "Jewish nation" that the republican state had previously sought to assimilate. Now, however, the Vichy government, together with its Nazi allies, was recreating this "nation" the better to destroy it. Thus some 3,000 Algerian-born Jews were deported from France.³⁸

In Algeria, meanwhile, the Crémieux decree was repealed on October 7, 1940.

Signed by Phillipe Pétain, the head of the collaborationist French government, the new decree drew a symbolic line through the entire Algerian assimilation project, in language that was brief and to the point:

The decree of the Government of National Defense of 24 October 1870 is hereby repealed insofar as it governs the political rights of the native Jews of the departments of Algeria and declares them to be French citizens . . . The political rights of the native Jews of the departments of Algeria shall be governed by the texts laying down the political rights of the Algerian Muslim natives . . . The present law shall be applicable to all beneficiaries of the decree of October 24, 1870 and their descendants.³⁹

Henceforth, Algerian Jews were to have the same status as the local Muslims. This outcome was welcomed by the royalist and nationalist ideologue Charles Maurras as “the end of a 70-year-old scandal.” In contrast, the presidents of the Consistories and the chief rabbis of Algiers, Oran, and Constantine issued a solemn protest, in which they declared: “Previously French citizens, at heart we remain French through and through. Long live France! Long live French Algeria!”⁴⁰

As in France, all Jewish teachers in Algeria were dismissed, a *numerus clausus* system was applied to Jewish elementary and high school students, Jewish property was “aryanized,” and large numbers of Algerian Jews were imprisoned in labor camps (mostly situated in the south of Algeria), under extremely trying physical and sanitary conditions. Rejected by Vichy and by most Frenchmen, the Jews were sometimes aided by Muslim neighbors. In November 1942, hundreds of young Jews led by Henri and José Aboulker played a pivotal role in the success of the Allied landings in Algeria. Notwithstanding, anti-Jewish measures continued to be enforced even after the arrival of General Charles de Gaulle, the head of the Free French forces, in May 1943. This situation utterly baffled Algerian Jews, who failed to understand how it was that Free France—the France of the republic and of emancipation—did not immediately restore their rights. It took U.S. pressure (sparked, in turn, by American Jewish lobbying) for Algerian Jewish rights to be restored on October 20, 1943 with the reinstatement of the Crémieux decree. This extended denial of long-held rights helps to explain why Algerian Jewry was so receptive to Zionist emissaries in the period following the end of the Second World War.⁴¹

The three-way interplay between Jews, Muslims, and the French became more tragic with the rise of Algerian nationalism and the outbreak of the Algerian War in November 1954. The Jews immediately found themselves in an untenable situation, caught between the demands of the Muslims and the violent reactions of non-Jewish Frenchmen. Although there had been a yawning gulf between Algerian Jews and the French since Vichy, the two groups still shared a French nationality to which Jews were deeply attached. Complicating the situation was the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries, as well as the rapprochement between France (hostile to Algerian nationalism) and Israel, which resulted in French-Israeli cooperation during the 1956 Suez Campaign. In Algeria, a number of Mossad agents arrived in order to advise French forces on the ground. Algerian Jews were caught in a baffling web of international relations that was far beyond their control.

Some Algerian Jews joined the armed struggle being waged by the Algerian Front de Libération National (FLN). A larger group, however, took up arms, toward the end of the war, with the opposing French terror group, the Organisation Armée Secrète (OAS), even though this group contained members of some of the most antisemitic and reactionary of French Algerian circles.⁴² Most Algerian Jews supported France, in this way demonstrating their continued loyalty to the republic that had once emancipated them. At the same time, they rejected the official French policy that advocated an independent Algeria—a policy that enjoyed the support of a number of leading French Jewish figures, including Raymond Aron, Pierre Mendès-France, Henri Curiel, and Jean Daniel (the last had an Algerian Jewish background).

In Algeria itself, as a result of the violent Muslim onslaught on the Jews of Constantine, arson attacks on the Batna and Orleanville synagogues, beatings of rabbis, and other violent incidents, Jews in many towns, including Constantine and Batna, set up clandestine armed self-defense groups, whose leaders had often done their military service in the French army or had been trained in Israel.⁴³ Despite this, the FLN tried to attract Algerian Jewish support by guaranteeing the Jews a place in a future independent Algeria. In 1959, the French Fédération of the FLN declared: “You are an integral part of the Algerian people.” In 1962, when some Algerian Jews took part in the final desperate phase of OAS fighting, the FLN continued to argue that “Algerian independence is around the corner, an independent Algeria will need you, and tomorrow you will need it, because it is your country.” For most Algerian Jews, however, such calls were to no avail: mistrust, nurtured by the 1934 pogroms, was too great. Years afterwards, some Algerian Jews still felt that they had abandoned their Muslim countrymen and deeply regretted not having assisted them in their struggle, especially given the aid many Muslims had offered during the Vichy regime. Friedman quotes one Algerian Jew, originally from Batna, who lamented the fact that Jews had failed to “honor their debt”—though at the same time believing that “Israel and the Jews come first.”⁴⁴

With the Evian agreements of 1962, Algeria gained its independence from France. Despite final appeals made by the Algerians to the Jews, between 100,000 and 120,000 Algerian Jews immediately left the country for France as part of a wave of emigration that totaled approximately a million people, mostly repatriated French settlers. Within a few years, practically all of Algeria’s Jews had left. Unreservedly throwing in their lot with France, they abandoned all of their property and turned their backs on a land whose history they had shared for thousands of years. Unlike their coreligionists from neighboring Morocco or Tunisia, very few of them (some 7,000 in all) made their way to Israel—a turn of events that caused great displeasure among the Zionist leadership. Moshe Sharett, for example, mocked these “nouveaux Frenchmen” who preferred France to Israel, while the Zionist paper *La Terre retrouvée* noted this “setback for Israel” and regretted that the mass emigration to France would inevitably lead to “assimilation and a loss of Jewish identity.”⁴⁵

This, however, marked the first time in the long history of Jewish migration that Jews were making their way to a country whose nationality they already possessed. Many Algerian Jews were already quite familiar with France, having studied or done their military service there. Many had relatives in France, and more than 15 percent

had civil service status that could be transferred to the mother country. Finally, the Algerian Jews, like the former French settlers, were welcomed by the authorities and immediately qualified for state assistance. Indeed, as Pierre Kauffmann, the head of the Fonds Social Juif Unifié (FSJU), emphasized in 1962:

those who have French nationality naturally first approach the authorities who are responsible for assisting them. They are confronted by all kinds of practical difficulties in terms of time and desire to contact the [Jewish] community. They decide to postpone such steps to better days. Nevertheless, this failure to establish contact between the community and the new arrivals is a worrying problem.⁴⁶

In fact, French Jewish agencies did provide considerable assistance, starting with the Algerian Jews' arrival at airports and railroad stations, where FSJU envoys awaited them. In an unprecedented move, French authorities agreed to work hand in hand with the Jewish institutions, with the FSJU playing the role of "privileged intermediary" between the Jewish repatriates and the state. Its efforts were intended

to attach the group of Jewish repatriates to the nation as quickly and solidly as possible through the intermediary of their own institutions. This is not so different from the Napoleonic policy toward religious groups. And at the same time, the FSJU, having practically become an assistant of the state, gained in stature over other Jewish institutions that were either older, such as the consistories (particularly the Paris Consistory), or more "political," such as the CRIF [Comité Représentatif des Israélites de France].⁴⁷

One of the reasons why the state was particularly concerned about integrating the Jews of Algeria was that, at the time, it was interested in keeping the expression of forms of communitarianism to a minimum. Hence, it was apprehensive about the arrival in France of refugees who, without being outright OAS activists, were nevertheless often pro-French Algeria and thus hostile to the official policy of supporting Algerian independence.⁴⁸

As French citizens, a considerable proportion of Algerian Jews preferred to approach state institutions rather than religious bodies for any necessary assistance. Unlike previous Jewish immigrants, they viewed themselves as repatriates and had no hesitation in insisting on their rights, which included a repatriation allowance, a sustenance allowance, and various housing benefits. Many even joined national repatriate organizations such as the Rassemblement des Français rapatriés d'Afrique du Nord et d'Outre-Mer (RANFRANOM).

By and large, the Algerian Jews settled in the south of France, in such cities as Marseilles or Toulouse, also establishing or reviving Jewish life in medium-size towns such as Le Havre, Dijon, Agen, Annecy, Luneville, Pau, Bourges, Meaux, and La Rochelle. Their arrival gave French Jewry a new, more visible presence.⁴⁹ Algerian Jews also exhibited markedly upward social mobility, in part because professional barriers that had been retained in Algeria were not present in France.⁵⁰ As Émile Touati notes:

in Algeria itself, access to positions of authority was strictly barred to them. It was possible for an Algerian Jew to enter the Council of State (which had at least one such), or to become a minister's chief of staff or a prefect of the Alpes-Maritimes department: but to do so, he had to have crossed the Mediterranean. In Algeria, it was quite impossible

for him to be a prefect or a high-ranking official in the Government General. At most, he might become a police captain.⁵¹

One of the consequences of this upward mobility (along with an increased sense of individualism, and a concomitant diminishing of communal pressures) was a sharp rise in the level of intermarriage.⁵² This was the ultimate form of gaining admission to French society, with which Algerian Jews had long identified—and within which some of them basically wished to vanish. Exogamous marriages frequently took place among Jews who had previously held relatively high-ranking positions in Algeria.⁵³ In this sense, assimilation was now defined more in terms of the non-Jewish French society. This society, rather than French Jewish society, provided the model to which many Algerian Jews now sought to conform.

At the same time, Algerian Jews often chose to settle within a defined geographic region in order to defend more effectively their collective identity, which differed both from the "Hebrews" of former times and from the Jewish immigrants of Eastern Europe. According to Henri Chemouilli, the long-established French Jews "never knew anything about our lives, our hopes, our struggles, our history" and the Judaism they practiced was "already a cold form of Judaism for us . . . We beg you, gentlemen, stop teaching our children to pronounce the blessing, "Boruch Oto Odonay gohol [sic] Yisroel."⁵⁴ Utterly modern, trusting totally in unfettered assimilation in an individualist society hostile to any survival of collective identity, Algerian Jews paradoxically remained nostalgic about a past charged with emotions that separated them from French Jews. Recriminations vis-à-vis French Jewry were common. One woman wrote:

For Pesach, the Consistory is issuing instructions to the effect that the festival is not over until after nightfall. But back home in Algiers, we prepared couscous on the last evening, beginning at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and it didn't make us any less Jewish! . . . The Consistory is trying to rob us of our identity as Sephardim!

Another woman complained that "for us, as Jews of Algeria, our religion is a religion of joy, of cheerfulness, and suddenly here we find ourselves with a religion that oppresses us, confines us. I just don't agree. I won't follow the Consistory's rules if they don't suit me."⁵⁵ Such comments reflect the immensity of the cultural divide, notwithstanding all the goodwill shown by the French Jews and all attempts to bring the two communities closer together.

In the course of time, Algerian Jews became increasingly visible in national Jewish bodies, both lay and religious, from the Consistory to the rabbinate, and from the FSJU to the senior management of the national press. Jews who hailed from Algeria now spoke on behalf of the entire Jewish "community." Moreover, in a break with the traditional desire of French Jews to blend into the secularized public sphere, the Jews from Algeria were not shy about organizing cultural events, festivities, or even political rallies. The upshot was a greater degree of "autonomization," with Algerian Jews becoming increasingly ascendant on the local level.

In Marseille, where more than 50,000 Algerian Jews made their home, local Jewish life was transformed with the establishment of more than 30 synagogues and some 20 kosher butcher shops, alongside a major community center and numerous cultural

associations.⁵⁶ In Toulouse, where a major social campaign was undertaken by the FSJU to prevent the Algerian Jews from being “diluted,” community institutions took on a more cultural and social (rather than religious) character, and the community became much more “visible.”⁵⁷ In Baumugnes, a picturesque town in the south of France in which many Jews from Batna settled, Jewish life became centered on a number of religious and social institutions. This town was also home to many non-Jewish Algerians of French extraction (the *pieds noirs*) as well as to Algerian Muslims. Algerian Jews had a complex relationship with both of these groups.⁵⁸

In Sarcelles, living side by side with coreligionists from Morocco and Tunisia, Algerian Jews participated in a kind of “ethnicization of politics” that was based on a Jewish community identity and a growing identification with Israel, rather than a strictly religious lifestyle.⁵⁹ Here, too, as in Baumugnes, Strasbourg, Toulouse, or certain Paris neighborhoods (those centering on rue Richet, for example) the public sphere came increasingly to acquire extremely visible and strictly Jewish manifestations. A kind of counter-society was reborn, bound up via the imagination with Israeli territorial spaces: essentially a ghetto, albeit one that was deliberately reconstructed and sought after.⁶⁰

In the end, the arrival in France of Jews who hailed from Algeria brought to a conclusive end the complex and sometimes tragic interplay of intercommunal relationships that had developed along traditional lines in the latter country. It also drastically changed French society by remodeling the traditional republican nature of French Jewry. Growing “communitization,” carried out not only on a “top-down” basis (with the blessing of various socialist governments interested in relegitimizing local cultural identities), but also on a “bottom-up” basis (with the specifically Jewish intention of reconstructing a community that would be visible in the public sphere), owes a great deal to this Jewish immigration.⁶¹ Although some Algerian Jews have gone all the way in the process of assimilating into French society, most of them have opted for the opposite approach, reinventing their community on the basis of sometimes nostalgic memories. In so doing, they have injected new blood into French Jewry, which had previously been characterized by a wholehearted support of the values of rationalist universalism, and which had previously tried, by authoritarian means, to “regenerate” their “backward” brethren.

Having positively “reversed” its most prized values, French Jewry today calls upon the spirit of a different regeneration: the reinvention, within the public space, of a cultural community that will henceforth embody the collective project specific to Algerian Jews.⁶² It is an irony of history that French Jews wanted to “decommunitize” Algerian Jews in accordance with those precepts of the French Revolution to which they had subjected themselves. Having made themselves into a conscious instrument of the assimilationist state, they wished to assimilate their “eastern” brethren. Today, however, as an unexpected outcome of the mass migration of Algerian Jews, there has been a growing recomunitization of French Jewry and a concomitant change in the traditionally subservient relationship between French Jewry and the state—which itself is increasingly less concerned with regenerating and controlling the public sphere.

Notes

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1. The Altaras report ("Le Rapport Altaras") was first published by Simon Schwarzfuchs in his *Les juifs d'Algérie et la France (1830–1855)* (Jerusalem: 1981). For background on this report, see 82–83.

2. "Le Rapport Altaras," 106.

3. *Ibid.*, 119.

4. *Ibid.*, 130, 177.

5. *Ibid.*, 179, 183. As Schwarzfuchs mischievously observes, "the new consistories would be Algerian but without the Algerians!" See his article "Colonialisme Français et colonialisme juif en Algérie, 1830–1845" in *Judaïsme d'Afrique du Nord aux 19^e et 20^e siècles*, ed. Michel Abitbol (Jerusalem: 1980), 46.

6. "Le Rapport Altaras," 187.

7. Elisabeth Friedman, "The Jews of Batna, Algeria: A Study of Identity and Colonialism" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1977; on Microfilms International 1977), 20.

8. See Michael Robert Shurkin's cogently argued "French Nation-building, Liberalism and the Jews of Alsace and Algeria, 1815–1870" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2000), 145–156.

9. *Archives israélites* (May 1840), quoted in Michel Abitbol, "La rencontre des juifs de France avec le judaïsme d'Afrique du Nord," in *Actes du colloque international sur les relations intercommunautaires juives en Méditerranée occidentale XIII^e–XX^e siècle* (Paris: 1984), 231.

10. See Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison: 1982).

11. Henri Chemouilli, *Une diaspora méconnue: les juifs d'Algérie* (Paris: 1976), 89.

12. These were rituals that Arnold Van Gennep, the eminent ethnographer, had witnessed decades earlier in the Algerian city of Tlemcen on the occasion of a great pilgrimage to the grave of a rabbi who had performed numerous miracles in the 14th century. He describes them in his work *En Algérie* (Paris: 1914), 84.

13. Chemouilli, *Une diaspora méconnue*, 67–68. Chemouilli notes that at the end of the Second Republic, the leaders of Algerian Jewry submitted numerous petitions calling for "the great sacrifice, the abandoning of our personal status, the end of the Jewish nation," and asks: "How could our forefathers have made such a mistake?" (*ibid.*).

14. "Situation des Israélites en Algérie: rapport général," in Simon Schwarzfuchs, *Les juifs d'Algérie et la France*, 286, 288, 297.

15. *Ibid.*, 306, 315.

16. *Ibid.*, 320, 349.

17. Quoted in Claude Martin, *Les Israélites algériens et la France, de 1830 à 1902* (Paris: 1936), 116. On a number of occasions, Crémieux acted in the name of the strong, centralized French state while at the same time heading the Central Consistory. In so doing, he was following the policy of a number of other "state Jews" of his time. See Pierre Birnbaum, *The Jews of the Republic: A Political History of State Jews in France from Gambetta to Vichy*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Stanford: 1996).

18. Shurkin, "French Nation-building, Liberalism, and the Jews of Alsace and Algeria," 244 ff.

19. Michel Abitbol, "The Encounter between French Jewry and the Jews of North Africa: 1830–1914," in *The Jews in Modern France*, ed. Frances Malino and Bernard Wasserstein (Hanover, N.H.: 1985), 34, 47–48.

20. See Richard Ayoun, *Typologie d'une carrière rabbinique: l'exemple de Mahir Charleville* (Nancy: 1993). See also the colorful description by Henri Chemouilli of the clash between the Jews of Oran and Rabbi Netter ("Une diaspora méconnue," 39); and David Nadjari, *Juifs en terre coloniale: le culte israélite à Oran* (Nice: 2000), 68 ff.

21. Nadjari, *Juifs en terre coloniale*, 126.

22. See Shurkin, "French Nation-building, Liberalism and the Jews of Alsace and of Algeria," 176–177, 190–191, 201.
23. Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun and Doris Bensimon, *Juifs d'Algérie hier et aujourd'hui: mémoires et identités* (n.p.: 1989), 156.
24. Shurkin, "French Nation-building, Liberalism and the Jews of Alsace and of Algeria," 289 ff.
25. Quoted in Aron Rodrigue, *De l'instruction à l'émancipation: les enseignants de l'Alliance israélite universelle et les juifs d'Orient, 1860–1939* (Paris: 1989), 77.
26. Ibid., 108.
27. Ibid., 101–102.
28. Simon Schwarzfuchs, "Judéité, urbanité et citoyenneté: l'exemple algérien," in *Les juifs et la ville*, ed. Chantal Bordes-Benayoun (Toulouse: 2000), 161–162.
29. Émile Touati, "Le décret Crémieux," *Information juive* (Feb. 1961).
30. Cited in Michel Ansky, *Les juifs d'Algérie: du décret Crémieux à la Libération* (Paris: 1950), 34.
31. Elisabeth Friedman has published the November 1872 instructions from the Central Consistory to the Algiers consistory, in which the latter was told to comply with French law in the area of civil law and to refuse to perform secret marriages that bring "disgrace on our coreligionists." The Central Consistory was counting on "your patriotic sentiments, on your devotion, and your enlightened assistance to aid us to promptly accomplish the regeneration of our coreligionists of Algeria" ("The Jews of Batna, Algeria," 56–57).
32. Quoted in Michel Abitbol, *Le passé d'une discorde: juifs et Arabes depuis le VII^e siècle* (Paris: 1999), 289.
33. Friedman, "The Jews of Batna, Algeria," 3, 140 ff.
34. See Geneviève Dermenjian, *L'antisémitisme dans l'Algérie coloniale* (Paris: 1986); Yves Déloye, "Citoyenneté et sens civique dans l'Algérie coloniale: l'émancipation politique de la minorité juive au 19^e siècle" (Ph.D. diss., Université Paris I, 1987); Paul Siblat, "Cagayous Antijuifs," *Mots* (Oct. 1987), 18. On the Constantine pogroms, see the documents published by Robert Attal in *Regards sur les juifs d'Algérie* (Paris: 1996), 191 ff.
35. See Pierre Birnbaum, *The Anti-Semitic Moment: A Tour of France in 1898*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (New York: 2003), ch. 9.
36. Quoted in Michel Abitbol, *Le passé d'une discorde*, 293. See also 290–303.
37. Pierre Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France: A Political History from Léon Blum to the Present*, trans. Miriam Kochan (Oxford: 1992), ch. 12.
38. Michel Ansky, *Les juifs d'Algérie*, 329.
39. Quoted in *ibid.*, 88.
40. Quoted in Michel Abitbol, *Les juifs d'Afrique du Nord sous Vichy* (Paris: 1983), 64–65.
41. A few dozen young Algerian Jews from Batna left secretly for Israel in 1948; most of them stayed. See Friedman, "The Jews of Batna, Algeria," 176.
42. Régine Gontalier, "Les juifs et l'O.A.S. en Oranie," in *Les relations entre juifs et Musulmans en Afrique du Nord, 19^e–20^e siècles* (Jerusalem 1980), 188–196.
43. Michael Laskier, *North African Jewry in the Twentieth Century: The Jews of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria* (New York: 1995), 318, *passim*. On the armed Batna group, see Friedman, "The Jews of Batna, Algeria," 187–188. This group was adamantly pro-French Algeria but opposed to the OAS.
44. Friedman, "The Jews of Batna, Algeria," 189.
45. Quoted by Michel Abitbol, "La Cinquième République et l'accueil des juifs d'Afrique du Nord," in *Les juifs de France de la Révolution française à nos jours*, ed. Jean-Jacques Becker and Annette Wiewiorka (Paris: 1998), 313. See also *La Terre retrouvée*, 15 July 1962.
46. Quoted in Colette Zynnicki, *Les juifs à Toulouse entre 1945 et 1970: une communauté toujours recommencée* (Toulouse: 1998), 156.
47. Ibid., 132–133.
48. In an official note from the administration, it was observed that "community action has moreover always been more effective since the Algerian Jews, unlike those who have immigrated from Central Europe, have a French cultural background. Their capital has been invested

in France. Their religious awareness has faded before their national awareness, because they were sure, here, of being able to remain both French and Jewish" (P. Baillet, "Les Rapatriés d'Algérie," in *Notes et études documentaires*. La Documentation française, no. 4276–6).

49. Abitbol, "La cinquième République et l'accueil des juifs d'Afrique du Nord," 308–312 ff.

50. Doris Bensimon-Donath, *L'intégration des juifs nord-africains en France* (Paris: 1971).

51. Émile Touati, "Portrait d'une Communauté," *Evidences* (Jan. 1).

52. Zytnicki, *Les juifs à Toulouse entre 1945 et 1970*, 241 ff. See also Bensimon-Donath, *L'intégration des juifs nords africains*, 206–208.

53. Pierre Birnbaum, "Devenir des juifs d'Etat: de la visibilité à la discrétion," in *Religion et action dans l'espace public*, ed. Pierre Bréchon, Bruno Duriez, and Jacques Ion (Paris: 2000), 162.

54. Chemouilli, "Une diaspora méconnue," 301.

55. Quoted in Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun and Doris Bensimon, *Juifs d'Algérie, hier et aujourd'hui*, 66–67.

56. Jean-Jacques Jordi, *De l'exode à l'exil: rapatriés et Pieds Noirs en France: l'exemple marseillais. 1954–1992* (Paris: 1993), 214 ff.

57. Zytnicki, *Les juifs à Toulouse entre 1945 et 1970*, 130 ff, 143ff, 181, ch. 7.

58. Friedman, "The Jews of Batna, Algeria," ch. 6.

59. See Emmanuelle Saada, "Les territoires de l'identité," *Géneses* (March 1993), 115.

60. As a woman from Algeria put it: "the Sephardim have discovered the Polish ghetto." Quoted in Sylvie Strudel, "Ostentations religieuses et pratiques politiques: le cas du judaïsme sarcellois," in Bréchon, Duriez, and Ion (eds.), *Religion et action dans l'espace public*, 176. See also Laurence Podselver, "De la périphérie au centre: Sarcelles ville juive," in Bordes-Benayoun (ed.), *Les juifs et la ville*, 88; Annie Benveniste, "Sarcelles, du grand ensemble à la ville juive," in *ibid.*, 75–76. On ties with Israel, see Doris Bensimon-Donath, *L'intégration des juifs nords-africains en France*, chs. 27 and 28.

61. On "top-down" and "bottom-up communitization," see Pierre Birnbaum, *Jewish Destinies: Citizenship, State, and Community in Modern France*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: 2000), ch. 12.

62. See Véronique Poirier, *Ashkénases et Séfarades: une étude comparée de leurs relations en France et en Israël* (Paris: 1998), 181.

From Dhimmis to Colonized Subjects: Moroccan Jews and the Sharifian and French Colonial State

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An apocryphal story told in 1998 about Simon Lévy, the Jewish deputy elected from Agadir, recounts that during his electoral campaign for the Moroccan parliament, he made the following speech: “I promised you running water in your districts, didn’t I keep my promise?”

The crowd responded: “Yes!”

He continued: “I promised to bring you electricity, didn’t I keep my promise?”

The crowd shouted: “Yes, thank you!”

Lévy insisted: “What else can I do, become a Muslim?”

The crowd cried out: “No, absolutely not!”—the implication being that the region of Agadir would be much better represented by a Jew than by a Muslim. As this anecdote shows, the idea of Jewish know-how, which is found in the discourse of the Moroccan state and king, is rooted as well in the popular imagination.

The notion that Jews knew how to do things that Muslims did not was always a component of the sharifian state ideology. Although Jews, according to Islamic principles, were regarded as inferior to Muslims, they were also considered *dhimmis* (lit. “protégés”)—protected non-Muslims—and this implied as well a certain privilege. As “people of the book,” the Jews were entitled to practice their religion and to preserve their own self-governing institutions under the protection of the state, provided that they accepted both the payment of the *jizya*, the annual poll tax, and a number of legal disabilities that symbolized their inferiority to Muslims.

The emphasis on the protective implication of dhimmi status, with the state as guarantor of the security of the non-Muslim, is found in post-colonial Moroccan historiography. In this nationalist interpretation of Moroccan history, the state as protector is the measure of the benevolent relationship between Muslims and Jews; the generally good relationship, it is claimed, was only disturbed as a result of the divisive and destabilizing influence of the foreign powers. Furthermore, the existence of Jews in high positions is seen as evidence of their favored position in Moroccan society.¹ This idea is echoed in an interview given by King Mohammed VI in 2001. In response to a question on Morocco’s role in the Middle East peace process, the king noted: “We

have always had Jewish advisors, ministers, and ambassadors, and there was no difference between a Muslim Moroccan and a Jewish Moroccan.”² In fact, the evidence provided by the king describes Jews who were privileged rather than merely equal.

In Morocco and elsewhere in the Muslim world, the theoretical role of the ruler was to uphold Islamic law (the *shari‘a*) and therefore to guarantee the protection of *ahl al-dhimma*. In the Middle East, the term *dhimmi* applied to Christians and Jews. But in the Maghrib, because of the disappearance of native Christians in the Middle Ages,³ it became the legal term for Jew. Thus, in Morocco, the justification for the existence of non-Muslims in the Islamic state, as formulated in the 7th-century pact of ‘Umar, applied only to the Jews.

To understand Moroccan history, one must appreciate the special status of its rulers. A descendant from the Prophet was known as a *sharif* (hence “sharifian”); in Morocco and elsewhere in the Muslim world, the construction of genealogies claiming descent from Muhammad was a legitimizing principle for dynasties from the first centuries after the rise of Islam.⁴ In Morocco, however, Berber dynasties since the eighth century based their claim to rule on tribal descent. Although this was a source of strength during the early phases of the dynasty, it was also the cause of its eventual decay, as Ibn Khaldun observed firsthand in the 14th century, while in the course of producing his famous theory of history.⁵

The Sa‘dian dynasty (16th century) and then the ‘Alawid dynasty (17th century onwards) revived the principle of sharifian descent, using it to legitimize their rise to power and subsequent rule. Precisely because of his sharifian descent, the ‘Alawid ruler—called “sultan” in western languages—was able, at least in principle, to transcend tribal differences and to create an alliance between tribes and urban groups. This unifying ideology was achieved and sustained even in the absence of political stability. Amid the internal disorder of the 16th century and the external threats posed by Iberian incursions on both the Atlantic and Mediterranean littoral in this period, sharifian ideology was a model for state power. The ability of the sharifian state to survive did not mean that the governing authorities were unchallenged by rebellions. In fact, there were frequent revolts against the sultan’s efforts to collect taxes and assert political control, but it was not the sharifian ideology that was questioned. Rather, rebellions to depose the sultan usually rallied behind an ‘Alawid pretender whose legitimacy was based on his own sharifian claims.

The sharifian ideology was maintained through the ritualized elevation of the sultan in the hierarchy of power, which resulted in the subservience of the governed to the sultan. In part, the sanctification of the ruler can be understood in the context of the wide dissemination of Sufism in the period before the rise of the sharifian state. In the mystical Sufi model, as Mohamed Tozy has argued, humility and even humiliation are fundamental to initiation in the mystical process: “Servility manifests the act of submission to God. It is one of the conditions of approaching Him and participating in His power.”⁶ The place of the sharifian ruler at the top of the social hierarchy was expressed culturally through an elaborate etiquette of the royal court that included rituals such as hand-kissing, the giving and receiving of gifts, and royal processions. The sultan, as descendant of the Prophet, was the “commander of the believers” (*amir al-mu‘minin*), the patriarch of a large family that extended (in real terms) over a large retinue of courtiers, servants, and slaves of the many palaces—

and, symbolically, over all his subjects. The royal court, or *dar al-Makhzan*, the center from which this power emanated, was a seat of both fear and reverence.⁷

Moroccan Jews were both a part of and outside this system of domination and obedience. Although their obedience to the sultan was obviously not based on the belief that the sultan was descended from the Prophet, Jews who went to the court participated in the rituals associated with the sharifian ruler. The Jewish elite joined Muslims of power and wealth in the rite of *hadiyya*, or giving gifts to the sultan, on the occasion of Muslim festivals, though the sultan received Jews separately from Muslims. During these elaborate ceremonies, both Jews and Muslims also received presents and privileges. This was a means by which social hierarchies were reaffirmed, with the sharifian ruler at the top of the pyramid, and it also demonstrated the principle that Jews were an integral part of the system, no more or less obsequious than their Muslim counterparts.⁸

Yet at the same time, Jews, as *ahl al-dhimma*, were considered to be religiously inferior and contemptible, and therefore isolated symbolically from the rest of society. As protégés of the Islamic state and dependent on the sharifian ruler for their protection, Jews were not part of the tribal system of power on which Muslim society was based. This offers an explanation for the Jews' special relationship with the sultan. The sharifian ruler, outside the tribal context of power, was feared and venerated because of his aloofness from the population. In this sense, the Jews and the sharifian ruler shared something that the Muslim population did not: both, in theory, were outside the political system of alliances based on one's tribal or regional identity. Thus, a kind of personal co-dependency between the sultans and the Jews developed because of the social separation of both from society.

The sharifian state reinforced the Islamic concept pertaining to *ahl al-dhimma* through the personage of the sultan. It was the personal obligation of the sultan to protect the Jews; failure to do this would underscore the weakness of the state itself.⁹ Thus, the ability of the sultan to protect his Jewish subjects was important for legitimizing the power of the royal court. For example, still relatively early in his reign, Sultan 'Abd al-Rahman wrote to the governor of Tetuan in 1825: "The Jews' protection is inviolable; as [our Prophet Muhammad] said . . . 'Whoever ill-treats them will be accountable to me on the Day of Judgment.'"¹⁰

This personal obligation to protect the Jews was manifested in a number of ways. The confinement of Jews to the mellah, for example, can be understood as a means for the sultan to legitimize his rule.¹¹ The term "mellah" was derived from the name of a district in the Marinid capital of Fez where the Jews were first confined in the 15th century, but it came to refer to all of the Jewish quarters of Morocco, and by extension, the Jewish community of a given town. Building its base of power from the southern capital of Marrakesh, the Sa'dian dynasty established Morocco's second mellah. One motive for creating the mellah in Marrakesh may have been the increase in Jewish population, especially following the influx of Jews from Spain, but it may also have served a political purpose for the dynasty: by protecting the Jewish population in an enclosed Jewish quarter, as already existed in Fez, the Sa'dians were legitimizing their claim to royal authority.¹²

The creation of mellahs also gave expression to the distinctive relationship between the Moroccan state and the Jews. The mellahs provided the government with greater

means to protect the Jewish communities. Although the Jews saw it as a great trauma when their actual confinement took place in a particular city, it can be argued that this living arrangement constituted a privilege—albeit fraught with ambivalence—not granted to the Muslim population.

The special protection guaranteed to them by the sultans also explains why Jews were entrusted with important roles in the sharifian state.¹³ Muslims might be appointed to positions because the sultan was interested in balancing or co-opting competing centers of political power in the country, but this always came with considerable political risk. Jews, in contrast, had no independent base of power from which they could threaten the central governing authorities, but rather obtained positions as the ruler's personal protégés. Furthermore, Jews were a useful, and at times even indispensable, instrument of state power. The employment and protection of privileged Jews by the state was justified by the Jews' "profitability" for the Muslim community. In real terms, the sultans' Jewish agents were sometimes called upon to raise money for the *Makhzan* (the term for the central government in Morocco) from the Jewish community as a whole.¹⁴ On a symbolic level, the idea of the Jews' profitability was manifested in the annual obligation to pay the *jizya*.

Foreign trade was an important component in building state power for the 'Alawid dynasty. A certain paradox was involved in the state's relation to the non-Islamic world: although peaceful relations were necessary, jihad against the Christians was part of the sharifian ideology. As the rightful head of the Islamic government, the sultan, as "commander of the believers," was required to fight against the encroachments of Christian Europe, especially since Spanish and Portuguese incursions were a major threat to the territorial integrity of the Moroccan state. On the one hand, the ruler's ability to govern was measured by his ability to fight the infidel. On the other, while jihad was a part of the ideological foundations of the sharifian state, peaceful commercial relations with Christian states were justified by Muslim jurists on the principle of strengthening the position of Muslims precisely in order to pursue the goal of jihad.¹⁵

The employment of Jews helped overcome the contradictory aims of conducting both peaceful trade and jihad.¹⁶ Muslim religious leaders (the '*ulama*') frequently denounced the corrupting influence of Christians in Morocco, and until Morocco succumbed to the pressure of the European powers in the mid-19th century, there were severe restrictions on the places in which Christians could reside, especially in the country's interior (where the major cities were located). Moreover, Moroccan Muslims rarely ventured to Christian countries. Travel to the Christian world was considered akin to a passage from the pure Islamic realm (*dar al-Islam*) to the impure realm of the infidel (*dar al-harb*), and Muslim embassies abroad were sanctioned only because they were deemed to advance the cause of Islam.¹⁷ By employing Jews, already unbelievers, as royal merchants in the Moroccan ports and as emissaries in Europe, the sharifian rulers could avoid the corrupting influence caused by direct contact with Christians. Although jurists in Morocco differed over the degree to which Jews and Muslims should intermingle, they were generally in agreement that the sultan could acquire funds needed for jihad from the Jews.¹⁸ Finally, and just as important as any ideological reason, there was always the risk that Muslim subjects could acquire arms and revenue from trade with Europeans and then establish an indepen-

dent base of power. This in fact was a perennial problem, especially along the southern Atlantic coast. It was one of the reasons why Sultan Sidi Muhammad b. 'Abdallah founded the port of Essaouira in 1764 and concentrated Moroccan trade in the hands of a group of commissioned merchants, most of them Jews who posed no such threat.¹⁹

Thus Jews became much more numerous than Muslims in foreign commerce. In Essaouira, which became Morocco's principal seaport, Jews constituted more than 90 percent of the merchants of considerable means (*tujjar*) engaged in the European trade.²⁰ While Muslim merchants were also subservient to the sultan, depending on him to authorize and finance their trade, there was an additional element of servility in the relationship between dhimmis and the sharifian ruler. Jews were the special protégés of the sultan both because they were agents of the state and because of their status as *ahl al-dhimma*.

In official government documents, the sultans and their officials often refer to Jewish merchants and courtiers as "our Jews" and occasionally "our chattel."²¹ This does not mean that the Jews were tantamount to slaves, for they were considered by jurists to be free. Rather, Jews became royal merchants or courtiers as legally free individuals who sought to enhance their own position of power and wealth. Being a royal merchant was a privileged position but at the same time involved a degree of servitude to the sultan. Moreover, royal merchants were vulnerable to unpredictable commercial actions and policy changes by the sultan. Since they traded on the credit of the Makhzan, they could not develop as independent agents; their goods and properties were subject to arbitrary confiscations, and they were at times compelled by the government to undertake specific commissions.

This privileged yet subservient relationship affected both the residence and movement of the elite Jewish *tujjar*. Jewish merchants were settled in Essaouira when it was developed as Morocco's main seaport in the 1760s and 1770s. The Makhzan leased them houses, at low rents, in the newly built casbah, which meant that their choice of residence was subject to government decision.²² Travel outside Morocco often required the sultan's authorization, which came after the merchants pledged their property and goods as collateral. Often they had to leave their wives behind as well, even when their journey abroad was of considerable duration.²³

Since maintaining an elite of Jewish merchants was recognized as an attribute of royal power, the sultans safeguarded the merchants' privileges. Apart from the sultan, local governing authorities were also obliged to protect the interest of the Jewish *tujjar*. Regarding the preeminent royal merchant of his time, a man named Meir Macnin, Sultan Sulayman decreed in 1809 to the governor of Essaouira: "You should keep the merchant, the son of Ibn Macnin, in his customary position of respect and preferential treatment over other *ahl al-dhimma*, so that he can perform his duties in our sharifian service. Grant to him what is necessary for this, and do not let anyone humiliate him."²⁴ The status of royal merchants was passed down within the family of merchants, and with each successor to the throne, in an official letter of renewal. For example, a royal edict (*dahir*) of Sultan 'Abd al-Rahman in 1857 proclaimed the importance of Jacob and Abraham Corcos, underlining how much the treasury had profited from them. Similarly, the prince (*khalifa*) and future sultan Muhammad demanded that year that the newly installed governor of Essaouira safeguard these two

merchants, who were among the “most profitable” of the sultan’s Jews.²⁵ Whereas the letters from the palace to individual Jewish *tujjar* would stress the friendship between the sultan and the merchant, the relationship was legitimized to government officials in terms of its profitability for the treasury. Yet it was more than mere revenue that perpetuated the relationship between the sharifian ruler and the privileged Jews. The descendants of Meir Macnin, for instance, continued to be subsidized by successive sultans long after the family’s commercial importance had ended, symbolizing how much the patronage of the Jewish elite was a measure of royal power.²⁶

The sultans’ Jews would in turn use their royal connections to enhance their status within the Jewish community. Yet this close link to royal authority had its risks, not only for the individual Jewish agent but also for the community as a whole. While the sharifian state was obligated to protect the Jewish community, in its official discourse it maintained Islam’s disdain of Jews as a collective group. Rulers could deflect discontent against unpopular financial policies by victimizing their Jewish agents (or at least appearing to do so), and this could have implications for the Jewish community as a whole.

However, very rarely in Moroccan history was there a general unleashing of violence against the Jews. The most noted exception to the rule of royal protection occurred from 1790–1792 during the short and violent reign of Mawlay al-Yazid, who initiated pillaging against the Jewish quarter and executed a number of prominent Jewish courtiers.²⁷ Yet the violence at this time was also directed at the wider population. Moreover, al-Yazid’s reign was understood by both the Jewish community and the new sharifian ruler as an aberrant violation of the Islamic pact of protection. Mawlay Sulayman, the sultan who eventually gained power following al-Yazid, was a pious and benevolent ruler.²⁸ He was scrupulous in his attention to the *shari‘a* and took pains to safeguard the Jews’ dhimmi status. He also allowed the Jews of Fez to dismantle a mosque that had been built in the mellah. Attracted to the Wahhabi doctrine that had emerged in Arabia during this period, Sulayman was ideologically opposed to the corruption caused by “innovation” (*bid‘a*) and sought to return to the purity of early Islam, with its model of the just and equitable ruler. He was critical of the hypocrisy of Muslim merchants who, with their allegations of fraud, sought to have restrictions imposed on their Jewish competitors. In order to alleviate the tax burden that fell on the Jewish community as a whole, he reduced the rate of the *jizya* while at the same time both requiring Jewish notables to pay in proportion to their wealth and disallowing exemptions of Jews who claimed particular ties to the Makhzan.²⁹

At the same time, Sulayman tightened the reins of control. In the first decade of the 19th century, he ordered the construction of new mellahs in Essaouira, Rabat, Salé, and Tetuan in response to Muslim claims that the Jews were violating religious boundaries by such acts as breaking a bottle of wine near a mosque or selling eau-de-vie to Muslims; chanting too loudly in the synagogue; or living too close to the site of a mosque under construction.³⁰ Such claims justified the need to protect the Jewish community from disturbances arising from too close cohabitation with the Muslims. Even as he asserted his moral authority by fulfilling his duty to protect the dhimmis, the sultan was aware of the perception that overly close contact between Muslims and non-Muslims corrupted society.³¹

The Jews also understood that crossing boundaries marking their subordination as dhimmis could undermine the balance of Moroccan society. Hence Jews everywhere wore distinctive clothing, differentiated by black garments; removed their shoes when walking near a mosque or other Muslim shrine; and in some towns walked barefoot outside the mellah. Jews continued to pay the *jizya* throughout the era of sharifian rule and frequently received a symbolic blow on the neck to mark their subordination. Even the elite Jews were not exempt from these requirements—they may well have understood that it was the outward signs of subordination that protected their position of superior wealth and property over most of the Muslim population.³² The strict interpretation of the law pertaining to *ahl al-dhimma* was certainly preferable to the anarchy that prevailed in the two violent years of al-Yazid's reign.

Yet with the acceleration of trade and contact with Europe in the first half of the 19th century, especially following the French invasion of Algeria in 1830, the Jews were presented with new possibilities to cross interreligious boundaries. Tensions emerged in the first decade of the 19th century when some native Moroccan Jews, who had become the subjects of foreign powers, began wearing European dress instead of the distinctive Moroccan Jewish clothing. The sultan saw this as a threat to Moroccan sovereignty and often confronted the European powers over this issue.³³ It remained unresolved for several decades until finally, in 1831, after negotiations with the British, the sultan 'Abd al-Rahman agreed that Jews coming to Morocco from Gibraltar would be allowed to wear foreign clothing, although for no longer than one month.³⁴ Another cause for concern were the Algerian Jews coming to live in Morocco as "foreigners."³⁵ The sultan sought to prevent any distinction between "foreign" and "native" Jews by applying dhimmi status to both, a battle that Morocco lost because of foreign intervention and threats.

The French attack on Morocco at Isly and the bombardment of the ports of Tangier and Essaouira in 1844, the signing (under considerable pressure) of the Anglo-Moroccan commercial treaty of 1856, and Spain's war against Morocco in 1859–1860 marked turning points in the progressive weakening of Moroccan sovereignty. New tensions arose in the relationship between the state and the Jews. The growing failure of the sharifian state to withstand foreign interference made it ever more imperative to maintain order from within, and the state's ability to protect and control the Jews increasingly became a measure of its power.

Jews, for their part, were now more frequently associated with the enemy. In 1844, for example, a number of Moroccan Jews fled to Gibraltar on board French ships prior to the French attack on Isly. More commonly, Jewish merchants absconded without paying their debts to the Makhzan.³⁶ In 1846, the sultan issued an edict to the governor (*qa'id*) of Tangier that required the latter to take measures to prevent Jews from leaving the northern ports. The edict proclaimed that the departure of Jews jeopardized Islam both because of losses in *jizya* revenue and because Jews would betray the Muslims by pointing out their weak spots.³⁷ Similarly, in 1849, the *qa'id* of Tetuan was instructed to scrupulously collect the *jizya*.³⁸

Over time, the question of the Jews' relationship to the state became more closely connected to the expansion of foreign influence in Morocco. More than other groups, the Jews were viewed by European countries as vital intermediaries for conducting trade in the countryside. As a result, European countries granted consular protection

to many Jewish merchants, frequently making them official trade representatives.³⁹ Jews who represented European countries were found not only in Tangier, Tetuan, Rabat, El Jadida, Safi, and Essaouira but also in the major inland cities and even in rural Moroccan communities.

In itself, the presence of foreign agents in the region was nothing new. For centuries, the European powers had established embassies and consulates in the Ottoman empire. These were based on “capitulations,” treaty arrangements that enabled foreigners to reside and conduct trade in the empire. Morocco had concluded similar treaties with foreign countries, which had resulted in foreign residents being granted extraterritorial rights under the protection of their consulates. Increasingly, however, foreign consulates were issuing patents of protection to local agents as well. At first, Morocco viewed such an arrangement as necessary to facilitate trade. But during the 19th century, consular protection became a major destabilizing force, being used as a means of commercial penetration, often to the disadvantage of local merchants. Meanwhile, a growing number of Moroccan Jews became naturalized citizens of foreign powers, either while residing in Morocco or, more frequently, after having gone abroad to Algeria or Gibraltar.⁴⁰ This situation was a direct challenge to Muslim authority and sovereignty—all the more so as the Jews were the very people that the Islamic state was required to protect.

By the latter half of the 19th century, nearly every Moroccan Jewish merchant with any significant business with Europe became a protégé of a foreign state. The protection offered by the foreign powers began to challenge that offered by the Islamic state as represented by the sultan. Jews increasingly turned to the European powers to look after their interests, in addition to—or instead of—the traditional protection of the Moroccan ruler. From a variety of locations in the interior of Morocco, such as N’tifa to the east of Marrakesh, Ilich in the Anti-Atlas, and especially in the High Atlas town of Demnat, allegations of persecution against Jews by local authorities were brought to the attention of foreign consulates, in addition to Jewish organizations and the Jewish press. In Demnat, for instance, the European embassies got embroiled in a dispute in 1884 involving the arbitrary actions of the town’s governor, and this became a cause célèbre for European diplomatic missions in Morocco.⁴¹

As indicated, European Jews also entered the picture in the mid-19th century, lobbying their governments and consulates in Morocco to intervene on behalf of the local Jewry and vigorously supporting the continuation of consular protection. The most famous event was the visit of the elderly leader of England’s Jewish community, Sir Moses Montefiore, to Morocco in the winter of 1863–1864. Following the execution of a Jew and the imprisonment of several others in the town of Safi, Montefiore embarked on a mission to Marrakesh to meet with the sultan, Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Rahman. His intention was to pressure the sultan to implement Tanzimat-like reforms (instituted by the Ottoman sultan) that would eliminate the legal disabilities associated with dhimmi status. In response, the sultan diplomatically issued a *dahir* that in effect reiterated the traditional Islamic system of justice and protection of the Jews, without calling for any reform of the system itself.⁴²

Notwithstanding, the Montefiore visit was a symbolic turning point for the Moroccan Jewish communities, which henceforth sought the intervention of foreign governments in their disputes with Muslim authorities. The impact of the Montefiore visit

was also noted by the '*ulama*' who, from this period on, more frequently complained of the Jews' haughtiness and growing tendency to violate dhimmi status. Here it is important to note that Muslims as well as Jews became protégés of foreign powers. However, it was the Jews' empowerment via foreign protection that caused far more alarm, since Jewish subordination to the state symbolized the superiority of Islam at a time when the weakness of the sharifian government was becoming increasingly apparent.

A new privileged class of Jews now emerged in Morocco—those who, as protégés of European countries, escaped the jurisdiction of the Makhzan. Nonetheless, many of them continued to maintain close ties with the sultan. Members of the Corcos family, for example, served as consular representatives of foreign countries while at the same time becoming more closely linked with 'Abd al-Rahman.⁴³ While some of the protégés may have escaped payment of the *jizya* and the other restrictions on dhimmis, they remained in a position of dependency vis-à-vis the sultan, renting Makhzan property, receiving loans, and repaying monthly installments on their debts. Therefore, to a certain extent there was continuity between the new Jewish elite and the old, with the privileged Jewish families positioning themselves in accordance with shifts in the Moroccan power structure.

Morocco's last efforts at general reform at the beginning of the 20th century could do little to thwart the designs of the foreign powers, which culminated in the occupation of the country by France and Spain in 1912. The alleged failure of the sharifian state to ensure the protection of the Jewish community was among the factors justifying foreign intervention. As noted, post-colonial Moroccan historiography generally places the blame for the disrupted harmony that had existed between Muslims and Jews on foreign intervention, starting with the system of consular protection and continuing with the occupation of Morocco (and later, the intensive Zionist campaign that brought about a mass exodus of Moroccan Jews to the state of Israel). Built into this theory is the assumption that Muslim-Jewish relations were always harmonious and that the traditional protection of the Muslim state provided a system in which Muslims and Jews could coexist peacefully. There is a certain truth in this assumption, and it is also the case that foreign intervention and colonial rule both disrupted previous patterns of social relationships and increased tensions between Muslims and Jews, while also stripping away the traditional pact of protection offered by the state.⁴⁴ Yet in seeking to account for the mass departure of the Jewish population, there is a retrospective telescoping of history that both idealizes the harmony between Muslims and Jews in pre-colonial Morocco and exaggerates the rupture caused by colonialism.

As a rule, colonialism favored and manipulated minority groups as a method of control, and this usually led to new forms of interethnic or interreligious tensions. In Morocco, the connection that already existed between a sector of the Jewish population and the French led to significant repercussions during and following the establishment of colonial rule. In some cases there was violence. In April 1912, for example, a serious incident occurred when the Moroccan army was establishing order in Fez under the command of French troops. Basing itself on charges that the Jews were involved in the contraband sale of arms to the rebellious Berber tribes, the military command offered a reward of 50 francs to anyone who discovered a hidden cache of

arms. The result was the pillaging of the mellah; according to the director of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) school in Fez, soldiers secretly deposited cartridges in Jewish shops and then brought in military authorities to arrest the store-owners.⁴⁵ In its report on the atrocities that ensued (“the first time in the modern history of Morocco that a mellah as large as Fez has been devastated, pillaged, and burned”), the Alliance offered a telling comment on the link between colonialism and Moroccan Jewry:

Moroccan Jews have always been considered by France as pioneers of the French civilization in Morocco; thanks to the schools of the Alliance, of which the oldest have already existed for fifty years, they have been the active auxiliaries of French consuls and agents with the view of expanding French influence and prestige in the country. The enthusiastic welcome that they gave the French soldiers and the satisfaction that they displayed for the establishment of the protectorate naturally elicited the hatred and vengeance of the adversaries of the French action.⁴⁶

In fact it is difficult to assess the real extent to which the Jews, as a community, welcomed the arrival of the French. Contrary to the Alliance report, there may have been many who feared the arrival of a new regime and the inevitable erosion of the traditional authority exercised by the sultan. The French, for their part, formulating their policy on the basis of their experiences in Algeria and Tunisia—and especially their misgivings over having granted French citizenship to Algerian Jews in 1870—were reluctant to show favoritism to the Jews because of the reaction this might elicit from the Muslims. Instead, under the guise of protecting and reforming native institutions, the protectorate authorities pursued a local policy that gave priority to their relationship with the Muslim population. As Daniel Rivet writes: “It would be fair to say that the Jews were considered to be the unloved of the protectorate. No halo of romantic ‘nativephilia’ surrounded them with a haze of affection, as it did the Muslims.”⁴⁷

As indicated by the Alliance report, the ever-growing number of Jews educated in Alliance schools welcomed the protectorate, hoping that the French would not only provide greater security but would also extend civil rights to the Jewish community. Seeking to obtain privileged status under the French, the Moroccan Jewish elite demanded adjudication in the new French courts rather than in the Makhzan⁴⁸ courts. Their real hope was to obtain French citizenship for all of Moroccan Jewry, as had been granted to the Jews of Algeria. But the French, apart from individual exceptions, preferred to keep the Jews under the jurisdiction of the Makhzan, seeking to minimize the discontent that might be provoked were the Jews to be given special privileges.

The theory underlying the notion of a protectorate was indirect rule—that is, reforming rather than replacing native institutions. Thus Louis-Hubert Lyautey, the chief architect of the French protectorate, preferred to retain the symbols of the Makhzan as a means of legitimating French rule while at the same time rendering subservient the traditional Muslim leadership. Pursuing a “politique d’association,” Lyautey attempted to recruit the Muslim urban elite into an alliance with the protectorate government. But in Lyautey’s vision of preserving sharifian sovereignty, Jews were left totally out of the picture, not even referred to as “Moroccans.” In his patrimonial role of mediator between different Moroccan groups, Lyautey favored very

moderate reforms for the welfare of the Jewish community as a whole without any fundamental transformation of its position in society.⁴⁹

Repeated efforts by the Jewish elite to obtain French nationality for Moroccan Jewry were thus to no avail. Official pronouncements in favor of granting French citizenship to the Jews were probably intended to placate the Jewish leadership. In fact, the colonial government in Morocco feared that massive naturalization would disrupt its policy of maintaining the equilibrium between Jews and Muslims and would provoke a violent reaction among the Muslim population.⁵⁰ Jewish advocates of naturalization were embittered by the fact that their community remained under the jurisdiction of the Makhzan and also lost some of the privileges it had enjoyed in precolonial days. In addition, most of those Jews who formerly had enjoyed extraterritorial status as protégés of foreign powers lost their privileged position, at least to some extent. The protectorate attempted to end the system of capitulations, which it saw as an obstacle in the way of administrative reform. With the establishment of the protectorate, French consulates (except in the international city of Tangier) were removed—and with them, the extraterritorial privileges that had been extended. In 1914, with the onset of the First World War, the capitulatory privileges of Germany and Austro-Hungary were also revoked. Only England and the United States retained their privileges, but even here, the number of local protégés was greatly reduced. Although ex-protégés still had recourse to the French courts, they were now considered Moroccan subjects in matters of personal status.⁵¹

Reforms that the protectorate government did introduce in the Jewish institutional structure, such as limiting the jurisdiction of the rabbinical courts (*batei din*) were not those that advocates of naturalization had sought.⁵² Following the implementation of a number of reforms in 1918, Lyautey assured the French foreign minister:

Moroccan Jews have no reason to complain against the protectorate, which has always been committed to maintaining an equal balance between them and the Muslims by according them the benefits of all the reforms implemented in this country. Nevertheless, one fears that as a result of the war and under the pressure of American Jews encouraged by the success of the Zionist idea, we may be overwhelmed by claims, supposedly emanating from Moroccan Jews, to grant the latter a special status.⁵³

Although fearful of the power of the Jewish lobby and the growth of the Zionist movement, Lyautey and the protectorate authorities were able to resist the pressure placed on them by the Jewish elite to remove the Jews from the jurisdiction of the Makhzan, where they remained under the judicial authority of the *bashas* and the *qa'ids*.

In a legal sense, to be sure, protectorate reforms granted Jews the same rights as Muslims. This idea was expressed by Lyautey in a circular sent in 1918 to French military authorities around the country:

Since the protectorate began, Moroccan Jews have benefited from reforms introduced in the interest of all the subjects of the sultan, without distinction to race nor confession; today, they enjoy the same civil and political rights as Muslims. . . . This equality is manifest in all domains of political and economic life; Jews are found in municipal councils, Chambers of Agriculture and Commerce, and in all the representative organs that take part in public life.⁵⁴

In this circular, Lyautey was essentially justifying reforms pertaining to the Jewish community (which were not universally welcomed by the Jews) on the grounds that these advanced the cause of equality between Jews and Muslims. Left out of his argument was the fact that Jews were totally absent in the Makhzan administration. Jews could not be appointed as judges, urban governors, or rural or tribal chiefs—any position, in other words, where they would be able to preside over disputes involving Muslims.⁵⁵

Thus Jews remained at the margins of the political structures that the protectorate established, underrepresented in municipal councils and absent (until 1947) in the government consultative council. Six Jews were eventually admitted to this council, probably as a result of lobbying by the Alliance.⁵⁶ It was an advisory body only, and the Jews in any event had minimal influence.

Largely excluded from the governing organs created by the colonial authorities, the Jews also lost a large measure of their former privileged autonomy. It is true that the elimination of dhimmi status (part of a broader reform that limited the authority of the Muslim religious court system) released the Jews from various inequities embedded in Muslim law.⁵⁷ However, with the exception of issues relating to personal status and inheritance, which still fell in the province of the *batei din*, the Jews were now to be adjudicated in the local courts presided over by a Muslim judge (represented by a *basha* or a *qa'id*). In the sharifian state, the *qa'ids* had been mainly responsible for criminal law. Under the French, whereas limitations were placed on the amount of fines and length of prison sentences the *qa'ids* could impose, their jurisdiction was extended to include civil and commercial matters that formerly had been adjudicated by Muslim religious judges. Moreover, the reconstructed Makhzan court system was placed under French control, overseen by local French officials in the Native Affairs department.⁵⁸ The reorganization of the old chieftaincy system under the control of protectorate authorities was one of the foundations of colonial domination through indirect rule. French authorities did all they could to co-opt the *qa'ids*—which in practice meant giving them free reign over their districts so long as they did not come into conflict with French interests. Local *qa'ids* often appropriated large amounts of property, implemented corvée labor, or embezzled funds through the local judiciary system without any interference from French officials.⁵⁹

While the corruption of the Makhzan system affected the entire population, it had particular consequences for the Jews. Under the old dhimmi regime, rabbinical courts had been granted a large measure of judicial autonomy for internal Jewish matters. As noted, the French restricted the power of the *bet din* to matters concerning marriage, divorce, and inheritance. According to a well-known contemporaneous observer, Joseph Goulven, retention of the rabbinical courts amounted to a continuation of Jewish privilege, almost tantamount to the extraterritorial rights enjoyed by foreigners during the precolonial era.⁶⁰ Yet although Jews “escaped the shari‘a” in matters of personal status, they now had to appear before the Makhzan courts for a wide variety of issues that formerly had been dealt with by the *bet din*. During the protectorate period, Jews frequently complained that a Jew’s testimony did not carry the same weight as did that of a Muslim.⁶¹

The French regime also eliminated inequities between Muslims and Jews in terms

of rights of residence and land ownership. No longer were Jews compelled to live within the walled confines of the mellah in locations where such residential restrictions were still in place. The Alliance urged the Jews

to participate in all the initiatives of progress that the occupation should bring with it . . . [T]he Central Committee of the Alliance is concerned to make the Jews, wherever possible, leave the walls of the mellahs where they are enclosed and to facilitate their acquisition of lands which would allow them to live in conditions of hygiene that they have not known until the present time.⁶²

Yet Jews by and large continued to inhabit the mellahs, whether out of economic necessity, social exclusion (in some instances, Jews complained about obstacles placed in the way of those who sought to live or to buy property in quarters outside the mellah), or cultural preference.⁶³ In a sense, it can even be argued that the largest mellah in Moroccan history developed during the colonial period, as poor Jews from all parts of Morocco migrated to Casablanca and settled in a densely populated and primarily Jewish district, with many of the more affluent Jews relocating to the more desirable neighborhoods.⁶⁴ A similar situation developed in other Moroccan cities. Although Jewish districts were still referred to as mellahs, colonialism brought a new type of habitat more closely akin to the modern urban ghetto, where a concentration of Jewish poor was to be found in squalid neighborhoods, while the more “Europeanized” Jews inhabited the “ville nouvelle.”⁶⁵ The mellah had previously contained a socially more differentiated cross-section of the Jewish population. Thus, although the colonial state eliminated a number of legal inequities, it contributed to growing class distinctions within the Jewish community.

As has been seen, the primary goal of French policy toward Moroccan Jews was to control them (in a very discreet manner, as Lyautey put it), so that its broader policy regarding the Muslim population would not be disrupted. On the one hand, the colonial administration to some extent perpetuated the old system of separation, and thus separate Jewish institutions such as local committees (*comités*), rabbinical courts, Jewish schools, special sections on municipal commissions, and separate wards in hospitals continued to exist.⁶⁶ On the other hand, it restricted the autonomy of Jewish communal institutions both by limiting their functions and by making them answerable to the administration. The *comités*, for instance, which formerly had been responsible for a range of institutions in the community, were now expected to deal solely with ritual and charitable matters.⁶⁷ In 1919, the protectorate created a new post, that of “inspector of Israelite institutions.” Appointed to this position was Yahya Zagury, who was previously a dragoman for the French consulate, president of the Casablanca Jewish community since its foundation in 1907, and decorated as chevalier in the Legion of Honor for having guided the first debarkation of French troops in Casablanca.⁶⁸ Zagury was regarded as indispensable by Lyautey, serving as a loyal and compliant intermediary between the French authorities and the Jewish communities.

By now, the French no longer needed Jewish courtiers of the old sharifian model to serve as intermediaries between Morocco and Europe. Unable to compete with the large colonial companies who were supplied with capital from France, the *tujjar* lost their privileged position, and many of them went bankrupt. “For them,” Rivet noted,

“colonial capitalism meant the end of ethnic commerce.”⁶⁹ Still, in the early years of the protectorate, the French authorities employed many Jews in administrative positions, there being both a lack of sufficient European settlers and a growing number of French-educated Jews. As more Europeans arrived in the 1930s, the quasi-monopoly of Jewish merchants in the coastal towns was broken, and settlers increasingly filled even the lower ranks of the French administration. Nevertheless, the number of Jews working in the French administration remained disproportionately higher than Muslims. A disproportionate number of Jews also worked in new occupations practiced in the European quarters—for example, as plumbers, electricians, mechanics, and printers. The commercial stock exchange instituted in 1920 had no Muslim brokers, whereas there were 26 Jewish members. In part because of the educational efforts and training provided by foreign Jewish organizations, especially the Alliance and ORT, the number of skilled Jewish workers continued to grow disproportionately, especially after the Second World War.⁷⁰

Despite the French policy of not granting privileges to the Jewish minority, a new generation of Jews developed with greater cultural ties to France. Above all, this was because of the Alliance, which, with French support, became the quasi-official system of modern Jewish education in Morocco in 1924.⁷¹ In the 1930s (when French military authorities finally secured control of southern Morocco), and especially following the Second World War, the Alliance further expanded its network of schools. A new elite of Jews found employment in European companies and banks and joined the ranks of the liberal professions.

As a result, many Jews looked toward France for their political future, whereas very few became involved in the developing Moroccan nationalist movement.⁷² Meanwhile, Zionism was also on the rise. Beginning at the end of the 19th century, a scattering of Moroccan Jews formed Zionist organizations that became affiliated with the World Zionist Organization. Owing in part to a more tolerant attitude of the protectorate authorities from the mid-1930s, secular Zionism grew significantly in Morocco during the 1930s and 1940s, especially among urban Jewish youth. By this time, the study of modern Hebrew was also making inroads throughout the Moroccan communities.⁷³

But Zionism never developed into a mass political movement in Morocco as it did in Eastern Europe. Following the First World War, a trickle of Jews immigrated to Palestine. Lyautey and Zagury viewed Zionism as an impediment to controlling the Jewish communities and acculturating them to the French language and values.⁷⁴ Yet to a certain extent, those Jews who were acculturated into the more modern political culture represented by Zionism were drawn to France and to the French culture espoused by the teachers in the Alliance schools. Indeed, although the Alliance leadership was for many years opposed to political Zionism, it came to recognize “how much the education and spirit given by the institutions of the Alliance are likely to favor French interests in Palestine by creating centers of French language and culture.”⁷⁵

The masses of Jews who eventually immigrated to Israel were neither well educated in French nor involved in Zionist political movements, although they had naturally been aware of developments in Palestine and later, Israel. Rather, the establishment of the state of Israel elicited a profound religious response.⁷⁶ Thus, active

participation in political Zionism was not a precondition for immigration to Palestine; other push and pull factors led to the mass immigration to Israel as the struggle for Moroccan independence unfolded in the 1950s.

Finally, the maintenance of the 'Alawid dynasty by the colonial state, and the rallying of the nationalist movement around the future King Mohammed V, preserved the connection of the Jews with the dynasty despite their very limited participation in the nationalist movement. King Mohammed V was much venerated by the Jews as a ruler who fulfilled the traditional role of protector. During the Second World War, when the Vichy regime established in Morocco attempted to rigorously apply the racist *Statutes des juifs*, Mohammed V was believed to have refused to cooperate with the French protectorate authorities. While his role as protector of the Jews in the war may not have been as proactive as many Moroccan Jews believed, his sympathetic attitude toward his Jewish subjects resulted in his untarnished image among Moroccan Jewry.⁷⁷ Upon his death in 1960, the Jewish masses poured out into the streets in a great display of public mourning, a scene attested to by Muslim Moroccans to this day.⁷⁸

During the colonial period, three apparently conflicting components of identity characterized Moroccan Jewry: identification with the French nation, support for Zionism and the state of Israel, and loyalty to the sharifian dynasty. Though these three components may appear to be ideologically inconsistent, for most of Moroccan Jews the boundaries between them were fluid. The reasons for the fluidity of these boundaries are connected to both the continuities from the pre-colonial sharifian state, and the new identities that developed under colonialism.

During the colonial period, most Moroccan Jews had limited access to French political culture. Unlike their coreligionists in Algeria who obtained citizenship *en bloc*, Moroccan Jews remained subjects of the sultan, and their formal self-governing institutions were weakened without a strong secular civil culture arising in their place. As a consequence, the role of informal religious culture, especially saint veneration and pilgrimages to the graves of prominent rabbis, was enhanced—assisted, ironically, by the improvement of roads and increased security in the countryside.⁷⁹

A strong civil culture also failed to develop in the wider Muslim society, which was inhibited by the pretenses of the French respect for native institutions and culture. The independence movement in Morocco proved to be mostly conservative, with a Muslim reformist orientation: the nationalists' rallying around the symbol of the sharifian sultan reflected the ambivalent development of the modern Moroccan nation-state. Following the Second World War, a Moroccan national identity of sorts began to coalesce among a minority of Moroccan Jews at the same time that Zionism was growing in strength. Yet the nationalist movement in Morocco, while arguing that Jews were an integral part of the nation, failed to attract many Jewish participants (compared to a much greater number who became Zionists) because of its predominantly Muslim cultural agenda. Furthermore, a growing number of Muslims associated Moroccan Jews either with the French colonialists or with Zionism, making it difficult for them to consider Jews as part of the emerging Moroccan nation. Hence, of the small number of Jewish political activists, more became involved with left-

wing political parties rather than with the more traditionalist Istiqlal party of the Muslim nationalists.⁸⁰

While Jews remained attached to their local religious communities, a wider consciousness of Moroccan culture gradually developed within the boundaries of the colonial state, reinforced by better networks of communication and the emergence of a mass culture of saint veneration. In a sense, it was *religious* culture that defined the Jews' Moroccan nationalism in the period after independence. In addition, loyalty to the king—indeed, a reliance on the protection of the palace—became part of what constituted a Moroccan national consciousness. Much as in the precolonial state, the Jews in post-colonial Morocco were both part of and outside the sharifian system of government, which in some ways was more powerful than before, supported by the coercive apparatus of the army and state. Despite the gradual emigration of all but several thousand Moroccan Jews in the decades following independence, there were still Jews in high positions as businessmen, political advisers, and even occasional parliamentarians closely connected to the palace.

The continued display of loyalty to the sharifian king during the reigns of Mohammed V and Hassan II, and continuing into the 21st century under Mohammed VI, reflects the endurance of a popular Moroccan Jewish cultural identity that developed on a national scale during the colonial period. Adherence to this culture, however, has not excluded an identity that assimilates the multiple encounters of Moroccan Jewry with the outside world, including the French nation and culture and Zionism and the state of Israel. This multifaceted culture has not simply disappeared in the Moroccan communities in Israel, France, and North America, but has rather evolved into a common bond that is tied to the myth of a Moroccan cultural homeland.

Notes

1. See, especially, Germain Ayache, "La minorité juive dans la Maroc précolonial," *Hespéris-Tamuda* 25 (1987), 147–168. For the major study of Muslim-Jewish relations in Morocco, see Muhammed Kenbib, *Juifs et musulmans au Maroc, 1859–1948* (Rabat: 1994).

2. http://www.mincom.gov.ma/french/generalities/samajeste/mohammedVI/discours/2001/Interview_AsharqAl-Awsat.htm.

3. On the disappearance of indigenous Christians from the Maghrib, see Xavier de Planhol, *Minorités en Islam: géographie politique et sociale* (Paris: 1997), 194–201.

4. There is much discussion about the origins and development of sharifian ideology in Morocco at the end of the Middle Ages. See Mohamed Kably, *Société, pouvoir et religion au Maroc à la fin du "Moyen-Age" (XIV^e–XV^e siècle)* (Paris: 1986), 291ff; Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (New Haven: 1968); Henry Munson, Jr., *Religion and Power in Morocco* (New Haven: 1993), 17–20; Abdelahad Sebti, "Cherifisme, symbole et histoire," *Oriente Moderno*, n.s. 18 (1999), 629–638; idem, "Au Maroc: sharifisme citadin, charisme et historiographie," *Annales ESC* 41 (1986), 433–457; Jacques Berque, *L'intérieur du Maghreb, XVe–XIXe siècle* (Paris: 1978), 171–176; Johan de Bakker, "Slaves, Arms, and Holy War: Moroccan policy vis-à-vis the Dutch Republic during the Establishment of the 'Alawi Dynasty" (Ph.D. diss., University of Amsterdam, 1991), 4–9; Vincent J. Cornell, "The Logic of Analogy and the Role of the Sufi Shaykh in Post-Marinid Morocco," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 15 (1983), 67–93.

5. Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (New York: 1958).
6. Mohamed Tozy, *Monarchie et Islam politique au Maroc* (Paris: 1999), 38; see also Mohammed El Mansour, *Morocco in the Reign of Mawlay Sulayman* (Wisbech, England: 1988), 16–18.
7. Tozy, *Monarchie et Islam politique*, 40–44.
8. See Rahma Bourqia, “Don et théatralité: réflexion sur le rituel du don (*hadiyya*) offert au sultan au XIX^e siècle,” *Hespéris-Tamuda* 31 (1993), 61–75. For descriptive examples, see Daniel J. Schroeter, *The Sultan's Jew: Morocco and the Sephardi World* (Stanford: 2002), 85–86.
9. See Yaron Tsur, *Kehilah keru'ah: yehudei maroko vehaleumiyyut, 1943–1954* (Tel Aviv: 2001), 44–45.
10. Quoted in Muhammad Da'ud, *Tarikh Titwan* (Tetuan: 1979), 8:81–82; cited and analyzed by Ayache, “La minorité juive dans la Maroc précolonial,” 155.
11. On the origins and development of mellahs in Morocco, see Daniel J. Schroeter, “The Jewish Quarter and the Moroccan City,” in *New Horizons in Sephardic Studies*, ed. Yedida K. Stillman and George K. Zucker (Albany: 1993), 67–81; ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Khamlishi, “Hawla mus’ala bina’ al-millahat bi-l-mudun al-maghribiya,” *Dar al-Niyaba* 4 (1987, pp. 21–28) and 5 (1988, pp. 30–41); David Corcos, *Studies in the History of the Jews of Morocco* (Jerusalem: 1976), 64–130; Simon Lévy, “Hara et mellah: les mots, l’histoire et l’institution,” in *Histoire et linguistique, colloque et séminaires* 20, ed. Abdelahad Sebti (Rabat: 1992), 41–50. On the mellah of Fez, see also Susan Gilson Miller, Attilio Petruccioli, and Mauro Bertagnin, “Inscribing Minority Space in the Islamic City: The Jewish Quarter of Fez (1438–1912),” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 60, no. 3 (2001), 312–313.
12. See Emily R. Gottreich, “Jewish Space in the Moroccan City: A History of the Mellah of Marrakesh, 1550–1930” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1999), 65–72.
13. Cf. Kenbib, *Juifs et musulmans au Maroc*, 33–36, 43–44.
14. This happened, for example, in Tetuan in 1770–1771; see ‘Abd al-Rahman Ibn Zaydan, *Ithaf a’lam al-nas bi-jamal akhbar hadirat Miknas*, 5 vols. (Rabat: 1929–1933), 3:255.
15. See Daniel J. Schroeter, “Royal Power and the Economy in Precolonial Morocco: Jews and the Legitimation of Foreign Trade,” in *In the Shadow of the Sultan: Culture, Power, and Politics in Morocco*, ed. Rahma Bourqia and Susan G. Miller (Cambridge, Mass.: 1999), 77–78.
16. See Patricia Mercer, “Palace and Jihad in the Early ‘Alawi State in Morocco,” *Journal of African History* 18 (1977), 549–553.
17. See Muhammad al-Saffar, *Disorienting Encounters: Travels of a Moroccan Scholar in France in 1845–1846: The Voyage of Muhammad as-Saffar*, trans. and ed. Susan Gilson Miller (Berkeley: 1992), 53–54.
18. See, for example, a *fatwa* dealing with a request by Jews of Fez to build a bath (*hammam*), in P. Paquignon, “Quelques documents sur la condition des Juifs au Maroc,” *Revue de Monde Musulman* 9 (1909), 117.
19. Prior to the establishment of Essaouira, a governor of Agadir, al-Talib Salih, had rebelled against the sultan by appropriating trade profits for himself. See René Basset, *Relation de Sidi Ibrahim de Massat* (Paris: 1883), 26–27; Ahmad b. Khalid al-Nasiri, *Kitab al-istiqa’ li-akhbar duwal al-Maghrib al-Aqsa*, 2nd ed., 9 vols. (Casablanca: 1954–1956), 8:20. Contemporaries stressed the military character of the new port. See Ahmad b. al-Mahdi al-Ghazzal, *Natijat al-ijihad fi muhadana wa-al-jihad* (Algiers: 1984), 38–39.
20. See Daniel J. Schroeter, *Merchants of Essaouira: Urban Society and Imperialism in Southwestern Morocco, 1844–1886* (Cambridge: 1988), 23–29.
21. This sense of possession is expressed in a letter by the prince and future sultan, Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Rahman, concerning the prominent merchant Shlomo Corcos in 1843. See Michel Abitbol, *Tug’ar al-sultan: ’ilit kalkalit yehudit bemaroko* (Jerusalem: 1994), 1, 2 (n. 5). The term “our chattel” (*mata’ana*) is used in reference to Meir Macnin. See Levy-Corcos Papers (Paris) (henceforth: L-C), 13 Rabi’ II 1209 (7 Nov. 1794), Mawlay ‘Abd al-Salam to Mawlay ‘Abd al-Malik.
22. See Schroeter, *Merchants of Essaouira*, 18–19.

23. See Jean Louis Miège, *Le Maroc et l'Europe, 1830–1894*, 4 vols. (Paris: 1961–1963), 2:28–29.
24. L-C, 24 Jumadi I 1224 (7 July 1809).
25. Ibid., 11 Rabi' II 1274 (29 Nov. 1857), Khalifa Muhammad to Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Salam Ibn Zakur. The text of the letter is found in Abitbol, *Tug'ar al-sultan*, 12.
26. See Schroeter, *Sultan's Jew*, 148–153.
27. For a discussion of these events, see *ibid.*, 26–29; cf. Kenbib, *Juifs et musulmans au Maroc*, 47–50.
28. See Shalom Bar-Asher, "Antisemitism and Economic Influence: The Jews of Morocco (1672–1822)," in *Antisemitism through the Ages*, ed. Shmuel Almog (Oxford: 1988), 203.
29. See Kenbib, *Juifs et musulmans au Maroc*, 50–52, and n. 113; Schroeter, *Sultan's Jew*, 87–90; El Mansour, *Morocco in the Reign of Mawley Sulayman*, 14, 18–19, 132–143.
30. See David Corcos, *Studies in the History of the Jews of Morocco* (Jerusalem: 1976), 92–93, 104, 121–122; Muhammad Da'ud, *Tarikh Titwan*, 6 vols. (Tetuan: 1959–1966), 3:238–239; Kenneth L. Brown, "Mellah and Madina: A Moroccan City and its Jewish Quarter (Salé ca. 1880–1930)," in *Studies in Judaism and Islam*, ed. Shelomo Morag, Issachar Ben-Ami, and Norman A. Stillman (Jerusalem: 1981), 154–155; David Ovadiyiah, *Kehilat Sefru*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: 1976), 1:103–4; El Mansour, *Morocco in the Reign of Mawlay Sulayman*, 15; Kenbib, *Juifs et musulmans au Maroc*, 53 and n. 122.
31. For a harsh early 19th-century critic of the evil influences of Muslim contact with both foreign Christians and native Jews in Morocco, see Muhammad al-Du'ayyif, *Tarikh al-Du'ayyif*, ed. Ahmad al-'Amari (Rabat: 1986).
32. See Susan G. Miller, "Dhimma Reconsidered: Jews, Taxes and Royal Authority in Nineteenth-Century Tangier," in *In the Shadow of the Sultan*, 103–126.
33. See James Grey Jackson, *An Account of Timbuctoo and Housa* (London: 1820), 296–297; Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands* (Philadelphia: 1979), 367, citing Public Record Office (London), Foreign Office (henceforth: FO) 174/10; Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton: 1984), 154–155; James Riley, *An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the American Brig Commerce* (Hartford, Conn.: 1846), 257; Jean-Louis Miège, *Chronique de Tanger, 1820–1830: journal de Bendelac* (Rabat: 1995), 277–278.
34. FO 52/53, 22 Jumada I 1247 (29 Oct. 1831) (original English translation); FO 174/126, 29 Oct. 1831.
35. On Moroccan Jews becoming naturalized French citizens in Algeria and then returning to Morocco, see Miège, *Le Maroc et l'Europe, 1830–1894*, 2:674–677.
36. See Kenbib, *Juifs et musulmans au Maroc*, 64–65.
37. al-Khizanat al-Hasaniyya, Rabat (henceforth: KH), 23 Jumada I 1262 (19 May 1846), Sultan 'Abd al-Rahman to Busilham b. 'Ali.
38. KH, 9 Safar 1266 (25 Dec. 1849), Sultan 'Abd al-Rahman to 'Abd al-Qadir Ash'ash.
39. Consular protection in Morocco has been the subject of numerous studies. See especially Muhammad Kenbib, *Les protégés: contribution à l'histoire contemporaine du Maroc* (Rabat: 1996); Leland Bowie, *The Impact of the Protégé System on Morocco, 1880–1912* (Athens, OH: 1970); F.V. Parsons, *The Origins of the Moroccan Question, 1880–1900* (London: 1976).
40. See Kenbib, *Juifs et musulmans au Maroc*, 66–71, 240–252; Miège, *Le Maroc et l'Europe, 1830–1894*, 2:274–277.
41. See Ahmed Toufiq, "Les Juifs dans la société marocaine au 19^e siècle: l'exemple des juifs de Demnate," in *Juifs du Maroc: identité et dialogue* (Grenoble: 1980), 152–166; Kenbib, *Juifs et musulmans au Maroc*, 224–229, 235–240. Allegations of persecution in Iligh were brought before the Alliance Israélite Universelle, the Anglo-Jewish Association, and foreign consulates. Archives de l'Alliance Israélite Universelle (henceforth: AIU), Maroc III.C.10, Mogador, 10 July 1889 ("J." to A. Elmaleh); *Hamagid*, 23 Sept. 1889; *Hazefirah*, 18 (1891), 573, 577; Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Nantes (henceforth: AEN), Tanger 95, Mogador, 23 Aug. 1889 (Lacoste).
42. The most extensive account and analysis of the Montefiore mission to Morocco is found in Kenbib, *Juifs et musulmans au Maroc*, 123ff.

43. See Schroeter, *Merchants of Essaouira*, 34–42.
44. See Daniel Rivet, *Le Maroc de Lyautey à Muhammad V: le double visage du Protectorat* (Paris: 1999), 414–415.
45. A description of the pillaging of the *mellah* is found in a letter dated 22 April 1912, by Elmaleh, a school director in Fez. See *Bulletin de l'AIU* 73 (1911), 58–62 (in fact, the bulletin went to press in 1912).
46. Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Paris (henceforth AEP), CPC-NS 222, 29 April 1912. This explanation is accepted at face value by Kenbib, *Juifs et musulmans au Maroc*, 385.
47. Rivet, *Le Maroc de Lyautey à Muhammad V*, 414.
48. The French had preserved the term “Makhzan” to refer to the Moroccan government and its institutions under the control of the protectorate authorities.
49. Daniel Rivet, *Lyautey et l'institution du Protectorat français au Maroc, 1912–1925*, 3 vols. (Paris: 1996), 2:155ff, 264–269; Kenbib, *Juifs et musulmans au Maroc*, 405ff.
50. See Y.D. Semach, “L’avenir des israélites marocains,” *Paix et Droit*, no. 6 (June 1927), and no. 6 (June 1928), 4–6; Rivet, *Le Maroc de Lyautey à Muhammad V*, 2:412–413.
51. Joseph Georges Arsène Goulven, *Traité d'économie et de législation marocaines*, 2 vols. (Paris: 1921), 2:33–47.
52. On the reform and restructuring of Moroccan Jewish institutions by the protectorate, see Daniel J. Schroeter and Joseph Chetrit, “Hareformat bamosadot hayehudiyim bemaroko be-reishit hashilton hakoloniali (1912–1919),” *Mikadem umiyam* 6 (1995), 99–116.
53. AEP, CPC, M-Maroc 826, 25 June 1918 (Lyautey to Pichon).
54. *Ibid.*, 13 June 1918.
55. Officials of the protectorate, as reflected in the colonialist literature, often comment on the equality accorded to Jews without mentioning that Jews were excluded from the Makhzan administration. The total absence of Jews from positions in the Makhzan is pointed out by André Chouraqui, *La Condition juridique de l'Israélite marocain* (Paris: 1950), 71, 103–107.
56. See AIU, Archives de la Délégation de l'Alliance Israélite au Maroc, 430, 21 Feb. 1949 (R. Tajouri to president of the Alliance); Michael Laskier, *The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco* (Albany: 1983), 186; Daniel Rivet, *Le Maghreb à l'épreuve de la colonisation* (Paris: 2002), 233; Stéphane Bernard, *The Franco-Moroccan Conflict, 1943–1956* (New Haven: 1968), 70; Chouraqui, *La Condition juridique de l'Israélite marocain*, 112–113.
57. See Rivet, *Lyautey et l'institution du Protectorat français au Maroc*, 2:145.
58. *Dahir* of 4 August 1918, found in *Code de droit privé et d'organisation judiciaire* (Casablanca: 1952), part 2:32–35; Alain Plantey, *La réforme de la justice marocaine: la justice makhzen et la justice berbère* (Paris: 1952), 67–74, Goulven, *Traité d'économie et de législation marocaines*, 2:13, 23–28; Robin Bidwell, *Morocco under Colonial Rule: French Administration of Tribal Areas, 1912–1956* (London: 1973), 268.
59. See Abdeslam Baita, “‘Reversion to Tradition’ in State Structures in Colonial Morocco,” in *The Moroccan State in Historical Perspective, 1850–1985* (Dakar: 1990), 39–44.
60. See Goulven, *Traité d'économie et de législation marocaines*, 2:14–15.
61. For a discussion of how the Jews were disadvantaged in the Makhzan courts, see Chouraqui, *La condition juridique de l'Israélite marocain*, 134–135.
62. *Bulletin de l'AIU* 75 (1913), 86.
63. “L’exode des juifs de Fez vers la Palestine,” *Paix et Droit* 1 (Jan. 1923), 7. This is given as an economic explanation for the departure of Jews to Palestine. See also Rivet, *Le Maroc de Lyautey à Muhammad V*, 415.
64. On the development of the Jewish community of Casablanca, see Yaron Tsur and Hagar Hillel, *Yehudei kazablankah: 'iyunim bemoderniza'iyah shel hanhagah yehudit bitfu'zah kolonialit* (Tel Aviv: 1995). By 1952, the Jewish community numbered almost 75,000, about 10 percent of the total population of the city. See André Adam, *Casablanca: Essai sur la transformation de la société marocaine au contact de l'Occident*, 2 vols. (Paris: 1968), 1:149, 183–204.
65. See Rivet, *Le Maroc de Lyautey à Muhammad V*, 411, 413. During the war, the Vichy

legislation required Jews who had recently settled in the *ville nouvelle* to return to the mellah; only some of them complied.

66. See Rivet, *Lyautey et l'institution du Protectorat français au Maroc*, 267.

67. See Schroeter and Chetrit, "Hareformat bamosadot hayehudiyim bemaroko bereishit hashilton hakoloniali."

68. AEP, CPC M-Maroc, 55, dossiers individuels, 4 Dec. 1926 (Le Ministre plénipotentiaire, délégué à la résidence générale de la République française au Maroc [Urbain Blanc]).

69. See Rivet, *Le Maroc de Lyautey à Muhammad V*, 411–412.

70. See Rivet, *Lyautey et l'institution du Protectorat français au Maroc*, 2:165. For a general discussion on Jewish occupations compared proportionally to the Muslim population, see Tsur, *Kehilah keru'ah*, 36–43.

71. See Laskier, *The Alliance*, 152–163; R. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *L'oeuvre française en matière d'enseignement au Maroc* (Paris: 1928), 193–195.

72. The relationship of Jews to Moroccan nationalism has been most thoroughly studied by Tsur, *Kehilah keru'ah*, passim; see also Simon Lévy, *Essais d'histoire & civilisation judéo-marocaines* (Rabat: 2001), 63–67, 128–136.

73. See Michael M. Laskier, *North African Jewry in the Twentieth Century* (New York: 1994), 32–36, 84ff; Rivet, *Le Maroc de Lyautey à Muhammad V*, 417–418; Tsur, *Kehilah keru'ah*, 197–205.

74. AEP, CPC, M-Maroc 826, 26 Sept. 1919 (Lyautey to the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères), and 6 Sept. 1919 (Zagury to Monsieur le Commissaire Résident Général de la République Française au Maroc [Urbain Blanc]). See David Cohen, "Lyautey et le Sionisme, 1915–1925," *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer* 67 (1980), 269–300.

75. AIU, Archives de la Délégation de l'Alliance Israélite au Maroc, 430, 21 Feb. 1949 (R. Tajouri to president of the Alliance). As opposed to the leadership, many Alliance teachers at this time were already coming to terms with Zionism. See Laskier, *North African Jewry in the Twentieth Century*, 47–52.

76. See Norman A. Stillman, *Sephardic Religious Responses to Modernity* (Luxembourg: 1995), 59–64.

77. The question of Mohammed V and the Jews during the Vichy regime has been discussed in a number of works. See Michel Abitbol, *The Jews of North Africa during the Second World War* (Detroit: 1989), 79; Michael M. Laskier, *Yehudei hamagreb bezel Vishi uzlav hakeres* (Tel-Aviv: 1992), 44–46; Robert Assaraf, *Mohammed V et les juifs du Maroc: l'époque de Vichy* (Paris: 1997); Kenbib, *Juifs et musulmans au Maroc*, 626–629; Tsur, *Kehilah keru'ah*, 17, 79–80.

78. See Agnès Bensimon, *Hassan II et les juifs* (Paris: 1991), 153–154.

79. See Issachar Ben-Ami, *Saint Veneration among the Jews in Morocco* (Detroit: 1998), 125–128.

80. Cf. Tsur, *Kehilah keru'ah*, 406–410.

Hungarian Jewish Politics from the End of the Second World War until the Collapse of Communism

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This essay examines Jewish politics in Communist Hungary. As is widely known, politicians of Jewish origin played an important role in the political life of postwar Hungary as leaders of the Communist party or as officials in the Communist government. Their activities had a considerable effect, both directly and indirectly, on the lives of Hungarian Jews—"Judeo-Bolshevik" is still a favorite epithet used in anti-semitic publications. Whether the Jewish origin of these politicians had an impact on their decision-making and, if so, to what extent is a matter worthy of analysis. This essay, however, deals with a different subject, namely, those politicians in postwar Hungary who identified themselves publicly as Jews or openly represented Jewish causes. How did these politicians, who viewed Jews as a collectivity and who sought to defend the Jews' collective interests, operate under the difficult circumstances of Communist Hungarian rule in the postwar decades?

Prelude: From Alliance to Collaboration

In his analysis of Jewish politics in Hungary after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, Ezra Mendelsohn noted that "Hungary was the most unfavorable environment for the emergence of modern Jewish politics," that is, the appearance of specifically Jewish political groups such as the Bund, the Zionists, and Agudat Israel.¹ In Hungary, as was not the case in other East and East Central European countries, the governing political elite supported the emancipation of the Jews and their acceptance into society—in fact, in the second half of the 19th century, it even suppressed occasional outbreaks of antisemitism. Moreover, there was no rivalry between elite groups of various ethnic origins that would have forced acculturating or assimilating Jews to choose among them or that would have encouraged them to develop their own mi-

nority identity (as they did in the Czech and Galician provinces of the monarchy). As a consequence of rapid Magyarization, there was no development of an autonomous secular Jewish culture, such as occurred in Poland or in Russia. All of this accounted for a situation in which “the participation of the Jews in Hungarian political life was governed by the maxim: never appear as a Jew or represent particular Jewish interests.”²

Nevertheless, modern politics did influence the activities of Jewish institutions and Jewish public figures. With regard to political conflicts that directly affected Jewish interests, Hungarian Jewish politicians generally resorted to *shtadlanut*—that is, intercession with the authorities on the part of Jewish notables. At the same time, they also sought to mobilize Jewish opinion and influence non-Jewish politicians by more modern political means such as press campaigns and group lobbying.

Three historical events highlight the particular nature of Hungarian Jewish politics during this era: the schism between the Orthodox and Neolog (Reform) communities that occurred in 1868; the wave of antisemitism of the 1880s; and the “reception of the Jewish denomination” as an officially accepted religion in 1895. As Jacob Katz has shown, in the conflict between the Neolog and Orthodox wings (which intensified in the years after the Emancipation), it was Orthodoxy that wielded the weapons of modern politics more successfully.³ At the outset, the Neologs—supported as they were by the liberal government—enjoyed a strong advantage in the political battle concerning the establishment of a Jewish body that would represent all of Hungarian Jewry. The Orthodox, however, waged a surprisingly skillful and eventually successful campaign against the establishment of a single representative Jewish body: Orthodox rabbis and community leaders banded together in a grouping known as the *Hitór Egylet* (Guardian of the Faith Alliance), expressed their views in a modern Hungarian-language newspaper, *Magyar Zsidó*, and organized an effective press campaign aimed at disseminating their views both at home and abroad. Even more important, they lobbied behind the scenes to gain the support of influential political actors such as Emperor Franz Josef and the extreme liberal group of the parliamentary opposition, which rejected the establishment of a single Jewish representative body as an unacceptable limitation of religious freedom.

In reaction to the wave of antisemitism in the early 1880s, Jewish leaders generally maintained a low profile.⁴ The most important public battles took place in the Hungarian parliament, where several antisemitic representatives—Győző Istóczy and his associates—kept the “Jewish question” on the agenda. Between 1878 and 1884, there were 10 representatives in the parliament who were of Jewish origin. Of these, six had been baptized early in their lives and took no part in the debate; the other four, who were members of the Jewish religious community, contributed only two comments. This policy of avoiding open skirmishing with the antisemites, leaving it to the non-Jewish liberal members of parliament to confront Istóczy and his allies, was seen as entirely proper: Prime Minister Kálmán Tisza even expressed thanks to the Jewish representatives for their “self-restraint” in this matter.⁵

A more visible reaction to antisemitism occurred in the wake of the Tiszaeszlár blood libel case of 1882, when fifteen Jews were put on trial for the murder of a Christian girl. In response, the official representative body of the Neolog community, the National Office of the Israelites in Hungary (usually known as the Israelite National Office) employed as the defendants’ lawyer one of Hungary’s most famous writers

and politicians, Károly Eötvös. A Jewish newspaper, *Egyenlőség* (Equality), was also founded at this time. Its chief editor (and subsequent owner), Miksa Szabolcsi, not only reported from the scene of the court proceedings but also conducted his own investigation, finding witnesses who were willing to testify on behalf of the defense. As a result, the most important element of the anti-Jewish case collapsed and the defendants were acquitted. By the time the trial ended, *Egyenlőség* had a print run of 6,000 and a subscriber base of 3,000, which made it one of Hungary's most widely circulated newspapers.⁶ Employing all the methods of modern publishing, this strident newspaper did not refrain from criticizing the government in its crusade against antisemitism. Several articles, for instance, attacked the Hungarian minister of justice, Ákos Pauler, for statements made during the course of the trial. Thus, the newspaper adopted a different strategy from that of Jews who were active in Hungarian politics. Szabolcsi was one of a generation of younger Jews who went on to play a major role in the next great conflict, the debate surrounding the reception of the Jewish denomination.⁷

In this struggle, members of the younger generation of Hungarian Jewry made skillful use of the weapons of modern politics in order to win over the Hungarian political elite. When the campaign for "reception" began, their leader, Vilmos Vázsonyi (who later became the minister of justice) appealed to all of Hungary's Jewish communities to prepare for the upcoming parliamentary elections and to vote only for representatives who promised to support the reception law. Some 230 Jewish communities outside of Budapest responded to this appeal. Employing open political pressure, leaders of the reception movement rejected the approach advocated by Mór Wahrmann, the distinguished leader of the Neolog community of Pest, who argued against such an open campaign on the grounds that it would make the government's position far more difficult and would fan the flames of antisemitism.⁸

The campaign led by Vázsonyi was successful, and this strengthened the general conviction that the political methods he had employed had been effective. The truth, however, is that Vázsonyi's campaign was in many ways a modernized version of *shtadlanut* politics. In fact, in all of the cases outlined above, non-Jewish political organizations and public figures were predominant in the fight for Jewish objectives. This was not only because non-Jewish politicians considered Jewish goals to be part of the general liberal agenda, but also because they were themselves anxious to receive political support from a group whose social and economic status was rapidly improving. Jewish politics carried out in the background, but with modern methods, strengthened politicians' expectations that the embrace of Jewish goals could be mutually advantageous.

In any event, these successes largely determined the development of modern Jewish politics in Hungary. The experience of Jewish politicians was that they could rely on the support of liberal Hungarian nobles as long as Jewish goals fit the liberal-emanicipation paradigm. Jewish politicians ably exploited a situation in which both sides of the Hungarian political scene—the government and the opposition—were dominated by liberal politicians. Thanks to this alliance, almost all Jewish objectives seemed to be achievable. In Hungary, there were none of the typical bottlenecks that led, in other Central and East European countries, to the development of autonomous Jewish politics.

Before the First World War, the upward social mobility of Hungarian Jews reached

its peak. Most of the Jews no longer faced poverty as did their coreligionists in Russia, Poland, or Romania. The ruling powers took a firm stand against antisemitism, and Hungarian Jews could rely upon the goodwill of the emperor even in the face of antisemitic sentiments that were expressed by elements within the clergy and among the aristocracy. Had there been fewer possibilities of realizing Jewish goals, advocates of autonomous minority politics might have gained more support. However, a switch to this sort of politics would have constituted the abandonment of the national liberal paradigm, which would doubtless have been accompanied by a reduction in the number of opportunities for defending Jewish interests. Moreover, any alliance with minority Croatian, Romanian, or Slovak groups simply could not be countenanced, not only because of considerations of realpolitik but also because of a basic difference in worldview. Jews were allied with liberalism, which both opened the way to social advancement and promised further benefits. Other minority groups in Hungary, however, were relatively backward in terms of modernization. In addition, these groups were also marked by strong antisemitic tendencies.

Until the turn of the 20th century, the symbiosis of Hungarian liberalism and the Hungarian Jewish community was preserved more or less intact. As long as national liberalism remained the dominant force in Hungarian politics, the Jewish political strategy of activating and mobilizing supporters by referring to common liberal principles appeared to work. However, the unfolding crisis of national liberalism after the turn of the century, and its complete collapse after the First World War, dramatically changed the underlying conditions of Jewish politics, which proved incapable of reacting to the change.

In the aftermath of the First World War, Hungarian mainstream politics considered the liberalism of the previous era to have been responsible for the break-up of the historical kingdom of Hungary. References to the liberal traditions of reception and emancipation were heard, if at all, only within the small liberal parties and groupings. Yet when the Hungarian parliament adopted the *numerus clausus* law in 1920—which, by limiting the number of university students of Jewish descent, became the first piece of European legislation to abolish the legal equality of the Jews—the Hungarian Jewish community (after some debate, to be sure) refrained from appealing to either the League of Nations or to the international Jewish community.⁹ It is instructive to note the statement formulated by Vázsonyi that was submitted to the general assembly of Hungarian Neolog communities:

We declare on behalf of Hungarians of Jewish faith who have assembled on the 30th anniversary of the reception of the Jewish religion: the legal equality of our denomination is part of the Hungarian constitution. Our civil and political rights were adopted by the Hungarian legislature in a free vote, and it was the legislature that registered our religion among the accepted religions.

Thus, for this reason, as we struggle against the *numerus clausus* institution, we may draw support from the Hungarian constitution alone, and we may not refer, and we shall not refer, to the section of the [Versailles] peace treaty that demands the equality of religious denominations.

We are Hungarians and profess to be a part of the Hungarian people; and the peace treaty, which is the sorrow of our nation, may not be a source of our rights. We express confidence that in the struggle for the completeness of our legal equality as guaranteed by law—a struggle that we shall continue as before—we shall not remain alone, but will

rather be joined by the supporters of the patriotic traditions of the greatest Hungarian statesmen.

Based on the Hungarian constitution, and anticipating from the resurrection of the noble Hungarian traditions the victory of our legal equality, we wish to deal with the matter of the *numerus clausus* here at home with our own government and our own legislature. Thus, we have not turned, and shall not turn, to any foreign organizations for assistance, and we shall avoid this, even if [outside intervention] stems from good intentions.¹⁰

It was precisely this argument, and the reference to the liberal traditions of the Emancipation and the reception it invoked, that lost its relevance in the 1920s. Following the First World War, it was no longer possible to create an alliance with the dominant forces of mainstream politics on the old liberal basis. Hungarian liberalism was now represented only by marginal parties such as Vázsonyi's National Democratic Party. Thus, the rhetoric of Hungarian Jewish politics suddenly became empty, even though it had not changed in any way, and Jewish politicians were no longer able to form alliances to defend, much less further, the Jewish community's interests.

As Mendelsohn has noted, during the "White Terror" of 1919–1920 that followed the fall of the Hungarian Communist regime, and particularly from the latter half of the 1920s, "the old Jewish-Hungarian establishment alliance was reconstructed; it was built on much less firm soil than in the prewar period."¹¹ This soil, however, was not only less firm, it was also qualitatively different from that which had represented the basis of the old alliance. Whereas Jewish politicians still used lofty rhetoric to conjure up the traditions of the era of Emancipation, their Hungarian political partners now used pragmatic arguments—the importance of Jews to the economy, the image of Hungary abroad, and the practical difficulties of implementing anti-Jewish restrictions—in combating the demands of the antisemitic extreme right-wing.¹² As a result of such arguments, the *numerus clausus* law was essentially revoked in 1928. At the same time, however, the new Hungarian leadership was quite willing to recognize the existence of the "Jewish question" and the necessity of its "resolution." This caused much disappointment to those Jewish leaders who, from the latter half of the 1920s until as late as the mid-1930s, still hoped for a restoration of the prewar situation. At the same time, they welcomed (as a sign of what they termed "the old harmony") various demonstrations of moderation with regard to Jewish issues on the part of government leaders, whatever the motives for such moderation. By this time, however, even Jewish leaders had come to believe only in the strength of pragmatic considerations, rather than in the possibility of principled cooperation.¹³

Zionism, never powerful in Hungary, was strongly opposed by the post-First World War Hungarian Jewish establishment. Jewish representative bodies prevented the official registration of the Hungarian Zionist Alliance until as late as 1927, and even afterwards attempted to thwart the advance of Zionists within the Jewish political arena. Partly because of this, many Jews who might have been active in Jewish politics turned their attention to the non-Jewish left-wing and urban liberal parties. In addition to the support received in Budapest by Vázsonyi's party, this trend is well demonstrated by data concerning the radical left wing. Of the 40,000 "leftists" in Budapest who were watched by the political police at the time (based on a random sample of

1,800 individuals), 28 percent were members of the Jewish denomination—a figure that was higher than the Jewish share of Budapest's total population (20 percent).¹⁴

There is no doubt that the new pragmatic politics brought some benefits, particularly to the wealthier and better-connected among the Hungarian Jewish community. Jews with Hungarian citizenship were not subjected to physical persecution until after the German occupation in 1944. And whereas the anti-Jewish laws of the late 1930s became increasingly draconian, there were still many loopholes. After the German occupation, for instance, Jews who had friendly relations with the Hungarian political elite found it easier both to obtain exemptions from the legal regulations oppressing the general Jewish population and to avoid physical persecution.¹⁵

Nevertheless, the Shoah brought a catharsis with respect to Jewish politics: for the surviving Jews, the prewar Jewish leadership—and its political strategies—had lost credibility and legitimacy. In the wake of the Nazi persecution, the ideology of integration that had been professed by all Jewish leaderships was radically shaken. The surviving remnant of Hungarian Jewry could no longer accept a rhetoric calling for the harmony of national and Jewish goals. Thus, Hungary of the immediate postwar years finally saw the birth of full-fledged autonomous Jewish politics.

The Brief Golden Age of Jewish Politics: The Immediate Postwar Years

About 200,000 Hungarians defined as Jewish (approximately one quarter of them had actually been baptized) survived the Shoah. The social and demographic composition of this population was very different from that of the prewar Jewish community.¹⁶ In the course of the persecution, Jewish communities living outside Budapest had been nearly destroyed. In Budapest, it was the assimilated Jews with their wider range of non-Jewish friends and acquaintances who, finding it easier to obtain forged papers or to secure hiding places, had a greater chance to escape. Thus, proportionally more urban and assimilated Jews survived. It also appears that the proportion of educated and middle-class Jews was larger than it had been among the prewar Jewish population. Given these demographic indicators, a logical assumption was that this secular, urban, and middle-class Jewish population was “doomed to assimilation.”¹⁷ In fact, the initial postwar years brought a surprising development: many surviving Jews turned to the movements and parties that proclaimed the necessity of autonomous Jewish politics.

Viktor Karády has analyzed the various psychological and sociological factors that led a “substantial minority” of the surviving Jews to reject assimilation—namely, their experiences at the time of the persecutions; the attempts on the part of Hungarian society to evade its responsibility both for the persecution and for compensation; the difficulties they faced in integrating into postwar Hungarian society; and the re-appearance of antisemitism and its obvious manipulation by the political forces of the new system.¹⁸ As a result of such factors, Zionism became an attractive option to a large group of the survivors, being seen as the modern and secular alternative to the now discredited ideal of assimilation.

During the first three years after the war, Zionist organizations and movements de-

fined the nature of Hungarian Jewish politics. In 1945, for instance, some 3,000 children were being cared for in Zionist-run children's homes; by the following year, the number had risen to 6,000. In 1946, more than 800 children were studying in the Tarbut school system run by the Zionists, and in 1947, there were 3,500 members of Zionist industrial and agricultural collectives.¹⁹ The growing Zionist influence was also felt among Jewish religious congregations. In 1945, Rabbi Dr. Fábián Herskovits, the chairman of the General Democratic Zionist Bloc, became chief rabbi of Budapest's largest synagogue, on Dohány Street; five of the 20 members of the Neolog community board of Pest were Zionists, and another seven were supporters of Zionism. In 1948, the Zionists gained control of seven of the 17 positions on the board of the Israelite National Office.²⁰

The rapid expansion of the Zionist movement is also illustrated by data concerning the movement's prewar and postwar membership. During the 1930s, there were no more than 4,000–5,000 members of Zionist organizations in Hungary. This number rose in 1939 following the return to Hungary of territories it had lost after the First World War. Yet even in that year, the total of those who purchased the shekel (designating support for the Zionist movement), was no more than 28,000—an insignificant minority of the total Jewish population.²¹ In December 1946, however, according to a report published at the 22nd Zionist Congress, some 95,000 Hungarian Jews had purchased the shekel; in 1948 (by which time many Jews had emigrated),²² about 58,000 Jews had purchased the shekel,²³ of whom 15,000 (8,300 of them in Budapest) were also active members of the Zionist movement.²⁴

An important factor in this surge of support for Zionism and Zionist institutions was the greatly enhanced prestige of Zionist groups in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. One of the most shocking experiences of Jews during the period of persecution was the total failure, as they perceived it, of official Jewish representative bodies—above all, the Jewish Council (Judenrat) that had been established by the German occupiers. Regardless of what these institutions had actually done or not done (debate on this issue continues to the present day, in an increasingly nuanced manner), Hungarian Jewish survivors felt that they had been betrayed; indeed, some Jewish leaders later faced accusations of collaboration. In contrast, the small Zionist groups had participated in the resistance movement. Moreover, during the months of persecution in Budapest, many Jews had obtained forged papers or places to hide as the result of direct or indirect Zionist involvement.²⁵ Following the war, accounts quickly spread of how the Zionists had both resisted oppression and aided in rescue efforts.

An immediate political factor also contributed to the sudden change in attitude toward the Zionist movement. The largest Zionist organizations in Hungary, and especially the groups that had taken an active part in resistance, were mostly of left-wing orientation—in some places, they had even merged with the small Communist resistance groups during the war.²⁶ During the immediate postwar years, it was generally expected that Hungary's two left-wing parties (the Communists and the Social Democrats) would have a determining role in the new political system. In that case, it was felt, the Zionists would be poised to become partners in a left-wing alliance that could effectively promote Jewish interests.

Increased support for the establishment of a Jewish state—especially on the part

of the Soviet Union—was another factor benefiting Hungarian Zionism. Quite suddenly, Zionism's main goal was transformed from a distant dream into an achievable reality. For the surviving Hungarian Jews, many of whom had lost most of their relatives, friends, and acquaintances, the establishment of the state of Israel offered the possibility of a completely new start in life.

Finally, immediately after the war, representatives of foreign Zionist organizations were permitted to operate freely in Hungary. As a result, Zionist representatives were able to offer assistance on a wide range of practical matters, including the establishment of new Jewish institutions. Such efforts were enhanced by financial backing from aid organizations such as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, whose European chairman, Joe Schwartz, was very sympathetic to the Zionist cause.²⁷

Contributing to the change in Jewish politics was the need to cope with the immeasurable material and financial losses of the community that had led to the impoverishment of large groups of survivors, among them many orphans and single people.²⁸ Community institutions had to face new tasks: urging the repeal of discriminatory laws and seeking legal remedies for those who had been affected by them; pressing for personal and communal compensation; and raising the question of who should be held responsible for the persecution of the Jews. The issues and debates in postwar Hungary were legion. How was "abandoned" property to be regarded? Should survivors be expected to pay inheritance duties? Should land confiscated from the Jews under the anti-Jewish legislation now be returned to them, or was it now to be treated as other land expropriated as the result of the 1945 land reform?²⁹ Given the extraordinary decline of confidence in the old community leadership (exemplified by Lajos Stöckler, who had been a member of the Judenrat in 1944 and who became the chairman of the Israelite National Office in 1945), it was clear to many that the political representation of Jewish interests would have to be entrusted to new and uncompromised organizations and individuals.

Yet as autonomous Jewish politics began to acquire considerable influence in Hungarian Jewish public life,³⁰ the general political atmosphere became increasingly subdued. By 1947, with the rapid and ruthless advance of the Communist party, political pluralism in Hungary was drastically restricted; over the course of the next two years, the Communists effectively dismantled all of Hungary's democratic institutions. This process proved fatal for Jewish politics. Although the Zionist left wing had cherished illusions with regard to a possible alliance with the Communists, it soon became apparent that friendly gestures on the part of the latter had been motivated solely by tactical considerations. In reality, the Communist party viewed the Zionist movement with hostility and suspicion. Although the international Communist movement (for various pragmatic reasons) still strongly supported the establishment of a Jewish state, leading Hungarian Communist ideologues made it clear that they could not accept any form of Zionism. As Erik Molnár, a Hungarian Communist historian and thinker put it:

In Hungary, there is both a reactionary and a progressive path to the resolution of the Jewish problem. The reactionary path is Zionism, which remains reactionary even if it proclaims socialism The cannibal antisemitism of fascism may have united the surviving Jews, but this is just a temporary phenomenon, just as fascism was also merely a

temporary regression on the road to human progress. Zionism's current popularity in Hungary expresses this temporary phenomenon. The attempt of Zionism to restore the lost national identity of the Hungarian Jews means turning against social development in Hungary and as such is a reactionary objective In Hungary, the progressive path to a resolution of the Jewish question leads toward the full assimilation of the Jews.³¹

Immediately after the war, the official Communist daily, *Szabad Nép*, struck a similar note. Reporting on a Zionist demonstration held in Budapest in 1945, the newspaper compared the procession to a *Hitlerjugend* march, then noted that

among the handful of Jews that are still alive, there are some who want to finish the half-completed fascist operation: the separation of the Jews from the Hungarian nation. Fascist external features, and here and there the reflection of the fascist spirit, accompany this strange attempt. The parades and marches of the Zionist youth foster antisemitism. They render it more difficult for Hungarians to deal with the spiritual heritage of counterrevolution, and make it more difficult to achieve a constructive national joining of forces, but they do the worst service to the Jews themselves.³²

The first disputes between the Zionists and the state bodies run by the Communists arose because of the activities of the Zionist-sponsored movement for illegal emigration to Palestine, known as *berihah*. In 1945, *berihah* organizers were temporarily detained by the government until (as was usual at that time) they paid a "fine" of \$20,000. The following year, the minister of the interior, László Rajk, threatened to deport non-Hungarian Zionist activists to the Soviet Union.³³ And in 1947, political pressure began to be applied to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the organization that had made the greatest contribution to the restoration of Jewish life after the war. In May of that year, Miklós Ajtai, who was working as a supervisor at the Ministry of Welfare (after 1956, he served as Hungary's deputy prime minister), discussed Communist party aims vis-à-vis the Joint in a candid letter sent to one of the party's leaders, Mihály Farkas. "At present," he wrote, "our aim is to dig as deep as possible into the affairs of the Joint; we shall prevent their [monthly outlay of] 10 million forints [worth about \$700,000] from serving to support reactionary aims, and we shall defeat the Zionist line."³⁴

A confidential report prepared for the Communist party by the Ministry of Welfare provided detailed information. Much of the financial aid being provided by the Joint, it noted, was being funneled "indirectly toward political goals," which

constantly promote and sustain the differentiation of Hungary's Jews from the Hungarian nation. For the purpose of having people emigrate, it is providing for several thousand young women and men in retraining camps under a reactionary leadership regime. Through the so-called Department of Work and Industrial Organization, it finances industrial cooperatives and factory sites, and it maintains agricultural collectives that constitute points of infection in the life of democratic Hungary When it comes to grants and allowances, the benefits are constantly being given to pro-Zionist individuals or organizations. . . .

However, the ministry official added, "at my suggestion, each month the Joint is now spending . . . 5 percent of its full donation mainly in support of the social institutions maintained by various progressive-minded left-wing parties." The report concluded as follows:

The question arises: Is it necessary that the Joint continue operating in Hungary? In the current situation it is absolutely necessary, because it means advantages from the economic and social point of view, but in terms of politics, "it must be brought under control" We have to find a Jewish public figure whom the reactionary leaders of the Joint trust, but who will work in accordance with domestic intentions.³⁵

Given this situation, it is clear that the deterioration in the relationship between the official Jewish community and the Zionists from 1947 was based on something more profound than mere personality conflicts. After the national elections of 1947, in which the Communist party received (through electoral fraud) the largest number of votes, attempts to get rid of the Zionist organizations were intensified.³⁶ Communist and Social Democratic cells were established in pro-Zionist and Zionist organizations; in an unusual move, a cell was also set up in a purely religious body, the Pest Neolog community. Communist party leaders began to use their leverage in the Neolog community organization as a means of getting rid of the Zionists. First, the Zionists were prevented from taking part, as an independent group, in the Neolog community elections. Afterwards, in March 1948, Lajos Stöckler, the chairman of the Neolog community³⁷ (acting, according to contemporaneous reports, under direct orders from the Communist party), informed the Zionists that cooperation between the Neolog group and the Zionists would be conditional on leftists being granted the leading posts in the leadership of the Zionist Alliance.³⁸ From late 1948, government measures increasingly restricted the opportunities for legal and illegal emigration. Finally, at a meeting of the general assembly of the Hungarian Zionist Alliance in late 1948, Marxist Zionists assumed complete control. This development, too, was attributed to Stöckler, who had allegedly threatened "external interference" in the event of a different outcome.³⁹

In January 1949, István Szirmai, a former Zionist now serving as the Communist party functionary responsible for "Zionist affairs,"⁴⁰ proposed a ban on all Zionist organizations and the expulsion of "foreign nationals and Zionist agents employed by the Zionist Alliance." In a memorandum to the party secretariat, he wrote:

The operations of the Zionist organizations have been banned in the people's democracies of Eastern Europe. Until February 1948, their East European headquarters were in Prague. After the change in policy by the Czechs, they moved their headquarters to Budapest. Many Palestinian citizens are residing in Hungary as Zionist agitators and organizers; these people are spreading bourgeois nationalism, they are adding to the emigration craze through their organizations, they are smuggling hard currency, "rescuing property," and damaging the forint. It is my suspicion that in the course of emigration—a process that has not been properly controlled—they have smuggled out a considerable amount of property⁴¹

The party secretariat's response was that the timing was not quite right, and that "self-dissolution" of the movement would be preferable.⁴² A month later, a coordinated action against the Zionists was launched, beginning with a series of virulent anti-Zionist articles in *Új Élet*, the Neolog community newspaper.⁴³ Stöckler informed the Zionists of new demands being made by the Communists, while Szirmai threatened police action in case of resistance.⁴⁴ At first the Zionists tried to avoid self-dissolution. However, caught between the Communists and the Communist-controlled Israelite National Office, and following the withdrawal of support from Israeli diplomatic rep-

representatives in Budapest,⁴⁵ they admitted defeat. On March 13, 1949, the Hungarian Zionist Alliance dissolved itself.⁴⁶

The break-up and liquidation of Zionist organizations was an inevitable consequence of the Communist takeover. However, Zionist organizations were far from being the only bodies not tolerated by the party-state system. By 1950, the Communist regime had either dissolved or had taken under its control all of the institutions of the limited democracy of the 1945–1948 period. The Communists had tolerated Zionism only for immediate political reasons—primarily because of the Soviet Union’s policy toward Palestine. As Communist power grew, and following the change in the Soviet Union’s Middle East policy, the fate of Zionist organizations throughout Communist-ruled Europe was sealed.

From the perspective of Hungarian Jewish politics, both the manner in which the dissolution of the Zionist organizations took place and the reaction of Jewish organizations to this development were noteworthy. In Hungary, the tactics employed by the Communist party were aimed at making it appear as though the clampdown on Zionism was an internal Jewish affair. Thus, direct pressure was placed on leading members of the Jewish communal leadership—above all, on Stöckler. Meanwhile, unquestionably loyal Communist party members entered Jewish organizations (including the Joint), among them Dr. László Benedek, the head physician of the Jewish Hospital. Once Jewish communal bodies had been taken under control, there was nothing to prevent their politics from becoming a mere extension of Communist party politics. Hence it came about that after a short detour in the direction of autonomous politics, Jewish institutional politics settled back into the prewar routine of unconditional public cooperation with the ruling powers, alongside quiet diplomatic maneuvering in the hopes of achieving modest concessions.

To some extent, the Zionists brought about their own downfall by placing unrealistic faith in the emerging Communist regime. After the war, left-wing groups (the Marxist Hashomer Hazair, the Social Democratic Ihud Mapai, Ahdut Ha’avodah, and the left wing of the General Zionists, as well as the youth organizations of the latter three bodies) formed a majority within the Hungarian Zionist movement. From the very start, then, the left wing had great influence within the Zionist Alliance leadership, and this influence grew over time. As noted, only leftists were elected to positions of leadership in the Zionist Alliance in March 1948, apparently because of Stöckler’s warning that otherwise there would be no cooperation between the Neolog community and the Zionists. In late 1948, more extreme left-wing Zionists (representatives of Hashomer Hazair and the Ahdut Ha’avodah) staged a coup and took control of the movement—again, partly because of Stöckler’s threat of external interference. By this time, more than half of the Zionist party membership were aligned with left-wing organizations, as opposed to 26 percent who belonged to the General Zionists.⁴⁷ An internal report of the (Communist) Hungarian Workers’ Party noted in 1949 that 12,275 of the 37,000 names appearing on a Zionist membership list in 1948 were those of Communist party members.⁴⁸

As noted, the Zionists and the Communists had been closely allied in resistance efforts during the war; indeed, the boundaries between the various small groupings of Zionists and Communists had not always been clear. Shortly after the end of the war, it had appeared to the Zionists that the binding force of shared goals—the real-

ization of anti-fascist policies, the calling to account of fascist crimes, and the struggle for left-wing goals in the new political system—would be stronger than the Communists' immediate aversion toward Jewish national ambitions. Occasional anti-Zionist rhetoric was interpreted by some Communist Zionists as a deviation by local leaders from the main line of policy as determined by the Soviet Union,⁴⁹ and it did not deter them from building contacts with the Communist party. At first, the Zionists consulted fairly regularly with Communist leaders, and some of them became involved in the work of the political police. During the elections, they called upon their members to vote for the Communist party. Despite the warning signs, they deluded themselves into thinking that the Communists' hostility toward Zionism was merely the consequence of there being some "reactionary forces" present within the Zionist movement.⁵⁰ In sum, the willingness of left-wing Zionists to implement Communist "salami tactics" within the Zionist Alliance was not only due to external pressure. Another contributory factor may have been the conviction that a Zionist movement led by Communists would be acceptable (as a fellow traveler) to the Communist leadership. Such collaboration, however, facilitated the dissolution of Hungarian Zionism.

Helplessness or Collaboration? The Years of Stalinism

By the summer of 1949, the construction of the Hungarian Communist party-state was complete. Having eliminated parliamentary democracy, political parties, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press, Communist authorities now began to exert increasing political pressure on the religious denominations. Even earlier, in 1948 (under the guise of a war against "clerical reaction"), the Communist regime had set out to destroy the institutions of the various churches and to eliminate their autonomy and social influence.⁵¹

The nationalization of church schools, and the subsequent abolition of compulsory religious education, constituted the first major blow to the social foundation of the religious denominations.⁵² Church leaders who attempted to oppose or protest against these measures, such as Archbishop József Mindszenty (the head of the Hungarian Catholic church) and Lajos Ordass (a Lutheran bishop), were imprisoned on trumped-up charges. In subsequent years, a series of trials led to the convictions of various (mainly Catholic) church figures. One by one, leaders of the various denominations were pressured into signing agreements with the Communist state in which they recognized the political status quo. In 1951, the State Office for Church Affairs was formed with the purpose of controlling the everyday activities of the churches. Among other things, ecclesiastical and denominational appointments were made subject to the approval of the appropriate state or party organs.

Since Jewish affairs were officially recognized only as denominational affairs, the policies of the Communist party-state toward the Jewish denomination were essentially the same as those directed against other religions. At the same time, however, Zionism was considered a political crime. In the first major trial of Hungarian Communist officials (the chief defendant was László Rajk, the former minister of the interior), the indictment stressed the Zionist background of several of the accused;

during the early 1950s, various personnel departments recorded former membership in a Zionist organization under the same rubric as affiliation with the fascist Arrow Cross. Moreover, between 1949 and 1954, a series of political trials based on accusations of Zionist activity took place, the defendants including former Zionists and Orthodox Jews.⁵³ Among those implicated on Zionist charges were Stöckler and Benedek, the two men who had consistently represented Communist interests within the Jewish community, and—even more ironically—István Szirmai, the former Zionist who, as a Communist functionary, had been responsible for the elimination of the Hungarian Zionist movement.⁵⁴

Overall, Jewish communal leaders behaved very similarly to leaders of the “pacified” Christian churches. The agreement between the Jewish denomination and the Hungarian state was signed on December 7, 1948. The Jewish negotiators (Stöckler and Samu Kahán-Frankl, the leaders, respectively, of the Neolog and Orthodox communities) gave their consent to the nationalization of Jewish schools and, a year later, to the abolition of compulsory religious education.⁵⁵ The next step was the forced union of the Neolog and Orthodox institutions. In February 1950, in the great hall of the Neolog community (under the portraits of Lenin, Stalin, and Mátyás Rákosi, the leader of the Hungarian Communist party), the elected heads of the local Jewish communities adopted a resolution establishing a single, uniform national organization known as the National Representation of the Hungarian Israelites, led by Stöckler. In so doing, they abolished the independence of the Orthodox organization, which henceforth functioned as a branch of the National Representation.⁵⁶

Another important element of state control was the “rules for rabbis” adopted shortly thereafter. Section 25 of this regulation declared that a rabbi “could not preach sermons whose content or philosophy contradicted the political, economic, or social order of the Hungarian state, or which conflicted with the interests of the Hungarian Jewish denomination.”⁵⁷ In 1957, senior appointments to official Jewish institutions and the rabbinate were formally made subject to the approval of state bodies, and in this way the leadership of the National Representation, as with other religious groups in Hungary, became an institutional part of the *nomenklatura* system of the party-state.

As László Csorba, author of the only comprehensive study of postwar Jewish denominational life, has shown, in the course of their negotiations with the state bodies, the Jewish leaders did attempt, sometimes successfully, to obtain minor concessions.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, Jews were affected by forms of repression that were absent in the case of other religious groups. Real or perceived manifestations of secular Jewish identity, or even Jewish descent, were often used as a pretext for political repression, as was, of course, Zionist activity. Another form of intimidation was the recording of Jewish background in official government documents and the attempts to restrict the number of Jews serving in party or state institutions.

As various sociological analyses have shown, the collapse of the prewar antisemitic regime had opened up previously unknown possibilities to various groups of Jews.⁵⁹ For instance, those who had been active in left-wing parties and political movements before the war, and who therefore were considered “reliable,” could now embark on careers in the police, in the army, and in the state and party apparatus. Jews who had previously been unable to attend university or to find work in accordance

with their qualifications also made use of the new channels of social mobility. Although these groups represented only a minority of the surviving Jewish population, they were a very visible minority. For this reason, the Communist leadership (which, immediately after the war, had made barely concealed gestures for support toward both lower-class antisemitic groups and anti-capitalist—but at the same time antisemitic—populist intellectuals)⁶⁰ adopted what amounted to a “silent numerus clausus” that advanced the so-called “people’s cadres” at the expense of Jews. For instance, in a letter written by the secretary of state for education, Géza Losonczy, it was noted that

Comrade Rákosi . . . has emphatically underlined that we should steer clear of “clever, petit-bourgeois Jewish intellectuals.” We might have just as many problems with them as with the intelligent workers that we are going to bring in—with the difference, however, that whereas in the case of the worker cadres, several years of laborious and toilsome work will bring forth its own fruit, in the case of the former group we may never know when they will become spies and when they will spoil our efforts under the pretext of enforcing the party line.⁶¹

What could representatives of Jewish politics do in a situation unlike any they had ever confronted? During the decades after the First World War, the benchmark of Jewish politics had been clear: the struggle against legal discrimination against the Jews and their exclusion from society. Later, Jewish politics had been defined by its achievements (and failures) in the effort to rescue lives. After the Communist takeover, however, Jews were experiencing a kind of “reverse emancipation.” From the point of view of the Communist regime, it did not matter whether the “enemies in the class struggle” were Jewish or non-Jewish. Communist politics perceived mortal peril in religion, in national endeavors, and in social and cultural pluralism. In this sense it was essentially *antireligious* rather than antisemitic, although the regime sometimes took advantage of the mobilizing force of antisemitic sentiment and constantly kept an eye on those Jews who were considered to be “infected with bourgeois views.” Overall, however, Jews were essentially placed on an equal footing with other groups in Hungarian society, whose political and civil rights were similarly denied.

Since virtually everyone was affected by repression, the range of potential allies interested in opposing the authorities became very wide indeed. Paradoxically, however, among these potential allies (including practically all of Hungary’s religious groups) were many who had been associated with the antisemitic policies of the previous regime. After years of persecution, the Jewish community was understandably fearful of antisemitism. Given this new situation, it was not immediately clear how the Jewish leadership should (or could) behave. No doubt, for many former Zionists and some adherents of Jewish Orthodoxy (the two groups that suffered most from Communist repression), the Communist party-state was an unmitigated evil.⁶² But this perception may not have been shared by many secular Hungarian Jews. For them, the Communist regime, as bad as it was, was at least not singling out Jews (apart from Zionists and the religiously Orthodox) for special repression. Clearly, compared with the previous period of persecution, Communist rule could be considered a lesser evil.

During the years of Stalinism, apart from the extraordinary extent of repression, it was this dilemma that fundamentally determined Jewish politics. According to

Csorba, the representatives of organized Jewry weighed the possibilities and decided to pursue a policy of political realism. Although the official line they adopted seemed “startlingly similar to the catastrophic policies [carried out by] the holders of these same posts before the war,” he writes,

the best of the leadership . . . having doubtless considered the overall fate in Hungary of the Jewish community . . . and having taken into account the geopolitical situation and the expected internal trends of development of Hungarian society, and pervaded by a profound spiritual and emotional commitment to the defense and protection of the Jewish community as a value in itself, quite consciously chose this political path [of collaboration].⁶³

It may be argued that, in any event, no other options were open to the Jewish leaders. Under Hungary’s Stalinist dictatorship, there were few opportunities for resistance; those who did resist wound up in prison.⁶⁴ Moreover, Csorba’s appraisal applies, to a large extent, to the leaders of other religious groups in Hungary. The position taken by the Jewish communal leadership was basically that Jewish matters were to be regarded as exclusively religious. Put somewhat differently, by giving up secular Jewish goals—which were in any event untenable—they hoped to preserve the vitality of Jewish religious institutions.

One of the main consequences of going along with the party line was the anti-Zionist and anti-Israeli stance adopted by the Hungarian Jewish leadership. This stance was consistently maintained over the decades even though many Hungarian Jews had relatives and friends in Israel. Other consequences were the disruption of ties with most western Jewish organizations. The official Jewish organizations supported institutions that served to legitimize the Communist regime, such as the Patriotic People’s Front or the “priests for peace” movement.

In certain crucial instances, the collaborationist behavior of the leadership seemed to go well beyond political realism. A case in point is the decision made by the Communist leadership in 1951 to banish thousands of people who had been members of the “bourgeois classes” from the city to the countryside. This resettlement order applied to many Jews who, before the war, had been entrepreneurs, merchants, or senior public officials. According to an official report compiled for the party leadership, 5,182 families (consisting of 12,074 individuals) were banished from Budapest between May 21 and July 18, 1951. Later, it is estimated, a further 1,200–1,400 Budapest families were forced to resettle, as were several thousand people from other Hungarian cities.⁶⁵ Of these people, 781 heads of family belonged to professions that, in the prewar period, were predominantly occupied by Jews (factory owners, bankers, company directors, and wholesalers), and a further 1,028 heads of family were classified as “others”—most of these, presumably, members of the free professions (doctors, lawyers, journalists, and the like). Assuming that about one-third of these families were in fact Jewish, as many as 2,000–3,000 Jews were forcefully resettled.⁶⁶ It is hardly surprising that, as the contemporaneous sources reveal, a general panic broke out, with many people seeking the protection of either official Jewish organizations or the Israeli embassy.⁶⁷ Although in individual cases the Jewish leaders attempted to provide assistance,⁶⁸ their official statements expressed unequivocal support for the government and rejected any expression of solidarity with Jews who,

within a few years of the war's end, had once again been driven out of their homes. On July 19, 1951, for instance, the leaders of the Jewish community issued the following statement in *Új Élet*:

The leading organs of the Hungarian Jewish community consider it their moral duty to issue their word of protest against the slander that is being spread by the western press, radio, and the inciters that are behind them about the behavior of our people's democracy toward Hungarian Jews. On behalf of both rabbimates, our councils of rabbis, and the National Representation of Hungarian Israelites, we solemnly declare that, in accordance with the full freedom of worship laid down in the constitution of the Hungarian People's Democracy, our brothers in faith are not prevented in any manner from freely exercising their faith; our congregation and its institutions are operating without hindrance throughout the country; and denominational discrimination is not being employed by anyone against our co-religionists. In the course of the current resettlement actions, not a single Jew has been included among those to be resettled on account of his being a member of the Jewish denomination. On the contrary, all of them—as super-wealthy wholesalers, factory owners, and landowners—were part of the Horthy regime, whose persecution of the Jews is known throughout the world and from whose system those who have now been resettled benefited materially and morally This protest and rejection also applies to the position and activities of the diplomatic representation in Hungary of the state of Israel. We note with indignation that even the bodies of the Jewish state have joined the lapdogs of the agitators, and are repeating their slander like parrots, whereas they could easily convince themselves of the falsehood of such slander.⁶⁹

This cynical statement—and, over the years, many others like it—not only sent a clear message to Jews that they should not count on the protection of the Jewish organizations, but also provided a cover for the repressive Communist regime on the important international front. To be sure, antisemitism was not an official factor in the selection of those who were to be banished (although it undoubtedly played a role in the individual decisions of some local Communist functionaries). At the same time, a different reaction to the resettlement plan—silence, the denial of open support for repression, and assistance in as many specific cases as possible—might have served to indicate to Jews that their representative bodies were at least on their side, even if they were unable to do much for them. Moreover, a denial of open support might have made it more difficult for the government to resist foreign pressure against the resettlement and might have opened up the possibility of emigration for many “class-alien” Hungarian Jews (a possibility the Israeli government proposed). As it was, the Jewish leadership's behavior signaled a stance that continued throughout Communist rule, which led in the end to the alienation of the vast majority of Hungarian Jewry from the official Jewish organizations.

A further consequence of the Jewish leadership's collaborationist policy became apparent only later. Among the various religious denominations, the government's anti-church and anti-religious policies created a community of interest. Although room for maneuvering was admittedly limited, coordinated actions would doubtless have made it more difficult for the Communists to apply their policy in full. Under the circumstances, even a limited amount of resistance would have had enormous significance; occasionally it might have been enough to bring about a moderation of repressive policies, as happened in the case of the Polish Catholic church. Not only did

the Hungarian Jewish leadership fail to seek cooperation with the other denominations, but when Archbishop Mindszenty was arrested in 1948, the Neolog and Orthodox congregations (as well as the soon-to-be-disbanded Zionist Alliance) supported the arrest in a declaration that was noteworthy for its stridency.⁷⁰ It is true that Mindszenty had shown little inclination to consider the issue of Catholic responsibility for the anti-Jewish laws and for the persecution of the Jews (as had been done by leaders in the Calvinist church). It is also true that, in his battle against the anti-church policy of the Communists, he had received the backing of various former politicians who were correctly suspected of antisemitism. Nevertheless, the statement by the Jewish representatives was both morally unjustifiable and politically obtuse. It brought no benefits to the Jewish community and presumably caused great indignation and distrust among Christian circles that might otherwise have become partners with the Jews in a struggle against the regime. Interestingly, at the time of the resettlement actions three years later, the possibility of issuing a joint protest with the Lutheran denomination did arise. However, Stöckler firmly rejected the Lutherans' offer.⁷¹

In sum, the Jewish leadership's policy in the first half of the 1950s not only alienated its Jewish public but also led to its isolation within the broader religious arena. The loss of support on the Jewish street and the inevitable lessening of internal legitimacy, as well as the loss of opportunities for forming external alliances, meant that the official Jewish representatives were increasingly at the mercy of the Communist state. After the 1956 revolution, this dependence led to disaster.

Post-Stalinist Communism and the Death of Jewish Politics

After a decade-long period of retribution in the aftermath of the anti-Soviet revolt of 1956, Hungarian Communist domestic policy gradually changed. Although the nature of the political system was unaltered and the Communists still refused to tolerate independent institutions, from the mid-1960s onward, under the rule of János Kádár, there was a noticeable relaxation of domestic control. Post-Stalinist Communist politics did not attempt a constant mobilization of the public but rather made numerous concessions to it, at least in the private sphere. Thus, the pressure on everyday religious practice gradually declined. Following a major trial against Catholic priests in 1961, the political supervision of the denominations increasingly took the form of bureaucratic controls rather than terror. The main body of control became the State Office for Church Affairs, which regulated religious life primarily by means of monopolizing decision-making in areas such as church finance and ecclesiastical appointments. Although intimidation did not disappear completely, state policy was fundamentally directed at ensuring the loyalty of the religious leadership. In the case of the Jews, this aim was achieved in full.

Within Hungarian Jewry, there had been differing reactions to the revolution of 1956. For Orthodox Jews, the revolution had meant liberation from the oppression of an atheist state—and not least, the possibility of leaving the country.⁷² A significant group of secular Jews was also sympathetic to the changes promised by the fall of dictatorship. At the same time, there was also a renewed fear of antisemitism. We now

know that very few antisemitic acts were actually committed during the revolution.⁷³ At the time, however, rumors of antisemitic violence spread fear throughout the Jewish population. Given the fact that scarcely a decade had passed since the end of the Holocaust, this fear was not unreasonable. In any event, it was an important factor in the decision of many Hungarian Jews to emigrate. Perhaps even more important, however, was the realization of many that, both for those Jews who wished to retain their Jewish identity and faith and for those who wished to free themselves entirely from any form of Jewish identity, it made sense to live elsewhere—in Israel, in the United States, or in any of the western democracies.

Approximately 20,000–30,000 Jews left Hungary in the years 1956–1957.⁷⁴ Following this wave of emigration, the profile of Hungarian Jewry once again changed. The remaining Jewish population outside Budapest disappeared almost completely as Jews either emigrated or else moved to the capital. Religious Jews, particularly those who were young or middle-aged, left the country in disproportionate numbers: of 190 pupils enrolled in the Budapest Jewish Grammar School in 1956, just 47 remained the following year.⁷⁵ In early 1956, the Budapest Jewish community had 15,000 dues-paying members. This number fell considerably in the following years. By 1960—although there were still an estimated 115,000 Jews living in Hungary—only 12 births were registered with Jewish officials, and this number fell even more in the course of the decade, with only three births recorded in 1965 and nine in 1970.⁷⁶

Reflecting the changes in demography and social status of the Jewish population, the community leadership also underwent a partial transformation. During the revolution, Jewish communal leaders had issued an uncharacteristically daring statement of support for the revolution and had announced the retirement of the current leadership.⁷⁷ With the personnel change came a shift in priorities, the Jewish community now devoting most of its resources to its elderly membership. Yet the program of the new Jewish leadership that entered office in 1957, as formulated by Endre Sós, the new chairman of the National Representation of Hungarian Israelites (who announced that “we were cultural Jews, and we want to remain cultural Jews”),⁷⁸ sounded remarkably hollow. To whom were these words addressed? The definition of the National Representation as an exclusively religious body excluded a great part of Hungary’s Jewish population from the circle that Jewish politics sought to represent. In addition, by the 1960s it was already becoming clear that young secular Jews who adhered in some way to a Jewish identity could realize this identity only *outside* the official Jewish institutions.

Thus, the National Representation could not count upon any significant social support. It was not backed by any group whose reactions needed to be taken into account by Hungarian decision-makers. Moreover, there was no change during these years in its anti-Zionist policies, which included the rejection of any public identification with Israel. In consequence, the possibility of exerting pressure from abroad on the Communist government was reduced to a minimum. In this situation—a state of complete internal and external isolation—all official Jewish institutions became fully dependent upon the Communist state.

Among the possible general objectives of Jewish politics, the primary objective, that of maintaining the very existence of self-conscious Hungarian Jewry, was effectively ruled out by the Jewish communal leadership when it failed to broaden the nar-

row definition of the Jewish community as a religious denomination. It also failed to preserve the religious and cultural heritage of the community. Since the assistance it received from the state (supplemented by a small amount of foreign assistance, mainly from the Joint) was insufficient even to provide for minimum social and educational tasks, the National Representation sold off or abandoned decaying synagogues and Jewish cemeteries as well as other properties of historical value that it still owned. The one remaining political goal serving to legitimize the official Jewish leadership was its defense of Jews against antisemitism. Even this goal, however, was transformed into a means to legitimize the Jewish leaders' unconditional loyalty to the Communist party-state.

Thus, the National Representation regularly published articles that reported on neo-fascist elements, particularly in West Germany, who were allegedly laying waste to the western world. The purpose of such reports was to show that the Communist system was the only guarantee of protection from fascism. A typical piece of propaganda put out by the National Representation was the following declaration from 1958, in which the Jewish leadership encouraged the faithful to support the official "candidates" (they were running unopposed) in the upcoming parliamentary elections:

Brothers and sisters! Whoever saw in 1956 the Jewish families fleeing from the Nyírség [a rural area in northeastern Hungary], the shocked children, the Talmud teacher covered with wounds who was the supporter of no political regime—he was a Jew, and he was among the first to be hit by the enemies of the people's democracy—whoever saw this, understood that there is no "third way" even for Hungarian Jews. There are just two paths ahead: socialism, that is, the possibility of life; and fascism, that is, death.⁷⁹

The Communist regime, for its part, appeared to be willing to stifle public manifestations of antisemitism, obviously fearing that antisemitism and anti-Communism might become intertwined.⁸⁰ At the same time, it placed a condition on this protection against antisemitism: strict adherence to the definition of the Jewish community as a religious denomination only. "Whoever does not consider the complete assimilation of the Jews into the surrounding society possible or desirable," wrote a leading publicist of the Kádár era (rejecting the idea of any form of Jewish identity outside the synagogue walls), "justifies, with his ideas, Hitler and the gas chambers."⁸¹ This ideology was also put forward by Imre Pozsgay, a leading politician of the post-1956 era and a member of the reformist wing of the Communist party. In the preface to a book of articles on Hungarian Jewry (the first to be published in many years), Pozsgay wrote the following:

Those who choose assimilation choose a nation for themselves. They will become sons of the Hungarian nation in Hungary because they accept its political system and identify with its history and program . . . It is a historical fact that the majority of the Jews in Hungary have chosen this path, and they follow this path of their own free will, so that nobody has the right to use the pronouns "we" and "they" in connection with them anymore.⁸²

Pozsgay's formula was straightforward: identification with the nation, namely the Communist system and its program, in exchange for protection from antisemitism.

In the decades following the revolution, two principles determined the Jewish pol-

icy of the Hungarian regime. On the one hand, "Jewish matters" did not officially exist and therefore would make no appearance in the political arena (except, rarely, under the heading of "church affairs"). On the other, the state would take a tough stand against anyone (whether within the power apparatus or outside it) who appeared to be either an advocate of autonomous Jewish life or, conversely, an enemy of the Jews.

During the 1960s, this basic concept was applied to two important events, the Eichmann affair of 1961 and the Six-Day War of 1967.⁸³ In the former instance, the basic question was how to react to Eichmann's kidnapping and subsequent trial in Israel for his role as the architect of the Final Solution in Hungary. At a Politburo meeting held on June 28, 1960, the proposal was made to exploit the affair as a propaganda weapon against "West German fascism" and Hungarian anti-Communist émigrés. Istvan Szirmai added that, in his opinion, the affair could be used to reveal wartime collaboration between the Zionist movement and the fascists, thereby compromising the Israeli leadership. At this point, Kádár stepped in. "I agree with the idea," he noted,

but I have some reservations. It is not a good idea to turn these awful fascist affairs into exclusively Jewish matters. If we do act in this affair, the decisive thing should be that Eichmann murdered thousands of *Hungarian citizens*. This is where the emphasis should be, rather than turning this affair into a Jewish question. Eichmann did not only murder Jews; others were there, too. This is not a Jewish question; this is a question of fascism and antifascism. We recognize the right of the Israeli court in this matter. And that is as far as it goes, when it comes to the Jews. We must be careful about this.⁸⁴

A similar logic dictated government policy after the Six-Day War. In the wake of the Israeli victory, a quiet purge was undertaken in the foreign, military, and security services: a number of people of Jewish descent, who were otherwise loyal and trusted Communists, were dismissed or transferred to minor posts. Documents that have recently been uncovered in the archives of the Communist party indicate that the party leadership feared both an upsurge in antisemitism and (perhaps even more) a dangerous turn in Hungarian public opinion, which appeared to view the Communist regime's pro-Arab policy with incomprehension and the Israeli victory with barely concealed glee.⁸⁵ Among Hungarian Jews, including party members, the Israeli victory was viewed with mixed feelings. Whereas there was fear concerning a possible rise in antisemitism both in everyday life and in the political arena, there was also a nearly unanimous rejection of the Hungarian government's policy regarding the Middle East.

In a memorandum prepared for the party headquarters by an unknown informer operating within the National Representation, it was reported that while most of those connected with the organization "stress that they believe in the Communist social system . . . many of them disagree with the Soviet Union's position when it comes to that part of the Middle East conflict that concerns Israel, and especially the question of whether Israel is the aggressor or not. In their opinion, Israel acted in a defensive manner." The same informer also spoke with the Communist party secretary of a small factory, who told him:

We Communists, who by descent are also Jews, do not agree with the Soviet Union on this issue, because the Arabs have always been antisemites and anti-Communists. It is im-

possible to believe that they have changed and are now progressive thinkers. The Israeli people are far more progressive, for three Communist parties are operating [in Israel]. Communists have never been persecuted in Israel as they have been in Syria and Egypt. We—who otherwise support the Soviet Union—in this area fear for the prestige of the Soviet Union.⁸⁶

Obviously, this mood characterized not only “official Jews” but also the Jewish community at large. In fact, the Six-Day War became a point of departure for a redefinition of Jewish identity among young Jews. This change in mood was perhaps alluded to in a remark made by Kádár at a meeting of the Politburo that was dealing with the outcome of the war:

A small section of the party membership—and I hope I shall not be misunderstood—but a section that exists and is rather influential in a certain area, behaved in a non-Communist manner. And I don’t want to make a racial thing out of this, and I understand that it is not sufficiently clear to everyone who is the aggressor, the attacker; it is possible to understand a certain anxiety, but this does not grant permission to challenge the position of the party . . . as to whom we should support and whom we are fighting against.

Kádár did not hesitate to draw the consequences:

I would not allow this to go without a response . . . It is vital to our system that the party be intact and firm. And if we have fewer party members, this is a smaller evil than having [more] members who fluctuate. We must not tolerate or allow that. . . . If these trends spread, we shall have to adopt new measures. That we should fatten up people by giving them good jobs, who then behave like this in critical situations—this cannot be permitted!⁸⁷

In this way Kádár issued clear instructions to the party apparatus to purge itself of “unreliable Jewish cadres.” At the same time, the activities of the political police force were stepped up in connection with informal groups, consisting of young people (sometimes loosely linked with various synagogues), that were regarded as seed beds of Zionist activity.⁸⁸ All of this—both the purges and the surveillance—took place behind the scenes. Mindful of the 1956 revolution, Kádár and the rest of the party leadership wished to avoid any conflict that might disrupt party unity and the social consensus. For this reason, the party did not sanction anti-Zionist campaigns such as those that were carried out in the Soviet Union and in Poland. Any attempts by the party apparatus to move in this direction were swiftly put down, and antisemitism on the streets continued to be suppressed.⁸⁹

The Jewish leadership proved itself a willing partner when it came to implementing the government’s policy.⁹⁰ Jewish leaders consulted with functionaries from the State Office for Church Affairs on all important matters and reported on events taking place within the denomination and on opinions voiced both in public and in private. Indeed, two chairmen of the National Representation, Endre Sós and Géza Seifert, were recorded by the political police force as being agents working under the cover names of “Sipos” and “Sárosi.”⁹¹ In one typical report dated March 7, 1960, “Sipos” reported that

in Békéscsaba . . . at the request of . . . the local head of the State Office for Church Affairs . . . I arranged for the dismissal of the chairman of the local Jewish community and is-

sued a stern warning to [Orthodox] deputy rabbi Berkovits . . . [who] is adapting with difficulty to the spirit of socialist Hungary. He has strong Zionist attitudes . . . I arranged for G.E. to be elected as the new chairman. He is a member of the town council . . . with anti-Zionist attitudes. After the election, in agreement with the new leadership, we offered the building of the old great synagogue to the municipality of Békéscsaba at a very reasonable price. The smaller Orthodox temple is sufficient for the small congregation. In two and a half years, we have sold about 15 synagogues to the state or to municipalities and communities. We have always taken steps to ensure that state interests are properly looked after. In several cases, we had to break the resistance of the congregations, which involved a great struggle.⁹²

Time and again, the protection of the Jewish community from antisemitism served to justify its leadership's collaboration with the regime, particularly with regard to its support of official anti-Israel and pro-Arab policies. Jewish leaders sought to win members of the community over to the party line on these matters, but this was no easy task. At a meeting of the national rabbinical council on January 27, 1968, for instance, the chairman of the National Representation, Géza Seifert, noted that "even if emotional ties link us to the Israeli people, we should never lose the main focus, according to which we are Hungarian citizens and builders of the Socialist system." Similarly, Chief Rabbi Imre Benoschofsky, who had been imprisoned during the early 1950s on charges of Zionism, warned that although Hungarian Jews "may have relatives in Israel, and the community of religious culture may link us . . . [a] rabbi's responsibility is to the community, and the faithful should be conscious of this in the course of everyday conversations."⁹³ In this spirit, rabbis and community officials participated in the work of such organizations as the Patriotic People's Front and the Peace Council, traveling abroad to act as government mouthpieces; at home, they dutifully wrote up reports for the State Office for Church Affairs and for the political police.⁹⁴

The government's policy was challenged only by small and informal pockets of resistance. From time to time, groups comprising mainly young people would develop around a young rabbi; in another instance, a group of mostly young Jews tried to establish a meeting place on National Representation premises. Although the political police were kept apprised of such developments, there was no need to intervene. The Jewish leadership itself disciplined maverick rabbis, sometimes dismissing them from their posts, and, as noted, sent information on suspected political or "Zionist" agitators to the relevant authorities. A more complicated situation arose in the 1970s when a group of young Jews began regularly to attend Friday evening talks given by Sándor Scheiber, the internationally renowned head of the Budapest rabbinical seminary. Following the rabbi's talk—which adhered strictly to religious themes—the young Jews would remove to a local coffee house or apartment to continue their discussion. Many reports on these meetings, which were suspected of having a Zionist character, were filed with the State Office for Church Affairs.⁹⁵

Inevitably, most of these informal groups were established outside of the official Jewish institutional system. The "political" nature of such groups was manifested only in the choice of certain topics for discussion (Israel, the Middle East conflict, and the possibility of a Jewish identity not based on religious affiliation). These groups, moreover, never moved in the direction of formal institutionalization, as hap-

pened in the Soviet Union or in Poland, but remained loose and informal, with no fixed membership.⁹⁶

Insight into the nature of such groups is provided by the following excerpt from a dossier kept by the secret police. Between 1971 and 1975, a group of young Jews who met each Tuesday in a Budapest restaurant was kept under surveillance. The file on this group (code-named “Jubilálók”) comprised more than a thousand pages and was justified on the grounds that the “Keddists” (from the Hungarian word for Tuesday) were Zionist activists. In a report dated October 14, 1971, for instance, it was noted that

[t]he group has been operating in effect without interruption for 10 years. Its numbers have been growing, and membership now stands at about 290 people Gatherings are usually held at the Moszkva restaurant on Tuesday evenings throughout the year. About 20–40 people generally attend the gatherings . . . [and] the group usually organizes a larger annual gathering in a place of public entertainment. Gatherings of smaller groups have also been organized in apartments

The group has a “Keddist” flag, which has the following appearance: a red background with a yellow letter “k” (symbolizing “keddism”) and the date of foundation: 1960. Soon after the group was formed, a newspaper appeared . . . but this was discontinued after two editions. An investigation into the significance of Tuesday has revealed that in Jewish tradition and religion, Tuesday is a benevolent and fortunate day

The aim of the group is as follows: to prevent mixed marriages, to hinder assimilation, to nurture and maintain Jewish national sentiment We also have some . . . indications that one of the leaders of the Keddist group was recently involved in a so-called “marrying off” scheme. Apparently the aim was to enable women of, for instance, Soviet citizenship to settle in Hungary, and then to assist them to defect from Hungary to the West Having analyzed the data that we acquired through operative surveillance, we may now conclude that we face a well-organized illegal Zionist organization whose goal is to arouse and keep alive Jewish national sentiment in young people of Jewish descent within the framework of the organization, and thereby to hinder the integration of these young people into our socialist society and their assimilation. These objectives demonstrate that in essence the group strives for racial separation. The methods, forms, and aims of the group’s activities—according to our findings—are identical to the World Zionist Organization’s programs and objectives for young Jewish people.⁹⁷

These accusations were not borne out by regular and detailed surveillance. In 1975, when the file on the group was finally closed, the secret service noted that “the gatherings have no political content; in the course of the investigation, we did not become aware of hostile activity or any endeavor to prepare for such. The leaders and members of the group use the gatherings to look for sexual partners.” Nonetheless, “occasional attempts on the part of persons leading the group to promote certain activities, the mere fact that the group exists, and the appearance from time to time of persons with Zionist attitudes [all] represent . . . a danger.”⁹⁸ Both of these closing assessments were essentially accurate. Although groups such as the “Keddists” were not efforts to create a spontaneous Jewish political movement, under certain circumstances they might have evolved into more formally organized and politically active organizations.

Between 1956 and 1989, the gap between the official institutions of Hungarian Jewry and Hungarian Jewish society became unbridgeable. Clearly, a new voice in Jewish politics could only appear from outside the institutional structure; such a voice

would have to take a position of open opposition to the Communist regime. This is precisely what happened in the mid-1980s when the illegal press of the fledgling democratic opposition published a political program that, for the first time in 35 years, formulated both a demand for autonomous Jewish politics and the possible parameters of such politics.⁹⁹

The “Shalom” manifesto rejected a purely religious definition of the Jews, arguing that Jews formed a group that was also defined by historical, cultural, and ethnic factors. It declared the loyalty of conscious Jews to the Hungarian nation, but declared that this did not automatically translate into loyalty to particular political regimes. The Communist system, in particular, could not demand the loyalty of Jews for the simple reason that it denied its citizens basic civil rights. Moreover, the Communist policy on Israel was unacceptable. According to the Shalom group, Jews in the diaspora had both the right and the moral duty to take a stand against the hidden antisemitism of anti-Zionist rhetoric and to express open solidarity with the state of Israel, regardless of any differences they might have with regard to specific Israeli policies.

The Shalom manifesto, written by György Gadó, sparked a debate both within the Jewish community and among the democratic opposition. These further developments, however, belong to the history of post-Communist Hungarian Jewish politics.¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

Throughout the modern era, Jews living in the diaspora have faced the fundamental dilemma of how to relate to majority politics while at the same time seeking to promote their own communal interests. In post-Emancipation Hungary, Jewish leaders chose the path of integration. They adhered to this path for the next 150 years, hoping to secure the survival, prosperity, and protection of the Jewish community as an integral part of Hungarian society.

The success of the integrationist program was conditional on the Jewish leadership's success in securing influential allies and in building an alliance that was based on a durable ideology rather than on mere political expediency; in addition, however, they were expected to strive for tangible benefits for Hungarian Jewish society. These three conditions were realized only during the pre-First World War era of Dualism. After the Shoah and the brief democratic interlude that followed the Second World War, Jewish politics was essentially left with only one of its original goals: the struggle against antisemitism. There is no doubt that, whereas under Communist leadership, it was impossible to articulate or realize particularistic political goals, there did appear to be—within the framework of “anti-fascism”—a favorable opportunity for taking a stand against antisemitism. Yet by accepting without reservation the Communist version of anti-fascism, whose main focus was an attack on the capitalist West, the Jewish leadership fatally restricted both the scope of its political goals and the range of its potential allies, while at the same time rendering impossible any form of opposition to the Communist regime.¹⁰¹ The disastrous consequences of this policy became apparent after the 1960s, when the Jewish leadership proved unable to react to the general political thaw and thus became completely isolated both in Hungary and abroad.

In fact, the question arises whether it is even possible to apply the term “Jewish politics” to the strategy pursued by the Jewish leadership during the Communist era. It can be argued that, for Hungarian Jewry, Jewish politics during these years was not only impossible but undesirable. It is true that among Hungarian Jewry in the immediate post-Holocaust years, there had been a definitive demand for autonomous Jewish politics. However, this demand was soon stifled by the Stalinist policies of the new regime. A benchmark for the evaluation of Jewish politics during this period, therefore, may be the extent to which it was able to preserve the earlier institutional structures, to keep alive the relationship between Jewish institutions and Jewish society, to protect Jews from repression, and to maintain the possibility of cooperation with the widest possible range of political, religious, and social victims of Communist repression. Hungarian Jewish postwar politics failed in this regard.

During the decades following the abortive 1956 revolution, owing to the internal transformation of Jewish society, the political changes, and the consequences of Jewish politics of earlier periods, the demand for autonomous Jewish politics virtually disappeared, being manifested only in small marginal groups. Nevertheless, the Communist regime continued to be concerned with “Jewish affairs” even when such affairs were not confined to the religious sphere. None of this was visible to the public. Rather, the regime demanded that Jewish leaders unconditionally adhere to the public position that “Jewish affairs” did not exist, while at the same time being expected to resolve whatever conflicts were in fact caused by such issues as the regime’s policy on Israel, “Zionist activism,” and its relationship toward foreign Jewish organizations. “Jewish issues,” in short, were continuously (albeit covertly) present in Hungarian politics. Yet the record of the official Jewish leadership with regard to these issues was very poor indeed. Isolated as it was from the wider Hungarian Jewish community, international Jewish life, and even non-Jewish civil society—and thus completely at the mercy of the state—the Jewish leadership willingly implemented government policy even when, as in the final years of the Kádár era, there arose several opportunities for denominational or community-interest politics. In consequence, the official Hungarian Jewish institutions experienced the final collapse of Communist power in a state of total paralysis.

Notes

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1. Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars* (Bloomington: 1983), 107.

2. András Kovács, “Jews and Politics in Hungary,” in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vol. 11, *Values, Interests and Identity: Jews and Politics in a Changing World*, ed. Peter Y. Medding (New York: 1995), 50.

3. See Jacob Katz, *A House Divided: Orthodoxy and Schism in Nineteenth-Century Central European Jewry*, trans. Ziporah Brody (Hanover, N.H.: 1998), chs. 3–5.

4. On the antisemitic wave of the early 1880s, see Judit Kubinszky, *A politikai antiszemi-*

tizmus Magyarországon 1875–1890 (Political antisemitism in Hungary from 1875 until 1900) (Budapest: 1975); Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Antisemitism, 1700–1933* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1980); Árpád Welker, “Jewish Politicians in the Hungarian Parliament,” in *Jewish Studies at the Central European University: Yearbook 1999–2001* (Budapest: 2001), 239–270.

5. See Lajos Szabolcsi, *Két emberöltő* (Two generations) (Budapest: 1993), 45.

6. *Ibid.*, 40.

7. See Welker, “Jewish Politicians in the Hungarian Parliament,” 266–267.

8. See Szabolcsi, *Két emberöltő*, 56–58.

9. For a detailed account of the numerus clausus law, see Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars*, 108–111. See also Mária M. Kovács, “A kisebbségek nemzetközi jogvédelmének politikai csapdája” (The political trap of the international laws on defense of minorities) in *The Holocaust in Hungary: Fifty Years Later*, ed. Randolph L. Braham and Attila Pók (New York: 1977), 137–146.

10. *Egyenlőség*, 1 June 1926, quoted in Szabolcsi, *Két emberöltő*, 367. Vázsonyi was a member of parliament from 1901 and in 1917 became the first member of the Jewish community to serve as a government minister. In the 1920s, until his death in 1926, he was a member of the parliamentary opposition. His party, the National Democratic Party, had four to six seats in parliament, and in alliance with the Social Democrats and several smaller parties, it fiercely attacked the “Christian-national” regime. The party’s power base was in Budapest, where it consistently received almost 20 percent of the votes in parliamentary elections. Many of its supporters were lower-middle-class Jews of Budapest. Vázsonyi condemned the government and the numerus clausus law in numerous articles. The text cited here is considerably stronger in tone than that submitted by government supporters among the leadership of the Neolog community. See *ibid.*, 352–370.

11. Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars*, 104.

12. *Ibid.*, 120–121.

13. A good example of the new recognition by Jewish leaders that pragmatic arguments rather than appeals to principle were necessary is found in the memoirs of Pál Sándor, a Jewish member of the ruling party in the Hungarian parliament. In 1926, Sándor persuaded Prime Minister István Bethlen to consent to representation of the Jewish denomination in the upper house. His argument was that

[this decision] will be of immeasurable benefit to Hungary. Do you know, Excellence, what it will mean if Hungary, which until now was famous merely as the country of the numerus clausus, shall become notable for delegating two rabbis into its upper house? . . . [I]f you consent to the Jewish priests taking their places among the Hungarian ecclesiastical notables, then tomorrow this will be featured prominently in the foreign press and particularly in America, because this will mean that . . . Hungary is setting an example to the liberal legislatures (*Egyenlőség* [Jan. 1930], cited in Szabolcsi, *Két emberöltő*, 384–385).

14. See György Borsányi, *Ezernyolcszáz kartoték a budapesti baloldaltól* (Eighteen hundred files concerning the Budapest left wing), *Válóság* 9 (1983), 19–31.

15. These mechanisms functioned even during the most horrific months of Arrow Cross rule. An example is the ministerial decree issued on November 13, 1944 by Gábor Vajna, minister of the interior in the Arrow Cross government, which exempted approximately 500 Jews (named in the document) from the anti-Jewish decrees of 1941. See *Decree of the Minister of the Interior of the Kingdom of Hungary, no. 16.157/1944. II. B.M.* (on the confirmation of exemption certificates) (Budapest: 1944).

16. See Viktor Karády, “Szociológiai kísérlet a magyar zsidóság 1945 és 1956 közötti helyzetének elemzésére” (A sociological attempt to analyze the situation of the Hungarian Jews between 1945 and 1956) in *Zsidóság az 1945 utáni Magyarországon* (Jewry in Hungary after 1945), ed. Péter Kende (Paris: 1985), 37–180.

17. *Ibid.*, 73.

18. *Ibid.*, 85–87; Viktor Karády, “Antisemitizmus, asszimiláció és zsidó identitás Magyarországon a régi rendszertől az ezredfordulóig—Összefoglalási kísérlet” (Antisemitism, assimilation, and Jewish identity in Hungary from the old system to the millennium—Summary attempt) (Antisemitism, assimilation, and Jewish identity in Hungary from the old system to the millennium—Summary attempt)

lation, and Jewish identity in Hungary from the old regime until the turn of the millenium), in idem, *Önazonosítás, sorsválasztás. A zsidó csoportazonosság történelmi alakváltozásai Magyarországon* (Self-identification and choice of fate: historical changes in Jewish group identity in Hungary) (Budapest: 2001), 56–60.

19. Attila Novák, *Átmenetben. A cionista mozgalom négy éve Magyarországon* (In transition: the four years of the Zionist movement in Hungary) (Budapest: 2000), 26, 126, 134.

20. Ibid., 29, 32, 154.

21. Ibid., 16; Karády, “Szociológiai kísérlet,” 93.

22. Postwar emigration from Hungary peaked in 1949. Collating data from various sources, it appears that approximately 40,000 Jews left Hungary between 1945 and the end of 1949, of whom approximately 15,000–18,000 emigrated to Palestine/Israel. See Karády, “Szociológiai kísérlet,” 100–103; Novák, *Átmenetben*, 38, Tamás Stark, “Kísérlet a zsidó népesség számanak behatárolására 1945 és 1995 közötti” (“An attempt to measure the size of the Jewish population between 1945 and 1995”), in *Zsidók a mai Magyarországon* (Jews in Contemporary Hungary), ed. András Kovács (Budapest: 2002), 101–128.

23. Novák, *Átmenetben*, 43, 154.

24. In 1949, the files with the complete records of the Hungarian Zionist Alliance came into the hands of the central leadership of the Hungarian Workers’ Party (the name of Hungary’s Communist party at the time). These files contained a list numbering some 37,000 names. According to a 1949 report of the State Security Authority (ÁVH) of the Ministry of the Interior, the Hungarian Zionist Alliance had six sections, 80 local groups, and a declared membership of 41,000. As the report itself noted, this number was obviously exaggerated (see *ibid.*, 295). These data were used as the basis of a report to the Communist secretariat concerning the expulsion from the party of Zionist party members; see the special double issue of *Múltunk*, nos. 2–3 (1993) titled “Dokumentumok. A magyar zsidóság és a hatalom 1945–1955” (Hungarian Jewry and power 1945–1955), (hereafter “Dokumentumok”), 273–276.

25. The history of Zionist resistance in Hungary has been elaborated most thoroughly by Asher Cohen. See, for example, his book *The Halutz Resistance in Hungary 1942–1944* (New York: 1986).

26. See Pál Demény, *A párt foglya voltam* (I was a prisoner of the party) (Budapest: 1988), 140–143.

27. See Novák, *Átmenetben*, 23–28.

28. See Karády, “Szociológiai kísérlet,” 67.

29. See László Csorba, “Izraelita felekezeti élet Magyarországon a vészorkszaktól a nyolcvanas évekig” (The life of the Jewish denomination in Hungary from the period of disaster to the 1980s), in *Hét évtized a hazai zsidóság életében* (Seven decades in the life of Hungarian Jews), ed. L. Ferenc Lendvai, Aniko Sohar, and Pál Horváth (Budapest: 1990), 76–80.

30. One manifestation of a new Jewish sense of activism, which caused an uproar among both Jewish and Hungarian official circles, was the protest demonstration organized by the Zionist Betar youth movement in May 1946, following a pogrom in Kunmadaras. Those who participated in the protest outnumbered Betar’s supporters. See Novák, *Átmenetben*, 101.

31. Erik Molnár, “Zsidókérdés Magyarországon” (The Jewish question in Hungary), *Társadalmi Szemle* 5 (1946), reprinted in *Zsidókérdés, asszimiláció, antiszemitizmus* (The Jewish problem, assimilation, antisemitism), ed. Péter Hanák (Budapest: 1984), 30.

32. “Rossz politika” (A bad policy), *Szabad Nép*, 22 June 1945. In theory, the Social Democratic Party (SZDP) also rejected Zionism. However, its tone differed from Communist rhetoric. A document issued on October 4, 1946, for example, noted that

the Party’s theoretical position on Zionism is still one of rejection, but it also manifests understanding toward Jewish sections of society which—since large parts of their families have been annihilated and their homes destroyed, and they themselves have been subjected to immeasurable suffering—now feel that they can only bear the brunt of their tragedy if they are able to develop their way of life somewhere else and among themselves. Thus, the Party cannot deny support and assistance to those who—after the suffering inflicted upon them, and driven by national, national-minority, or religious senti-

ments—now wish to migrate to Palestine. Nevertheless, the Party disapproves of any propaganda that seeks to encourage the emigration of people among whom the idea of emigration has never arisen or is not yet strong (“Dokumentumok,” 254).

The underlying motives of the Social Democrats’ position are well demonstrated by the handwritten notes of Antal Bán, the general secretary of the party, on a letter sent by Béla Dénes, leader of the Social Democrat Zionist Ihud-Mapai party, in April 1945. Dénes was seeking to have the Social Democrats recognize his party and grant membership in the social-democratic party (SZPD) to members of the Zionist party. Bán noted that “we must find out more about this matter, we must have a look at them unofficially We should sound out the position of the Communist party toward them. In my opinion, they [the Communists] will object if such a party makes an appearance in Hungarian political life” (ibid.). In 1948, the Social Democrats were forced to merge with the Communists to form the Hungarian Workers’ Party.

33. See Novák, *Átmenetben*, 37.

34. Letter from Miklós Ajtai to Mihály Farkas, “Dokumentumok,” 260–261.

35. See report in ibid., 261–264.

36. For a detailed account of the dissolution of the Hungarian Zionist movement, see Novák, *Átmenetben*, 40–43, 145–172.

37. As noted, he was also (from 1945) the leader of the Israelite National Office.

38. Ibid., 215.

39. Ibid., 157.

40. Szirmai’s political career was marked by contradiction. He began as a member of the Zionist movement in Transylvania. From 1931, he was a functionary of the Communist party, first in Romania and then in Hungary. After 1945, he held various senior posts. In 1953, he was arrested in the course of inquiries against “Zionists” and briefly imprisoned. Following the 1956 revolt, he was admitted into the party leadership; in 1959, he became the Central Committee’s secretary responsible for ideological issues, and in 1962, he became a member of the Politburo. He died in 1969.

41. See memorandum by Szirmai in “Dokumentumok,” 266–267.

42. Ibid., 268.

43. The coordinated nature of the action is indicated by Szirmai’s second proposal to the secretariat, submitted in February 1949, in which he noted: “The chairman of the Jewish congregation, *at my suggestion*, has met with the leaders of the Hungarian Zionist movement, advising them to halt their emigration propaganda and to voluntarily dissolve the Zionist organizations. At the same time, an article objecting to emigration has appeared in the Jewish weekly *Új Élet*” (emphasis added). See “Dokumentumok,” 268.

44. Ibid., 268–269; see also Novák, *Átmenetben*, 157.

45. A consular report issued on March 28, 1949, stated the following: “We saw no possibility of the Hungarian Zionist Alliance managing to survive, and we did not want to make a special sacrifice. We wanted to stop the arrests and we wanted to rescue the funds that had been collected . . . as well as the Zionist funds.” Original document in Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem; quoted in Novák, *Átmenetben*, 295.

46. The announcement of the “self-dissolution” appeared in the Communist party daily, *Szabad Nép*, on March 25, 1949. It noted that the Zionist Alliance had adopted the resolution because “the state of Israel has been formed and thus the main objective of the Alliance has been fulfilled, and because normal diplomatic relations are today maintained between Hungary and Israel”

47. See Novák, *Átmenetben*, 154.

48. See “Dokumentumok,” 273–274.

49. At a meeting of Hashomer Hazair in Budapest in May 1947, for instance, it was noted that “[Soviet Foreign Minister] Gromyko’s speech has confirmed our belief that the correctness of our analysis will be recognized by the international proletarian movement. We see in the speech the development of the Soviet Union’s position concerning Zionism, which has by no means reached its ‘end-point.’” Quoted in Novák, *Átmenetben*, 51.

50. Ibid., 44–52.

51. See Jenő Gergely, József Kardos, and Ferenc Rottler, *Az egyházak Magyarországon* (The churches in Hungary) (Budapest: 1997), 210 ff.

52. Following legislation by the Hungarian parliament in June 1948, 6,505 church schools—two thirds of the country's total schools—came under state ownership. More than half of these schools had been owned by the Catholic church. Following the school nationalization legislation, the religious denominations were allowed to retain the following schools: 6 grammar schools and two teacher training colleges of the Reformed (Calvinist) church; two grammar schools of the Evangelical (Lutheran) church, and one Jewish grammar school. Following the agreement between the Catholic church and the government in 1950, eight schools were returned to the Catholics. Compulsory religious education was discontinued in September 1949. See Péter Tibor Nagy, *Járszalog es aréna. Egyház és állam az oktatáspolitikai erőterében a 19. és 20. századi Magyarországon* (The church and state in the field of education policy in 19th and 20th century Hungary) (Budapest: 2000), 175–181.

53. In May 1949, for instance, Béla Dénes, along with a number of associates, was arrested. A physician and a journalist, Dénes was the leader of the Ihud Mapai. Previously, he had been active in the Social Democratic Party and, from 1933, in the party's autonomous Zionist affiliate, the Poale Zion. Following his conviction on charges of Zionist activity, Dénes spent five years in prison. He left Hungary in January 1957 and died in Israel the following year. In 1999, his memoirs, written in Israel, were published in an abridged version. See Béla Dénes, *Ávósvilág Magyarországon. Egy cionista orvos emlékiratai* (The world of the ÁVÓ [state security]: The memoirs of a Zionist doctor) (Budapest: 1999).

54. See Mária Schmidt, "Ez a per lesz a legek lege" (This trial will be the biggest of the big), in idem, *Diktatúrák ördögszekerén* (Dictatorship on the devil's chariot) (Budapest: 1998), 271–284.

55. Jewish communal leaders cynically sought to justify the abolition of compulsive religious education on the grounds that this ran counter to the traditional Jewish preference for a division between church and state. See Csorba, "Izraelita felekezeti élet Magyarországon a vészorkszaktól a nyolcvanas évekig," 114.

56. In a letter to Zoltán Vas, Stöckler requested that the Orthodox chief rabbi, Samu Kahán-Frankl, and the former deputy chairman of the Orthodox organization, Imre Reiner, should be permitted to emigrate, since they had lost their livelihood with the unification and since their work had served "the cause of democracy" (Magyar Országos Levéltár [Hungarian National Archive; hereafter: MOL], M-KS/276/65/367/1–2).

57. See Csorba, "Izraelita felekezeti élet Magyarországon a vészorkszaktól a nyolcvanas évekig," 131.

58. Ibid., 116, 141. For example, the state provided financial support for the rabbinical seminary in Budapest.

59. See Karady, "Szociológiai kísérlet" 110–121; idem, "Post-Holocaust Hungarian Jewry 1945–48: Class Structure, Re-stratification and Potential for Social Mobility," in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vol. 3, *Jews and Other Ethnic Groups in a Multi-ethnic World*, ed. Ezra Mendelsohn (New York: 1987), 147–160; András Kovács, *A zsidókérdés a mai magyar társadalomban* (The Jewish question in modern Hungarian society) (Paris: 1985), 13–15.

60. See Éva Ständeisky, "Antiszemita megmozdulások a koalíciós időszakban" (Antisemitic riots during the period of the coalition), *Szazadok* 2 (1992), 284–308; idem, "A kommunista polgárellenesség" (Communist hostility toward the middle classes), *Budapesti Negyed* 8 (1995) (special issue titled "Zsidók Budapesten" [The Jews of Budapest]), 223–226. Before war's end, in March 1945, the Communist party journal published an antisemitic article written by József Darvas, a leader of the (fellow-traveler) Peasant Party. By publishing this article, the Communist party indicated its desire to break out of its political isolation by making overtures to the populist opposition to the Horthy regime. See József Darvas, "Őszinte szó a zsidókérdésben!" (A sincere word on the Jewish question!), *Szabad Nép*, 25 March 1945.

61. Letter from Géza Losonczy to József Révai, 14 July 1949, reprinted in Ständeisky, "A kommunista polgárellenesség," 224. It is worth noting that both Rákosi and Révai were of Jewish origin.

62. See Dénes, *Ávósvilág Magyarországon*; Sándor Bacskai, "A magyarországi zsidó orto-

doxia története 1945 után" (The history of Hungarian Jewish Orthodoxy after 1945), *Múlt és Jövő* 4 (1993), 73–83; idem, *Egy lépés Jeruzsálem felé* (One step towards Jerusalem) (Budapest: 1997), 44–50, 65–68; Imre Goldstein, *Novemberi tavasz* (Spring in November) (Budapest: 2000).

63. See Csorba, "Izraelita felekezeti élet Magyarországon a vészkorszaktól a nyolcvanas évekig," 118–119.

64. Apart from Catholic leaders, priests, and other Christian figures who were imprisoned for refusing to cooperate with the regime, members of Zionist groups were convicted in 1953 of spying, incitement, and treason.

65. On the resettlement from Budapest, see MOL 276/65/183. For an analysis of the data in this document, see András Rátki, "A volt magyar uralkodó osztályok," *História* 3, no. 3 (1981), 28–29. See also Ignác Romsics, *Magyarország története a xx. században* (History of Hungary in the 20th century) (Budapest: 1999), 343.

66. Before 1990, when the archives of the Communist era were still inaccessible, estimates of the number of resettled people (including Jews) were higher—up to 16,000–18,000 people. See François Fejto, *Les juifs et l'antisemitism dans les pays communistes* (Paris: 1960), 14; Kovács, *A zsidókérdés a mai magyar társadalomban*, 84.

67. On June 8, 1951, Zoltán Vas sent a memorandum to Rákosi in which he reported that, according to Stöckler, panic had broken out among the Jews of Budapest because of the resettlement orders. In Stöckler's view, the Israeli embassy and the Zionists were inflaming this panic. Stöckler asked Vas to "take steps against, on the one hand, the Israeli embassy and, on the other, the Zionist groups, which evidently still existed." Vas added the following handwritten note at the bottom of the page: "I assume that Stöckler wants to persuade us to take steps against the Israeli embassy so that subsequently they will talk openly about this issue, that is, he would like to cause diplomatic complications" (MOL, M-KS/276/65/367/88).

68. Some 300–400 "resettled" Jews received assistance from the National Representation. See Zsidó Levéltár (Jewish archive) (Budapest), 33/5/b-2.

69. *Új Élet*, 19 July 1951.

70. The statement read in part:

We have watched with anxiety how the people who were the drafters and active participants in the awful tragedy of Hungarian Jewry have planned a new Auschwitz while backing Archbishop Mindszenty. We have seen how the Arrow Cross and Hitlerite elements, the enemies of democracy, the people, human equality, and the equal rights of the denominations, under Mindszenty's leadership, are kindling antisemitism in the processions, the church pulpits, and at religious gatherings; are spreading the unextinguished fire of the hatred of the Jews; and thus are crushing the lives of the Hungarian Jewish remnant. . . . For this reason, Hungarian Jews received the news of Mindszenty's arrest with great relief. . . . The responsible leaders of Hungarian Jewry appeal to the leaders of their fraternal organizations in America and Western Europe to inform interested parties, the press, and public opinion, as well as our leading brothers in faith, of the real situation. They should make it known that Mindszenty and his circle are detested fascists, antisemitic forces who sought to destroy Hungarian and East European Jewry, and allied themselves with the former Hungarian politicians (Horthy and his associates), who are responsible for the destruction of a majority of Hungary's Jews.

The full text of the statement can be found in the secretariat papers (MOL 276/65/356/2021); a summary, in slightly modified form, was printed as an editorial in *Új Élet*, 27 Jan. 1949.

71. Stockler reported the Lutheran offer to Vas, who subsequently informed the Communist party head, Mátyás Rákosi (MOL, M-KS/276/65/367/88).

72. See Goldstein, *Novemberi tavasz*; Bacskaï, *Egy lépés Jeruzsálem felé*, 50.

73. An official Communist propaganda publication, based on a "memorandum" compiled by Jewish officials after the revolution, reported on 15 instances of antisemitism during the course of the revolution (see "Antiszemita jelenségek és zsidóellenes atrocitások a magyarországi ellenforradalom idején" [Antisemitic phenomena and anti-Jewish atrocities during the counterrevolution], in *Ellenforradalmi erők a magyar októberi eseményekben* [Counter-

revolutionary forces in the October events in Hungary, 4:70–78]). These data may be considered reliable. The Communist party wanted to report as many “fascist atrocities” as possible, while the organized Jewish leadership was eager to explain why it was that so many Jews had emigrated. Several further cases of antisemitism later came to light; see Kovács, *A zsidókérdés a mai magyar társadalomban*, 31.

74. See Stark, “Kísérlet,” 122.

75. See László Felkai, *A budapesti zsidó fiú-és leánygimnázium története* (The history of the Budapest Jewish Grammar School for Boys and Girls) (Budapest: 1992), 153, 168. The number of pupils fluctuated during the following years. From 1967, it declined steadily, reaching a low point of seven in 1977. Only in 1986 did the number of pupils rise above 30. Since 1990, however, approximately 1,200 pupils have been enrolled in Jewish schools throughout Budapest—an indication that demographics were not the primary cause of the earlier drop in enrollment.

76. See Stark, “Kísérlet,” 118–119; birth data published by János Gadó in “Zsidó újszülöttek bejegyzése 1945-től 1996-ig” (Registration of Jewish newborns 1945–1996) *Szombat* no. 1 (Jan. 1998), 8.

77. Reported in *Magyar Nemzet*, 2 Nov. 1956; see also Csorba, “Izraelita felekezeti élet Magyarországon a vészorkszaktól a nyolcvanas évekig,” 140.

78. Quoted in *Új Élet* (July 1957).

79. Quoted in Csorba, “Izraelita felekezeti élet Magyarországon a vészorkszaktól a nyolcvanas évekig,” 141.

80. See, for instance, the Ministry of Interior’s proposal of September 1960, which mentions “nationalist and antisemitic” chanting at soccer matches and the planned attack of “hooligans” against students at the Budapest rabbinical seminary, and which urges the Politburo to take a tough stand against such manifestations (MOL, KS 288/5/198, 10–11).

81. György Száraz, *Egy előítélet nyomában* (On the trail of a prejudice) (Budapest: 1976), 265.

82. Imre Pozsgay, introduction to Hanák (ed.), *Zsidókérdés, asszimiláció, antiszemitizmus*, 11.

83. I am grateful to János Gadó and Brigitta Eszter Gantner for their assistance in researching the documents of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party [the Hungarian Communist party] and the former political police.

84. See the minutes of the Politburo, 28 June 1960, proposal concerning the Eichmann affair (emphasis added), MOL KS, 288/5/204/15–18. Kádár also suggested that after the Israeli court proceedings, Hungary should ask for Eichmann to be handed over, but this demand was withdrawn following consultations between the Hungarian foreign policy leadership and the Czechoslovak, Polish, and Soviet leaderships. In the end, it was decided that the authorities would not ask for Eichmann and would submit documents pertaining to the case—albeit through unofficial nongovernmental channels—to the Israeli authorities. These documents were to be compiled in such a manner that they would not only refer to the era of the deportations but could also be used to further the original propaganda aims; it was suggested as well that “properly prepared witnesses” be allowed to testify at the trial. See Foreign Department of the Hungarian Communist party, proposal to the political committee, 29 Sept., MOL, KS/1960, 189/SE/1960.

85. See information sheet no. 3 on the situation in the Middle East, MOL, M-KS/288/11/2149 (1967).

86. See memorandum on Middle East conflict and the mood of Hungarian Jews, MOL, M-KS/288/22/1967/9.

87. See minutes of the meeting of the Politburo, 13 June 1967, MOL, M-KS/288/5/427.

88. In a summary report issued on June 28, 1967, the political police noted that it had initiated criminal proceedings against several university students on the basis of alleged “Zionist activities.” According to the report,

Zionist youth groups are operating in various [districts] in Budapest and in other areas of the country—primarily Szeged. In general, the groups hold gatherings twice a week: sometimes in the cultural halls of the districts and sometimes in private apartments. The

groups comprise young people aged 16–25. The young people are university and college students, civil servants, and intellectuals. The Zionist propaganda activities are being pursued in the groups, with the ultimate aim being the departure of the young people to Israel by legal or illegal means. At the gatherings, in addition to religious and Zionist issues, everyday political issues are also discussed—with a bias against the system. According to our data, the group members, the numbers of whom rose in the course of one year from 20–25 to 150, are operating with the knowledge and support of the Israeli embassy . . . [T]here are indications that the leaders of the Zionist group in Budapest are specifically involved in organizing and assisting [those deserting the country] . . . [I]n the course of 1966, more than 13 young Jews escaped to Israel through Yugoslavia or other Western states, some of whom belonged to one or another of the known Zionist groups and were in contact with the Israeli embassy (Történeti Hivatal [lit. Historical Office, this contains documents of the secret police], V-155325/2).

In March 1968, two leading members of the group were convicted of “continuous incitement against the state” and given a four months’ suspended sentence. The court’s stated reasons for its decision were as follows:

In this matter, the events stretching back several years are of particular significance, because as such they gradually resulted in the committing of a criminal offense. These events began in fully legal and unquestionable circumstances, when the accused, having received a religious upbringing and, while they were still children, wanting to acquire a more profound religious education, regularly met with several of their fellows at Talmud-Tóra courses. Their initial feelings of internal religious cohesion began to be transformed into nationalistic sentiment as a result of various influences stemming from relatives living in Israel, acquaintances, and, above all, propaganda reaching them from the Israeli embassy. The gatherings held after the Talmud-Tóra course and in private apartments, as well as the jointly organized excursions, were no longer of a merely religious nature. This is proven by the works that were read out there, the problems that were debated there, the heightened interest in the state of Israel, and the demand—almost without criticism—for anything that comes from Israel . . . This all gave rise to the idea that whatever comes from Israel must be good, and the uncritical demand for all this led the defendants to the point where they began swapping press items from [Israel] among themselves—ignoring the said items’ hostility toward the form of government of their own people’s democracy and homeland, the People’s Republic of Hungary. For the sake of completeness, it should be pointed out that responsibility for these religious gatherings ending up where they did is also borne by the defendants’ religious leaders, Chief Rabbi Dr. Artúr Geyer, and Rabbi Dr. Tamás Raj, as well as by the defendants’ parents. The young people’s spirit developing in this community is the hotbed of more serious crimes against the state (*ibid.*).

89. See Kovács, “Jews and Politics in Hungary,” 53.

90. See Csorba, “Izraelita felekezeti élet Magyarországon a vészorszaktól a nyolcvanas évekig,” 150–170.

91. Based on currently available sources, it is impossible to say whether Sós and Seifert ever signed a recruitment declaration (which would have signified their willingness to serve as secret agents) or whether their reports—written as an “official obligation”—were simply recorded by the political police force as agents’ reports. A secret service report issued in 1962 noted that “we have at present four agents working in the sphere of the denomination and the Zionists. Our agents are placed in the senior leadership of the denomination.” Cited by János Gadó in “A prés alatt” (Under pressure), *Szombat*, no. 3 (March 2001), 16.

92. Történeti Hivatal, O-171699.

93. See memorandum concerning the meeting of the national rabbinical council on 27 Jan. 1968, which was compiled for the State Office for Church Affairs (MOL-XIX, A/21/c/5.9).

94. See Csorba, “Izraelita felekezeti élet Magyarországon a vészorszaktól a nyolcvanas évekig,” 144–167. Some of the documents analyzed by Csorba (plus others that surfaced only more recently) appeared in *Szombat* nos. 4–7 (April–July 2000).

Among the reports submitted to the State Office for Church Affairs was one written by Sós

in November 1965, in which he describes an exchange between Moses Rosen (the chief rabbi of Romania), Nahum Goldmann of the World Zionist Organization, and Sós and Seifert:

Dr. Rosen stated at the meetings of the World Jewish Congress that Romania is a “free country” because the Jews can leave that country whenever they want. Dr. Nahum Goldmann rightly asks . . . why does Hungary not pursue a “free policy” similar to Romania? Why can’t Jews leave Hungary en masse? When I and Dr. Seifert explained to Dr. Nahum Goldmann two years ago in Zurich that Hungarian Jews do not want to emigrate, Dr. Nahum Goldmann reproached us, saying that “we should not tell him the official Communist Hungarian position” (MOL/XIX/A21/C5.9).

In a summary report to the State Office for Church Affairs dated June 19, 1975, Vilmos Lóránt, a functionary who was responsible for the “Israelite denomination,” wrote (quite accurately) that

The Hungarian Israelite church [sic] leadership and the great majority of the rabbis and the faithful are willing to cooperate politically with the socialist state . . . In the past decade—as a result of the church policy development and political influence—the practice has been established whereby the Israelite church leadership asks the State Office for Church Affairs what its position is prior to making any important decision. The State Office for Church Affairs provides appropriate assistance to the church leadership in both international and domestic [personnel] matters (published in *Szombat*, no. 5 [May 2000], 13–14).

95. See Csorba, “Izraelita felekezeti élet Magyarországon a vészkorszaktól a nyolcvanas évekig,” 161–166.

96. On these informal groups of the 1980s, see, for example, the interviews with Ferenc Lovász and András Rác in *Budapest Negyed* 8 (1995), 227–260.

97. From report of 14 Oct. 1971, Történeti Hivatal V-155/325/1.

98. Ibid. (closure of file no. 13-Cs-758).

99. See “Nyílt levél a magyar társadalomhoz és a magyar zsidósághoz” (Open letter to Hungarian society and Hungarian Jews), *AB Hirmondó* 6–7 (May–June 1984), 271–284.

100. On the Shalom manifesto, see Kovács, “Jews and Politics in Hungary,” 54–56.

101. On the Communist manipulation of anti-fascism and the effect of such manipulation (primarily in Germany), see Antonia Grunenberg, *Antifaschismus—ein deutscher Mythos* (Hamburg: 1993); François Furet, *Le passé d’une illusion. Essai sur l’idée communiste au xx^e siècle* (Paris: 1995), chs. 7–8.

The Vicious Circle: Jews in Communist Poland, 1944–1956

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When a Jewish tailor working in a Lodz cooperative was interviewed for a sociological study completed in 1950, he offered an optimistic assessment of the future of the Polish Jewish community. “A distinct national Jewish culture should be part of the culture of the democratic country,” he noted, adding that government policy in this regard “should not diverge from the general democratic program of the People’s Republic.”¹ While the tailor’s statement expressed something of the precariousness of the attempt to rebuild Jewish community life in postwar Poland, it also demonstrated how, in the immediate postwar period, at least some Jews hoped for a renewal of Jewish life—a hope that was tolerated or even supported by the emerging Communist regime. Indeed, in the first years after the Second World War, the Jewish community in Poland rebuilt many of its political, cultural, and social institutions, although obviously on a much smaller scale than previously. Observing this, a functionary in the local Polish administration in Szczecin, in northwest Poland, noted in 1946 that “Jews seem to be setting up their dozens of factions and political organizations while still in repatriation trains on the way [back to Poland] from the Soviet Union. As soon as they get off the trains, they organize committees, parties, and unions.”²

All of this activity occurred against a backdrop of deepening animosity and suspicion toward Jews. The new Poland that arose after the Second World War was very different from prewar Poland, both geographically and politically. The Communists were supported by Soviet Russia and by the presence of the Red Army in Poland, but enjoyed only a small following among the Polish population. As usual, the Jews found themselves to be a minority in a hostile environment. As they had sometimes done in the past, they sought support from the government: this time (for some Jews, at least), the new political and social system seemed truly to hold out the promise of equal rights and equal protection. But in a country that found itself in the throes of a Communist takeover and a bitter, sometimes violent struggle between left-wing and right-wing forces that lasted for several years, Jews were often perceived as enjoying not merely an equal but a privileged position, and indeed as having a decisive voice in Polish politics—unlike the vast majority of Poles. In consequence, antisemitic

rhetoric became an expression of anti-Communist defiance and a political weapon in the fight against the government.

The irony is that this perception of Jewish political power was completely at odds with the sense of vulnerability and helplessness experienced by many Jewish survivors. Most Polish Jews regarded themselves not as free political agents, but rather as hostages of a political climate that offered them few, if any, options. To side with the anti-Communist opposition was all but impossible—those bitterly opposed to the Soviet takeover in the immediate postwar period were often equally hostile to Jews. Jewish leaders were united in believing that the anti-Communists could offer very little to a postwar Jewish community whose survival depended not only on substantial material aid but, more importantly, on a basic acceptance of the right to maintain their identity. The Communists, in contrast (acting, of course, out of self-interest), were more sympathetic with regard to the plight of Jewish survivors. Under these circumstances, the choice of the Communist regime as a political ally was inevitable. In the end, however, Jewish hopes were only partially and temporarily fulfilled. After 1948, with the consolidation and Stalinization of the Polish Communist regime, the very existence of Polish Jewry as a group was rendered problematic.

This study raises several questions about the nature of Jewish political activism in the domestic arena while Poland was in the process of its Communist takeover, in particular during the years 1945–1947. My focus is on the Zionist movement and the Bund, the anti-Zionist Jewish socialist party. I first look at who the Jewish leaders were and what roles they played in the political life of the community, and then go on to examine how these new Jewish activists functioned politically in a Poland very different from the one they had known before. Subsequently, I examine the tactics and overall strategies of these leaders, as well as how the rapidly changing postwar political landscape of Poland shaped and informed their expectations. Finally, I consider whether the Zionist leaders' choice to ally themselves with the Communists was part of a broader trend to adopt left-wing ideologies, or whether it had independent roots in the specific political condition of Jews in Poland.

I will also consider issues surrounding the government response to the Jewish position and government policies pertaining to Jewish institutions. In particular, I ask how the government could have had (albeit for only a brief period) a favorable stance toward the Zionists, in light of the longstanding Communist hostility to Jewish nationalism. I also raise the general question as to whether government policy toward Jews differed from its attitude toward other national minorities in Poland.³ The focus will be on the Communist leadership's changing attitudes toward Jews during the immediate postwar period, when a sizable Jewish community still resided in Poland. "Jews" in this context refers to those who chose to identify themselves as such, rather than people of Jewish extraction who were employed in government administration but who did not identify themselves as Jews or as members of the Jewish community.

In striking contrast to the contentious relationship between the Zionist leadership and the Polish government throughout the interwar period, one of the hallmarks of what I would call the radically new Jewish politics was the effort to create a partnership with the new Polish government, however tenuous that partnership might have been. Some Jewish leaders supported the government out of a sense that no political

option existed except quietism and trust in the new regime. This support was always vulnerable to criticism, however, since government policies failed to meet many of the Jewish objectives. Moreover, as time passed and as Communist rule in Poland became stronger, government policies proved increasingly untenable for Jews.

Demographic Portrait of the Jewish Community in Poland, 1944–1956

Compared to a prewar population of more than 3,500,000, the Jewish community in postwar Poland was a small remnant consisting of those who had survived German occupation during the war and those who had found themselves in the Soviet Union. Some Jews survived under the Nazi occupation by posing as Aryans. Others went into hiding because of their appearance or accents.⁴ Still others fought in partisan units, both Jewish and non-Jewish.⁵ Another group was liberated from concentration camps and forced labor camps.⁶

The earliest data pertaining to the number of Jews who survived under German occupation were generated in the fall of 1944. According to Szlomo Herszenhorn, then head of Poland's Department for Aiding the Jewish Population, the area liberated from German occupation contained about 8,000 Jews.⁷ Figures from the Provisional Central Committee of the Jews in Poland (Tymczasowy Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce [TCKŻP]) indicated that in June 1945, there were 73,965 Jews registered with various Jewish committees, including those in the Polish army and camp inmates liberated in Germany.⁸ In January 1946, a total of 99,881 Jews were registered.⁹ The majority of Polish Jews who survived the war did so in the Soviet Union. Based on an agreement between Poland and the Soviet Union signed in July 1946, these Jews were repatriated from the Soviet Union to Poland in the second half of 1946.¹⁰ Nearly 150,000 Jews returned to Poland as a result of this agreement; altogether, some 230,000 Jews were repatriated to Poland from the Soviet Union.¹¹ David Engel estimates that from mid-1944 to mid-1946, there were 266,000 to 280,000 Jews residing in Poland.¹² During these years, emigration and repatriation more or less counterbalanced each other, and by the summer of 1946, some 243,000 Jews were registered in Poland.¹³

Whereas prewar Polish Jewry was concentrated in small towns as well as in large cities, most Jews in the postwar period lived in big cities, primarily Lodz, Warsaw, Cracow, Częstochowa, and Lublin. Moreover, the critical mass of Jews shifted to the new western territories to which the repatriated Jews were directed, mainly Lower Silesia and Szczecin.¹⁴ At the same time, great geographic mobility characterized the Jewish population. Overall, only a few repatriates "left the transports to settle down in their previous domiciles or in places where they were expected by relatives and acquaintances."¹⁵

A large wave of emigration took place following the Kielce pogrom, which occurred on July 4, 1946. From then until the second half of 1947, some 100,000 to 120,000 Jews left Poland, most of them in Zionist-organized groups.¹⁶ By the spring of 1947, according to the registration carried out by the Central Committee and by the Jewish Religious Congregations (Żydowskie Kongregacje Wyznaniowe), only

93,978 Jews remained in the country.¹⁷ In the years 1949–1950, an additional 20,000 to 30,000 Jews left Poland, and thus the estimated number of Jews who were still in the country in 1951 was about 67,000. In 1956–1957, about 40,000 Jews and Poles of Jewish origin emigrated. Following this wave of emigration, about 25,000–30,000 Jews remained in Poland.¹⁸

Postwar Political Leadership of the Polish Jewish Community

The political map of the Polish Jewish community after the Holocaust had largely been drawn in the interwar period. It included various Zionist parties and organizations as well as the Bund, Agudat Israel, and a small group of Jewish Communists.¹⁹ After the war, numerous Jewish schools, kibbutzim, and Zionist orphanages were established by adherents of these movements. At the same time, the Palestine Bureau (also known as the Pal Amt)—the emigration office of the Jerusalem-based Jewish Agency—assisted Jews who wanted to emigrate legally to Palestine. Representatives of the Jewish minority joined the newly formed left-wing underground legislative body, the National Council for the Homeland (Krajowa Rada Narodowa [KRN]).²⁰ These representatives, Emil Sommerstein of the Ihud (general Zionist) party and Michał Szuldenfrei of the Bund, came together to lobby the authorities in the name of the Polish Jewish community.²¹ With two exceptions, prewar Jewish parties and youth organizations were allowed to renew their activities. The government denied the Revisionists legal status because of their perceived fascist and anti-Soviet leanings, while Agudat Israel was outlawed because of its alleged cooperation with the pre-Second World War right-wing Polish government.²²

Zionist leadership in postwar Poland consisted of two distinct groups. Activists such as Sommerstein, Rabbi Dawid Kahane, Adolf Berman, and Józef Sack were men of the old generation who had been active during the interwar period. They were joined by younger people, including Yitzhak Zuckerman, Zivia Lubetkin, Tuvia Borzykowski, Stefan Grajek, and Chaika Grossman. These activists had belonged to various Zionist youth movements in the 1930s and had emerged as leaders of the Jewish underground during the Nazi occupation. Some had organized underground schools and seminars, as well as armed resistance in the ghettos. Others, who found themselves in the Soviet Union, established connections with members of the Polish Zionist underground and arranged illegal border crossings for those on their way to Palestine. The Bund relied on a group of pre-Second World War activists who were joined by a number of young people, most of whom had belonged to Bundist families. Most important among them were Szuldenfrei, Herszenhorn, Grisza Jaszunski, and Salo Fiszgrund. As with the Zionist movement, the Bund leadership included activists who had survived under German occupation and others who were repatriated from the Soviet Union. Most Bundists who were in Western Europe or in the United States during the war decided not to return to Poland, fearing that their freedom would be curtailed.²³

The Jewish political leaders' domestic agenda included obtaining government assistance in the form of loans, food rations, clothing, medical services, and protection against violence. These issues were the core of the postwar program shared by both

Bundists and Zionists. For the latter, they constituted the basis of the prewar Zionist *Gegenwartsarbeit* program, the aim of which was to secure both civil and national minority rights for Jews of the diaspora. At the same time, the Zionist leaders argued that, after the Holocaust, emigration to Palestine was the only real solution to the Jewish question. Therefore, a fundamental Zionist demand was for the freedom to leave Poland.

One of the most significant aspects of Jewish political leadership in the postwar period was its identification with Communism, a movement whose success had long been linked with Jewish support. In fact, the equation of Jews with Communism and the fear of a Jewish conspiracy against Poland were prewar stereotypes that played an important role in postwar antisemitic propaganda.²⁴ Following the Second World War, the relatively new fear of sovietization became linked with the old, ingrained myth of the Jewish Communist threat, reinforced by the Communists' initial readiness to cooperate with the Jews.²⁵ Thus, Jews were perceived as closely tied to the Communist-dominated government, and accusations of Jewish privilege were often heard in the public arena. Anonymous leaflets and various underground publications warned about the alleged Jewish assault on the Polish nation and Polish values, and urged Poles to stay alert and to confront the Jewish threat. A leaflet disseminated in Warsaw in September 1946, for instance, warned about "the scheme of international Jewry to abolish religion and family and to mix the nations . . . You can see for yourself that there has never been a Jew who would not participate in the eternal war that Jewry wages against the Christian world."²⁶ In Lodz that summer, another leaflet cautioned that the government was planning to send 60,000 Jews to the city in a bid to take over local industries, as the first step in giving Jews control over the nation's economy. The leaflet ended by demanding the removal of all Jews from Poland.²⁷

Antisemitic propaganda also played on the theme of economic competition and the alleged Jewish attempt, with the support of the government, to take over the most desirable positions in both industry and the administration.²⁸ A diplomatic report from Rome to the Foreign Office in London in August 1946 quoted the undersecretary of the Vatican, who claimed that

there are only about 60,000 Polish Jews left, but the Russians have recently sent into Poland nearly half a million Bolshevised Jews, many of them Russian, who are expected to promote the Bolshevisation of Poland. This naturally enhances the congenital anti-Semitism of the Poles. Further, a large number of Jews hold administrative offices throughout Poland and this does not tend to endear them to the Poles.²⁹

Finally, Jews were associated with the much hated and feared secret police.³⁰ For some Poles, the atrocities committed by the secret police were perceived as an extension of the hatred the Jews supposedly felt toward the Polish nation. According to a local official of the government administration in Włodawa, the animosity against the Jews "results from the fact that in the first months of independence the Jews [were] unable to coexist with [the Polish population], and as far as those [Jews] who now occupy positions in the police or in the Security Office, their attitude toward other ethnic groups is clearly that of an enemy."³¹

Some members of the hierarchy of the Catholic church in Poland voiced similar critical opinions about the Jews. Church representatives often blamed the Jews' over-

representation in government and administration for creating tensions. In the aftermath of the Kielce pogrom, the primate of Poland, Cardinal August Hlond, held a press conference on July 11, 1946, at which he announced that the church was opposed to all murder, whether of Poles or of Jews. He claimed that racism had not been a factor in motivating the pogrom, and he also praised Poles who had saved Jews from the Nazis at the risk of their lives. Yet despite this conciliatory approach, Hlond's viewpoint reveals the same basic misconception that plagued the general population. According to him, antisemitism in Poland was "to a great extent due to the Jews, who today occupy leading positions in Poland's government and endeavor to introduce a governmental structure that a majority of the people do not desire."³² Hlond warned that the Jews might have to pay dearly for such dangerous behavior. Similar opinions were voiced by Stefan Wyszyński, at that time the bishop of Lublin, at his meeting with the delegation of the Provincial Jewish Committee in Lublin in the summer of 1946. Wyszyński believed that behind the tragedy of the Kielce pogrom lay deep Polish resentment against the Jews, who played "an [all too] active role in contemporary political life."³³

Some members associated with the political opposition seem to have shared this perception of the Jews. The Socialist party deputy, Zygmunt Żuławski, maintained that "the Jews in Poland are a privileged element."³⁴ He criticized Jews for their occupying high positions in the government and termed the growth of antisemitism "a reaction to Jewish behavior." In 1945 in Jodłowiec (Dębica region), the remaining Jews fled the town after a meeting of the Peasant Party (Stronnictwo Ludowe) called on them to leave.³⁵ As a result of such developments, some Jews voiced the conviction that a Communist regime was their only safeguard. This view is epitomized in the following comments of a white-collar worker from Lodz voiced around the same time: "I would be very willing to stay in democratic Poland. However, I fear a change of regime that may have tragic consequences for the Jews."³⁶

This perception seems to have been proven correct in 1956, when the problem of antisemitism surfaced along with the crisis of authority within Poland's Stalinist regime. According to Paweł Machcewicz,

from 1948 to 1955, any independent expression or open manifestation of social emotion was extremely limited, indeed practically impossible. National resentments disappeared from the surface of social life, but this did not mean that they ceased to exist. When the Stalinist vice started to relax its grip, what was hidden began to come to light.³⁷

Among the most important themes of the anti-Jewish agitation in 1956 was, again, the image of Jewish Communism.³⁸

Rebuilding Jewish Institutions: Jewish Expectations versus Government Promises

The experiences of the Second World War had a decisive impact on the perspectives and political positions of the Jewish community vis-à-vis the Polish government. The support of the Zionist camp for the new Communist government stemmed from the widely held conviction that Polish Jewish survivors of the Holocaust owed their lives

either to the Red Army or to their escape deep into the Soviet territories during the war years.³⁹ On numerous occasions, Zionist party and youth movement leaders expressed support for the newly established Communist order in Poland. The most vocal support came from left-wing Zionist parties and youth movements, including Poale Zion-Left, Hashomer Hazair, Borochoy Yugnt and Dror. The leaders of these groups saw the Communists as a political ally capable of implementing a radical social policy.⁴⁰ Adolf Berman, a leader of the Marxist Poale Zion-Left, declared in a 1945 speech at the KRN that “what is most decent in the Jewish nation—the fighting Jewish democracy, the Jewish radical working class, the Jewish anti-Fascist movement—enthusiastically welcomes the democratic [that is, opposed to the pre-war “fascist”] Poland.”⁴¹ Similarly, a report from the May Day celebrations that was published in the organ of Hashomer Hazair stated that in the “ongoing struggle for the political system, we came to demonstrate our solidarity with the forces of progress, with democracy, with the new political system of the new Poland.”⁴²

Describing the postwar political reality in Poland, Yitzhak Zuckerman admitted that he

went through two different experiences: [the first being] that of Polish Communism, as I saw it in those years, including the two years I stayed in Poland after the war. If I had been Polish, I would have joined [the Communists] wholeheartedly, and not the other forces. The other experience was the Zionist, Eretz Israeli line.⁴³

For Zuckerman, clearly, there was a tension or even a tinge of incompatibility between these two paths. Adolf Berman experienced a similar sense of duality. As he put it, “I would be happy if I were a Pole, since they are implementing for the Poles [the program] I want to implement for the Jews in Palestine.”⁴⁴

One can understand such ideological declarations emanating from the circles of left-wing Zionist organizations, given the political and social agenda they shared with the Communists. Less readily understandable is the support given to the [Communist] Polish Workers’ Party (PPR) by the religious Zionists (Mizrachi), General Zionists, Poale Zion-Right, and non-Marxist socialists (Hitahdut). In this case, purely pragmatic concerns dictated their support. From 1944 to 1949, one had to declare a certain loyalty toward the government in order to secure administrative consent for political activity. In exchange for this political allegiance, Zionist parties whose sympathies were far removed from Communism were able (at least temporarily) to implement their Zionist program of educating the youth and organizing mass Jewish emigration from Poland to Palestine.⁴⁵ Moreover, Zionist leaders understood that political loyalty at both the national and local levels was crucial in securing material aid for survivors, maintaining their physical security, and organizing the repatriation of Polish Jews still in the Soviet Union.

Zionist support for the new political regime was bolstered by the promises made by the Communists to the Jewish minority in the years 1944 and 1945. According to the program of the Department for Jewish Affairs, formed by the underground KRN in March 1944, the future policies toward the surviving Jewish community were to include: 1) “Participating in the productivization process along the lines of the social restructuring of the Jewish community”; 2) “Securing the full social and national equality of Jewish citizens”; 3) “Settling the issues of residence and Jewish property”;

and 4) "Organizing social and cultural life in the spirit of secular Jewish culture, with special emphasis on cultural and educational work in the language of the Jewish masses, according to their demands."⁴⁶ The manifesto of the Polish Committee of National Liberation (Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego [PKWN]) (founded by the KRN to rule the liberated areas) promised, in July 1944, that "the Jews, who were brutally exterminated by the occupiers, will be allowed to reconstruct their lives and will be granted equality of rights."⁴⁷

Although Jewish leaders drew much hope from these official promises, their stance toward the political situation in Poland from 1945 to 1946 was influenced more by the actual policies of the new government regarding the Jewish population. At the outset, several special government bodies were in fact set up in order to provide for the immense material, physical, and psychological needs of the Jews. Remarkably, this policy was quite different from the state's attitude toward other national minorities in postwar Poland, which were not allowed to organize their own separate institutions. The Office for the Aid of the Jewish Population, established in August 1944, was responsible for a multitude of activities on behalf of the survivors. Its delegates investigated the health and welfare of the surviving Jewish population in Lublin and the surrounding area (under Communist control), distributed food and clothing, and intervened with the local administration.⁴⁸

Another official organization set up with the aid of the government was a network of Jewish communities. At the end of October 1944, the government set out to transform the Jewish committee in Lublin into a centralized Jewish organization, which later became known as the Central Committee of the Jews in Poland. This organization became the representative body of Polish Jewry, and its local branches registered survivors and organized orphanages, schools, shelters, and kitchens for the poor, as well as shelters, day-care centers, and classes for Jews repatriated from the Soviet Union.⁴⁹

In early 1945, Rabbi Dawid Kahane asked government officials to set up a network of Jewish religious institutions.⁵⁰ In February of that year, the Religious Department of the Ministry of State Administration issued a circular in which it notified the public that the prewar body known as the Israelite Religious Institutions (*Izraelickie gminy wyznaniowe*)—responsible for a broad range of religious and social functions—would not be reestablished. Instead, a network of strictly defined religious groups known from 1946 as the Jewish Religious Congregations (*Żydowskie kongregacje wyznaniowe*) was created. In essence, what the government offered was a centralized body to oversee the rabbinite, synagogues, cemeteries, ritual slaughterers, religious schools, and mikvehs.⁵¹

Jews were the only national minority allowed to organize political parties and youth organizations. Besides permitting a network of Jewish committees, religious congregations, and political organizations, the government allowed numerous Jewish cultural institutions to function. These included separate Jewish school systems, cooperatives, hospitals, libraries, and a publishing house. In April 1947, a Jewish music school was founded; in 1948, a Jewish ballet school opened in Wrocław.⁵² Moreover, the provisional government permitted Jewish representatives to have a voice in matters concerning the Jewish population. For example, it allowed Polish Jews to be of-

ficially represented in the commission investigating the crimes committed by the Germans in Auschwitz.⁵³

Of equal importance was the financial support obtained from the government. The Central Committee of the Jews received money, clothing, and raw materials from government agencies. In addition, the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) was permitted to carry out its activities in Poland. It received the same status as other foreign voluntary agencies, who were exempted from customs duties, given free railroad transportation for their imports, and provided with warehouse facilities at reduced cost.⁵⁴

However, along with the stabilization of the new regime came its attempt to gain full control over all institutions in Poland, including Jewish organizations. This policy was not directed against the Jews per se, but was rather part of a general political shift.⁵⁵ Starting in late 1948, the situation began to worsen for Jewish political, educational, economic, and social institutions. By 1949, all of the larger Jewish schools had been taken over by the Polish school system and the Jewish health services had been nationalized. In 1949, the Jewish cooperative organization, Solidarity (*Solidarność*), was obliged to unite with the Polish cooperative organization, Work (*Praca*). There was a change in the curricula of the remaining Jewish schools, and the Polish language, rather than Yiddish, became the language of instruction for all but Jewish subjects.⁵⁶ JDC offices were closed down that year; in December 1949, the JDC representative, William Bein, left Poland. According to Yehuda Bauer:

With the liquidation of JDC's work in Poland, the idea of a permanent presence in Poland ended too In the end, what had been important was the massive intervention by JDC which kept body and soul together among Polish Jews and enabled them to survive, to move on. The whole reconstructive effort, on the other hand, had been useless.⁵⁷

At the beginning of 1950, Jewish old-age homes, children's homes, and the Jewish theater became nationalized, and the Jewish Writers Association ceased to exist.⁵⁸

The Bund was also forced to dissolve in January 1949, and some of its members joined the ruling Communist party.⁵⁹ The Zionist parties and youth organizations were dissolved by a directive of the Ministry of Public Administration.⁶⁰ Polish Jews also lost their official representatives in the parliament. The Zionist deputy, Józef Sack, left Poland, and the Bundist Michał Szuldenfrei was expelled from the Bund in the course of its dissolution.⁶¹

Thus, by 1950, very little was left of the mosaic of Jewish institutions and organizations that the government had allowed in the early postwar period. The only ones that continued to exist were the Jewish Religious Congregations, the Jewish Historical Institute, and the Social-Cultural Union (*Towarzystwo społeczno kulturalne żydów* [TSKŻ]), whose task was "to persuade the Jewish working population to become socially active in the broadest sense, to participate in the historic struggle for the reconstruction of socialist society in Poland, in the struggle to strengthen our motherland." Jewish Communist activists, who had become a dominant force within the remaining Jewish community, declared a "fight against our own Jewish nationalism."⁶² After 1950, the allegedly pro-Jewish stance of the Communist government proved even more illusory. Jewish institutions had very little freedom to organize so-

cial and religious life. Moreover, following the “Doctors’ Plot” of 1953 (in which a group of Jewish doctors in the Kremlin was accused of plotting to murder Soviet leaders), Jews and those of Jewish origin in Poland were dismissed from positions in administration and government.

Only following the “Polish October” of 1956 were demands made to revitalize the activities of the Central Committee of the Jews. In various cities, Jewish clubs, theatrical and musical assemblies were organized, supported by Jews of the younger generation. However, no real reform was allowed, since all crucial decisions had to be approved by the Central Committee of the Communist party.⁶³

Fighting Antisemitism: Jewish Expectations and Government Responses

In postwar Poland, the issue of the Jewish community’s physical safety had a direct impact on the Jewish political leadership’s stance toward the Polish government—according to various estimates, at least several hundred Jews fell victim to anti-Jewish violence in the years 1945–1947.⁶⁴ Representatives of the Zionist parties expressed their hope that the government would fight antisemitism in its most violent forms not merely for humanitarian but also for pragmatic reasons.⁶⁵ At the meeting of the Commission for Religious and National Affairs of the KRN in November 1945, for example, Adolf Berman warned that “expressions of antisemitism here make a certain impression on public opinion in Great Britain and France and cause bitterness among the members of the Communist and workers’ parties.” Berman advocated that the government immediately issue a decree against antisemitism, and he stressed the need to make the government’s stance known through the foreign press.⁶⁶ Sommerstein, for his part, noted that

the very same dark forces that are shooting at Polish officers, Polish soldiers, Polish peasants and workers—the builders of our new, democratic, and just Poland—these very same dark forces murder the few remaining Jews. They apply the very same methods as the barbaric occupiers . . . Public life has been poisoned with antisemitism, and it is not only in the best interest of the Jewish population to fight against antisemitism, but it will also lead to the strengthening of democracy in Poland.⁶⁷

In addressing their Jewish constituencies, the Zionist parties accentuated the positive, arguing that the new government was committed to fighting antisemitism and was the only political force not tainted with the sin of antisemitism.⁶⁸ *Mosty* (Bridges), the official press organ of Hashomer Hazair, portrayed the government as the defender of the Jews and the new form of government as the only viable political option:

Now, when the democratic government is making an effort to rebuild the country and remove the old poisonous habits of the past . . . the “professional patriots” of the gun and the hand grenade have no place to return to; they go to the forest, blow up bridges and railroad tracks, murder Jews, socialists and innocent citizens, and cherish false hopes that a new world war might begin that will turn their homeland again into a battlefield. . . .⁶⁹

In fact, the Communist-dominated government in postwar Poland officially opposed antisemitism, which it labeled reactionary and fascist. The government made some efforts to combat it through a program of reeducation, and in 1946, it approved the establishment of the League to Combat Antisemitism. In the aftermath of anti-Jewish violence, Jewish political leaders tried to organize a network of Jewish self-defense in the *kibbutzim* and in other Zionist centers and requested permission from the government for Jewish guards to carry guns.⁷⁰ At first they met with a refusal, but following the Kielce pogrom of July 1946, the government authorized Jewish communities to organize their own defense groups and provided them with arms for that purpose. A special commission, headed by Yitzhak Zuckerman, was set up by the Central Committee, which was charged with the task of organizing Jewish self-defense “in order to help the authorities protect Jewish lives in the country, prevent panic, and enable the Jewish community to work in a peaceful, productive manner to rebuild their lives.”⁷¹ According to the commission’s report, published in May 1947, some 200 groups had been organized, and 2,500 Jews served in these units. Weapons—including pistols, guns, about a hundred machine guns, and 120 hand grenades—had been provided by the Security Office, along with training regarding their use.⁷²

At the same time, although antisemitism was officially condemned, it was prevalent among low-ranking Communist officials and in local government. Jewish complaints about antisemitic bias prompted the Ministry of Public Administration to send out a directive in the spring of 1945 demanding equal treatment for all citizens and special consideration for the needs of Polish Jews.⁷³ That same spring, a report sent out of Poland by agents of the Soviet People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) pointed to widespread antisemitism in the new regime.⁷⁴ According to an emissary of the Polish Workers’ Party in the summer of 1946, antisemitism was present among members of the Communist party who viewed Jewish Communists as competitors.⁷⁵ The official in charge of the productivization of the Jewish population of Cracow noted in 1947 that “animosity against the Jews is still present [though] more or less hidden. It is to be found even in the lower ranks of the democratic parties, although obviously on a much smaller scale and more contained. It is the same with the army and the police.”⁷⁶ In an episode described by Bernard Goldstein, a Holocaust survivor, Jews became afraid to speak Yiddish in public after a policeman to whom they complained about verbal abuse told them that Jews should not provoke Poles by speaking this language.⁷⁷ In Wrocław, during a pro-government election demonstration, the people shouted: “Long live democracy—but without the Jews.”⁷⁸

Civil Rights and Economic Opportunities

Zionist leaders often expressed their gratitude for efforts made by the government to secure full civil rights for Jewish citizens.⁷⁹ In his speech at a session of the KRN, Adolf Berman asserted that the

Jewish masses believe that in the holy work of rebuilding their destroyed life, they will be helped by the whole Polish nation. They believe that Polish workers will treat it as a

matter of honor to provide access to industry and to workshops for the small number of Jewish workers who remained alive and who want to come in from the ruins and contribute to productive and creative work.⁸⁰

In an appeal issued by the chief rabbinate of the Polish Army in the spring of 1945 on the occasion of the upcoming Passover, it was noted that “for the first time in five years we will celebrate Passover in the land liberated from the enemy, as free, equal citizens of the reborn, democratic Poland. . . . It is necessary this Passover evening for each and every Jewish soldier to feel that each Jewish religious community, each Jewish family, the entire country, all of Poland is his home.”⁸¹ Individual Jews also praised the government for enabling them to take advantage of economic and educational opportunities on equal terms with ethnic Poles. A woman from Dzierżoniów, for example, is quoted in Hurwic-Nowakowska’s report as declaring that “in today’s democratic Poland, Jews are treated equally with Poles. The government’s attitude towards the Jews is favourable”⁸²

In postwar Poland, there were a number of changes in employment patterns among the Jews. The most radical departure was the opening of channels to upward mobility for Jewish intellectuals and professionals. In her report, Hurwic-Nowakowska writes of the comprehensive “changes in property relations and entree into the sector hitherto closed to Jews, namely, state administration and civil service. The discriminatory social milieu in which Jews were externally defined as a separate socio-economic group has been eliminated.”⁸³ Official government policy also encouraged Jews to “productivize” by working in nationalized, rather than private, enterprises.⁸⁴

The shift in lifestyle experienced by many Polish Jews had not only economic, but also social and psychological repercussions. In the words of Hurwic-Nowakowska:

The new type of skilled and fully fledged Jewish worker is characterized by feelings of dignity and even pride in his occupation and class membership. The possibilities of advancement are fully open to him; he is accorded social respect; nothing triggers feelings of social degradation—neither in his identity as a worker nor as a Jew.⁸⁵

Overall, however, Hurwic-Nowakowska’s report appeared to indicate that changes were less sweeping than the author herself was willing to admit. For one thing, notwithstanding the claim that Jews were “accorded social respect,” there were still calls to boycott Jewish stores and businesses.⁸⁶ In addition, finding jobs was a daunting task for many Jews. In the immediate postwar period, the prewar requirements for professional standing for artisans and for the maintenance of their shops were still in force. But many Jewish artisans had lost their documents during the chaos of the war, and thus had no proof of certification. Further, the war had eliminated any chance for younger people to obtain formal professional education. As a result, a considerable portion of the Jewish population had to undergo training or retraining courses in order to find work in the growing number of nationalized enterprises.⁸⁷

The Question of Jewish Communal and Private Property

Despite the government’s positive rhetoric—expressed more concretely in a decree “regarding property and inheritance of property of forcibly resettled citizens and

those who escaped because of persecution”—restitution of Jewish property proved difficult. In the first months following liberation, only a few Poles either made voluntary restitution of property to returning Jews or were forced to do so by local Polish authorities. More often, restitution met with strong opposition and contributed to the growth of antisemitism. In the fall of 1944, Herszenhorn complained that “in Lubartów, Jewish real estate property is returned to the people who claim it. [But] in other places the problem of restitution progresses very slowly. The decree on the return of confiscated property did not reach many localities in the province. In Łuków, it was hidden by the secretary in a pile of unimportant documents.”⁸⁸ According to Bernard Goldstein, who described the Lodz repatriation center,

among the homeless Jews . . . I met Jews who lived all their lives in Lodz and whose homes and workshops had not been destroyed but were occupied by Poles. The Jewish owners were not allowed to enter their houses. I also met some who recovered their homes and workshops by legal action, but who have left them again upon receipt of threatening letters.⁸⁹

A number of ministerial decrees issued between March and July of 1945 limited the legal right to restitution, eliminating practically all potential claimants except members of the immediate family: parents, children, and siblings.⁹⁰ A law enacted in May 1945 (amended in July 1945 and again in March 1946) dealt with property that had either passed to a third owner to avoid loss or else had been abandoned by persons who were fleeing. Abandoned properties were to be returned upon request to the original owner regardless of who currently owned them. A special government office was created to administer such properties until they were claimed. However, the property was not returnable if the state had a special interest in it, or if it had been acquired through the 1946 Law of Agrarian Reform or the Law for the Nationalization of Industry.⁹¹

Recovering properties that had belonged to Jewish communities, foundations, and organizations proved to be even more complicated. After liberation, these properties came under the jurisdiction of the Office of Deserted and Abandoned Properties. But most of them—including synagogues—continued to be used for non-Jewish purposes. For some time, the government refused to recognize either the Central Committee of the Jews or the Jewish Religious Congregations as successors of the prewar Jewish community organizations. Jewish representatives repeatedly requested the restoration of communal property. Yet negotiations with the government resulted only in the issuing of an order for the return of Jewish tombstones that had been used to pave streets.⁹²

This state of affairs complicated the Zionist leaders' position vis-à-vis the government. On the one hand, they continued to declare their political support in various official forums and in the Zionist press. At the same time, however, some Zionist activists were openly disappointed. In the General Zionist newspaper *Opinia*, Szymon Rogoziński wrote of restitution as the “one problematic issue that has not yet been solved even though we will soon celebrate the second anniversary of the Manifesto. . . . Is it not high time that the Jewish society as a community gets back what each and every citizen has already received thanks to just and right regulations?”⁹³ In fact, the continuing problem of property that was not returned proved how limited

was the ability of the Jewish leaders to influence the Polish government's decisions in matters critical to the Jewish public.

Jewish Demands and Polish Reactions: Emigration from Poland

Zionist support for the Polish government was also a function of the government's initially sympathetic stance toward the "Palestinian cause," particularly with regard to Jewish emigration. As early as May 1945, Sommerstein appealed to a session of the KRN on the matter, noting that

the honorable prime minister said . . . that he would not interfere with voluntary emigration. With this declaration, he proved that he understood the feelings of the majority of the Jewish population. I think that the time is coming when, with the end of the war, this issue will eventually be solved in a humane manner.⁹⁴

A similar theme was voiced at the Zionist conference that met two months later in London.⁹⁵ There, Sommerstein emphasized the survivors' support for "the forces of progress and democracy" and for building the new Poland—but also stressed his hope that the new government would in fact allow emigration for Jews who wished to go to Eretz Israel.⁹⁶ "We should not be interested in what kind of democracy . . . will rule and prevail in the world," he declared. Rather, he said, "we have so many problems that need to be taken care of and we must get the land of Israel and strengthen the Jewish people"⁹⁷ This statement took on added symbolism given the fact that the conference met in London, the location of the Polish government-in-exile during the Second World War.

High officials of the Communist government declared that Jewish emigration would not be impeded, and the government put no serious obstacles in the way of the movement for illegal Zionist emigration (*berihah*), whose existence was an open secret. Its permissive attitude seems to have derived from a number of sources, among them a genuine understanding on the part of some government leaders that many Jews preferred to go to a country they could call their own. More pragmatically, the presence of Jews was seen as a possible destabilizing factor for the new regime, given the prevailing antisemitism in Poland. Finally, as Krystyna Kersten notes, Soviet attitudes played a crucial role in shaping Polish Communist policies. The Soviet acquiescence to Jewish emigration went hand in hand with its "involvement in the creation of an independent Israel, through which it hoped to eliminate British and American influence in the Middle East."⁹⁸

In practice, except for some minor interruptions, the government permitted both legal and illegal Jewish emigration from Poland until 1947. Although legal emigration was limited from 1945 to 1946, illegal emigration organized by the Zionists was allowed to proceed, and by the summer and fall of 1946, it had turned into a mass exodus of Polish Jews. In large part, this was the outcome of an informal agreement between certain Polish officials and the Zionist leaders. A delegation of Zionist leaders, including Zuckerman, Berman, Grajek, and Kahane had found themselves in Kielce in the aftermath of the July 1946 pogrom. On his way back to Warsaw, Zuckerman

talked with representatives of the government about the tragic condition of the Jewish survivors in Poland, who seemed destined to continually fall victim to antisemitic attacks. It was decided that Zuckerman should meet with Marian Spychalski, the first vice minister of national defense. Zuckerman, accompanied by Adolf Berman, met with Spychalski, who agreed to allow the Zionist-organized emigration of Jews from Poland.⁹⁹

Between 1948 and 1949, the situation changed dramatically. Activists of the Communist caucus gradually took control of the Central Committee of Jews, which in earlier years had enjoyed a high degree of autonomy. In October 1949, in a statement noting appreciation that mass emigration had been allowed, a Zionist leader added: "Every Jew should use this opportunity now, since we do not know when another opportunity like this will come along."¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

From 1944 to 1950, Jewish political organizations in Poland—mainly the Zionist parties and the Bund—were influenced by two important factors. One was the need to adapt to the evolving Communist government of Poland and the freedom it granted to Jewish institutions, which made it possible for the parties to operate in the first place. The other was international politics, especially that pertaining to the status of the Zionist movement worldwide and to the situation in Palestine. Following the Second World War, the Zionist movement adopted an instrumentalist strategy vis-à-vis political and social institutions in Poland. The Bund was in a more difficult position, since it had to compete with the ideological message of the Jewish Communists. In any event, all Jewish groups were at the mercy of the Communist authorities, and had to rely on the latter's promises. Yet this highly vulnerable position escaped the attention of many contemporary observers, who viewed the Jews as unconditional and enthusiastic supporters of the new regime. For example, according to a report from the May Day celebration in Walbrzych, "Jews appeared in great numbers, Bundists and [members of the Zionist] Shomer dressed in special uniforms of the Jewish committees, all with banners in Polish and Yiddish. Nobody else—only the Jews carried banners [that read] 'Long Live the Polish-Soviet Alliance,' and so on."¹⁰¹ The author of this report noted that such visibility on the Jews' part could be harmful to them, since it made it easier for enemies of the new regime to claim an imminent Jewish-Communist alliance.

Indeed, Jewish national parties, including Zionist organizations, not only declared their support for the "popular democracy" but also took part in the electoral campaigning. Every Jewish political organization participated in the national referendum on June 30, 1946, in which Polish citizens were asked whether they favored land reform, the new state borders, and the abolition of the Senate (the Communists urged approval of all three proposals).¹⁰² The Jewish committees united to form the Interparty Commission, whose purpose was to organize the propaganda effort among the Jews. Political meetings were also held in the local branches of the Zionist parties.¹⁰³ According to Szymon Zachariasz, "all the Jews participated in the referendum

and overwhelmingly they voted 'yes' three times. . . . Only a small percentage of the Jews supported the position that their priority should not be the general, the national, or their Jewish interests, but rather the private interest of their pockets."¹⁰⁴

Jewish national parties, including Zionist organizations, also participated in the campaign for the parliamentary elections of 1947.¹⁰⁵ According to a propaganda statement, in the weeks proceeding election day

the entire Jewish population, all its political groupings and factions, expressed its unconditional support for the [Communist-led] Democratic Bloc. This unified position found expression both in the decision of the Central Committee of the Jews in Poland and in the decisions of each and every party. . . . Mass meetings took place in synagogues, where alongside the representatives of the democratic parties, rabbis and representatives of the Jewish Religious Congregations were featured. . . . Reports from all the Jewish centers seem to point to the fact that the Jews went to the polls as an organized group, guided by a sense of civic duty.¹⁰⁶

At the same time, some members of left-wing Zionist organizations, who had spent the war years in the Soviet Union or had had encounters with the Soviet partisans, underwent an ideological crisis and became deeply disillusioned with Soviet-style Communism. Among the most notable of these was Abba Kovner. According to Zuckerman, "Kovner and his comrades brought a completely different intellectual load, which perhaps was objectively correct. We heard shocking tales [regarding life in the Soviet Union] from members of HaShomer Ha-Tza'ir."¹⁰⁷ Other rank and file members of the Hashomer Hazair who returned to Poland from the Soviet Union shared similar concerns. At one of the meetings of the organization, young members "discussed the contemporary subject, namely the accusations voiced by some members against the form of government and political system of the Soviet Union [since] it cannot be denied that the standard of living there is low when compared with other countries."¹⁰⁸

Postwar Polish government policies toward the Jewish question were in many ways contradictory, and the hopes voiced by the Jewish political leadership after liberation were only partially fulfilled. On the one hand, the government allowed all the prewar Jewish parties except the Revisionists and Agudat Israel to renew their activities, and it also made efforts to help reconstruct Jewish life in Poland. But in matters affecting other sectors of the population, the Communists were more reluctant to fulfill Jewish requests. For example, when it came to the restitution of Jewish property and responding to anti-Jewish violence, the government was careful to avoid giving offense to the majority by seeming to favor the Jews.

Moreover, the Communist government's relatively favorable stance toward the Jewish minority in Poland turned out to be short-lived. Ultimately, the vocal political support expressed by the Zionists and some Bundist leaders had only a limited influence on Polish government policy toward the Jewish population. In fact, the Communist government's policy vis-à-vis the Jews was to a large extent the result of the former's weakness within Polish society. The evacuation of Germans from the western territories and the loss of the non-Polish population of the eastern territories created near ethnic homogeneity for the first time in the country's modern history. It appeared that one of the few groups significantly disturbing this unity was the remnant of Polish Jewry. Thus, the Communist regime repeatedly (in 1946, 1949 and 1956)

allowed mass Jewish emigration as a means both to address Jewish concerns and remove a politically problematic group.

The following ostensibly optimistic commentary by Hurwic-Nowakowska in 1950 is actually a slanted description of the end of Jewish communal and social life in Poland:

The isolation of the Jewish community broke down after the war. The social system of postwar Poland embraces everyone within the uniform socialist system. The role of Jewish institutions has changed accordingly. They no longer serve as centers of Jewish life because their constituents have entered the mainstream of general social life. Since the inception of the new social conditions in postwar Poland, religion has become a private matter . . . Immediately after the war, secular Jewish institutions took over the most important social role within the Jewish community. These same secular Jewish organizations, still very active in the early postwar period, are undergoing yet another stage of development. Immediately after the war, Jewish committees actively encouraged Jewish productivization and extended material assistance. Gradually, their activities became restricted to relatively minor fields. No longer is there a need for the various Jewish organizations which employ Jews because there is no longer any discrimination in employment.¹⁰⁹

As this quotation clearly indicates, Jews were openly expected to merge with the rest of Polish society in the Communist People's Republic of Poland. In her study, Hurwic-Nowakowska also acknowledges the pessimism expressed by some Polish Jews "about the possibility of maintaining Jewish national and cultural distinctiveness in Poland" because of "the small size of the Jewish population in Poland and the conditions of freedom in postwar Poland which are conducive to assimilation."¹¹⁰ In fact, the period of Jewish-Communist rapprochement in Poland in 1944–1950 was a temporary interlude that ended with the almost complete dissolution of Jewish autonomy.

Notes

1. Quoted in Irena Hurwic-Nowakowska, *A Social Analysis of Postwar Polish Jewry* (Jerusalem: 1986), 112.

2. Archiwum Państwowe (hereafter: AP) w Szczecinie (State Archives, Szczecin), Urząd Wojewódzki (hereafter: UW) Szczeciński, Wydział Społeczno-Polityczny (hereafter: WSP) 1307, 29 (report from the provincial bureau in Szczecin to the Department of Administration of the Ministry of Recovered Lands), Szczecin, 25 June 1946.

3. See Zbigniew Kurcz (ed.), *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce* (Wrocław: 1997). On the attempt to create ethnically monolithic states, see Piotr Madajczyk (ed.), *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce: państwo i społeczeństwo polskie a mniejszości narodowe w okresach przełomów politycznych (1944–1989)* (Warsaw: 1998).

4. See Nechama Tec, *When Light Pierced the Darkness: Christian Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland* (Oxford: 1986); and Teresa Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna rada pomocy żydom w Warszawie 1942–1945* (Warsaw: 1982), 163–189.

5. See Shmuel Krakowski, *The War of the Doomed: Jewish Armed Resistance in Poland, 1942–1944* (New York: 1984); Eliezer Lidowski, *Usheviv haesh lo da'akh* (Tel Aviv: 1986); Faye Schulman, *A Partisan's Memoir: Woman of the Holocaust* (Toronto: 1995).

6. See Yisrael Gutman, *Hayehudim bepolin aharei milhemet ha'olam hasheniyah* (Jerusalem: 1985), 1–12. Similar categories are offered in David Engel, *Bein shihurur livriyah: nizolei hashoah bepolin vehama'avak 'al hanhagatam* (Tel Aviv: 1996), 39–41.

7. Archiwum Akt Nowych (hereafter: AAN) (Warsaw), Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego (hereafter: PKWN), XI/6, 16–18 (third report of the Office for the Aid of the Jewish Population for the period of 18 September to 10 October), Lublin, 12 October 1944.

8. AAN, Ministerstwo Administracji Publicznej (hereafter: MAP) 786, 65. The majority of the Jews lived in the provinces of Lodz (18,633), Warsaw (9,051), Silesia (8,009), Cracow (6,461), and Kielce (5,085).

9. Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego (hereafter: AŻIH) (Warsaw), Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce (hereafter: CKŻWP), secretariat 25 b, 1–4. According to the numerical register of the Jews in Poland, on January 1, 1946, Jews lived in more than 220 cities and towns. According to the Ministry of Public Administration, there were about 86,000 Jews registered in Poland on January 13, 1946. See AAN, MAP 786, 30.

10. Archiwum Urzędu Rady Ministrów (hereafter: AURM) (Warsaw), Prezydium Rady Ministrów (hereafter: PRM), 5/262, 24; *ibid.*, 5/5, 6–9. Also see Krystyna Kersten, *Repatriacja ludności polskiej po II wojnie światowej: studium historyczne* (Wrocław: 1974), 96–99; Yosef Litwak, *Pelitim yehudiyim mipolin bivrit hamao'ot, 1939–1946* (Jerusalem: 1988), 337–352.

11. See Litwak, *Pelitim yehudiyim*, 346.

12. See Engel, *Bein shih'ur livrihah*, 155, n. 7.

13. AAN, MAP 786, 67 (report of the Central Committee of the Jews in Poland).

14. The western territories of Poland, and particularly Lower Silesia, seemed to be well suited to the needs of the Jewish community. There were apartments abandoned by the fleeing German population and more possibilities for employment. See *ibid.* 788, 113–120.

15. *Ibid.*

16. See Engel, *Bein shih'ur livrihah*, 155, n. 7. According to Lucjan Dobroszycki, there were no more than 250,000 Jews at any given time in postwar Poland. See his “Restoring Jewish Life in Post-War Poland,” *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 3, no. 2 (1973), 59.

17. The so-called “matzo action” (*akcja macowa*) was the registration of the Jewish population in Poland that accompanied the distribution of free matzo for Passover in the spring of 1947. In this endeavor, the Central Committee of the Jews cooperated with the Jewish Religious Congregations. For reservations concerning the accuracy of this registration, see AURM, Gabinet Wiceministra, 2a/24, 22; AAN, MAP 787, 55. According to Dobroszycki, the number of Jews in Poland in 1947 was about 85,000; see his “The Jewish Community in Poland 1944–1947: A Discussion on Post-War Restitution,” in *She'erit Hapletah 1944–1948: Rehabilitation and Political Struggle*, ed. Yisrael Gutman and Avital Saf (Jerusalem: 1990), 14.

18. See Alina Cała, “Mniejszość żydowska,” in Madajczyk (ed.), *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce*, 245. See also Paweł Machewicz, “Antisemitism in Poland in 1959,” *Polin* 9 (1996), 181–182.

19. See Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars* (Bloomington: 1983), 43–63.

20. KRN was seen by its dominant personality, the Communist Władysław Gomułka, as the Polish parliament in the making. It was established as an underground parliament in January 1, 1944.

21. Emil Sommerstein was also the director of the War Compensation Department of the PKWN. After the parliamentary elections of January 1947, there were two representatives of the Jewish population: Józef Sack (Poalei Zion-Right) and Michał Szuldenfrei (Bund).

22. See AAN, MAP 787, 68–70; *ibid.* 786, 30–34; *ibid.* 790, 60; *ibid.* 791, 2–9. See also AAN, Akta Szymona Zachariasza 22, 1–10 (information on the situation of the Jewish population in Poland).

23. See Daniel Blatman, *Lema'an herutenu veherutkhem: haBund bepolin 1939–1949* (Jerusalem: 1996), 317–318.

24. On the traditional, stereotyped association between Communism and Jews, see Anna Landau-Czajka, *W jednym stali domu: koncepcje rozwiązania kwestii żydowskiej w polityce polskiej lat 1933–1939* (Warsaw: 1998), 150; Michael Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust* (New York: 1997), 35–36; Jaff Schatz, *The Generation: The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communists of Poland* (Berkeley: 1991), 95–98. For

examples of recent historical narratives based on the assumption of a Jewish-Communist alliance, see Jerzy R. Nowak, *Przemilczane zbrodnie: Żydzi i Polacy na kresach w latach 1939–1941* (Warsaw: 1999); Marek J. Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy 1918–1955: współistnienie-zagłada-komunizm* (Warsaw: 2000).

25. See Krystyna Kersten, *The Establishment of Communist Rule in Poland, 1943–1948* (Berkeley: 1991), 218–219; Bernard D. Weinryb, “Poland,” in *The Jews in the Soviet Satellites*, ed. Peter Meyer, Bernard D. Weinryb, Eugene Duschinsky, and Nicolas Sylvain (Syracuse: 1953), 241, 249; Litvak, *Pelitim yehudiyim*, 346.

26. Diaspora Research Institute (DRI), P 21, 7; AP w Krakowie, UW Krakowski, WSP 931, 929, 918. See also Jan Gross, *Upiorna dekada, trzy eseje o stereotypach na temat żydów, polaków, Niemców i komunistów, 1939–1948* (Cracow: 1998), 61–92; Krystyna Kersten, *Polacy, Żydzi, Komunizm: anatomia półprawd 1939–68* (Warsaw: 1992), 15–75. See antisemitic leaflets published in *Dzieje żydów w Polsce 1944–1968: teksty źródłowe*, ed. Alina Cała and Helena Datner-Śpiewak (Warsaw: 1997), 35–37. On accusations concerning cordial relations between Jews and Soviet officers, see AP w Krakowie, WSP 931, 929, 918.

27. Weinryb, “Poland,” 251; Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 10 July 1946.

28. AURM, Gabinet Wiceministra 2a/37, 72. In the report of the Ministry of Public Administration for September 1945, it was noted: “In Kielce province, reactionary elements use the insufficient productivization of the Jewish population as a springboard for antisemitic agitation” (*ibid.*, 88).

29. Public Record Office (London), FO 371/57694-WR2280, document no. 1, telegram to Sir N. Charles, 22 Aug. 1946; quoted in Arie J. Kochavi, “The Catholic Church and Antisemitism in Poland Following World War II as Reflected in British Diplomatic Documents,” *Gal ‘ed* 11 (1989), 121.

30. In a recent article, Andrzej Paczkowski attempts to establish the nature and degree of Jewish participation in the Polish secret police (*Urząd Bezpieczeństwa* [UBJ]) in the period 1944–1956, which he examines in the context of Jewish attitudes toward Communism as well as Polish-Jewish relations. See Paczkowski, “Żydzi w UB: próba weryfikacji stereotypu,” in *Komunizm: ideologia, system, ludzie*, ed. Tomasz Szarota (Warsaw: 2001), 192–204. According to Nikolaj Seliwanowski, a Soviet adviser to the Ministry of Public Security, Jews in 1945 comprised 18.7 percent of the ministry and occupied half of the positions of leadership. In some departments, the numbers were even higher. See report to Beria, 20 Oct. 1945, in *Teczka specjalna J.W. Stalina: raporty NKWD z Polski 1944–1946*, ed. Tatiana Cariewskaja et al (Warsaw: 1998), 421.

31. AP w Lublinie, UW Lubelski, WSP 50 (letter of the representative of the local administration in Włodawa to the provincial office in Lublin, SP 17/4/45, Włodawa, 10 Sept. 1945).

32. Quoted in Shmuel L. Shneiderman, *Tsvishn shrek un hofnung* (New York: 1947), 124; also see 125–126.

33. AAN, KC PZPR (Polish United Workers’ Party), 35, report on the meeting with Bishop Wyszyński of the delegation of the Provincial Jewish Committee. Wyszyński’s comment should be understood in the context of a prewar Polish landscape in which the Jewish role had been limited to representing the group as a minority, rather than holding public office as such. See another account of the meeting in Shneiderman, *Tsvishn shrek un hofnung*, 129–130.

34. Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 13 July 1947, cited in Weinryb, “Poland,” 250–251.

35. AURM 5/137, 68 (report of the Office for the Aid of the Jewish Population on the state of security of the Jews), quoted in Cała and Datner-Śpiewak (eds.), *Dzieje żydów w Polsce 1944–1968*, 32.

36. Quoted in Hurwic-Nowakowska, *A Social Analysis of Postwar Polish Jewry*, 54.

37. Machcewicz, “Antisemitism in Poland, in 1959,” 171–172.

38. *Ibid.*, 172–174, 178.

39. Indeed, in the years 1944–1945, the Red Army was, in the words of Adolf Berman and Pola Elster, “the only hope for the survivors of the Jewish masses who live under constant threat of death . . . It is for them . . . the army of liberation” (AAN, KRN, Biuro prezydyjne, wydział prawny, t. 148, 1–5 [referat do spraw żydowskich do ZPP w Moskwie], Warsaw, 15 June 1944). Other Zionist leaders expressed their gratitude for liberation. J. Bialer, a Mizrahi party mem-

ber in the interwar period, wrote to thank a fellow Zionist in the United States for sending food parcels, and in his letter extolled the Soviet Union for saving his life. See Zerach Warhaftig, *Refugee and Survivor: Rescue Efforts during the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: 1988), 257. In his speech at the KRN in May 1945, Emil Sommerstein declared: "We remember at this very moment and we will never forget, and we express our gratitude to the Soviet Union. It is thanks to the Soviet Union that a significant percentage of the Jewish population of Poland survived in its territory. We also remember that the march of the victorious Red Army and the Polish Army rescued the remnants [of the Jews] in Poland" (AŻIH, CKŻwP, wydział kultury i propagandy, t. 129, Biuletyn ŻAP, Łódź, 12 May 1945). See also the description of liberation in Bernard Goldstein, *The Stars Bear Witness* (New York: 1949), 273–274; Thomas Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor: A Story of Survival* (Evanston: 1997), 221–222; Frank Morgens, *Years at the Edge of Existence: War Memoir 1939–1945* (Lanham: 1996), 174–175.

40. On the ideology formulated by Ber Borochov that combined elements of Zionism with Marxism, see Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism and the Russian Jews, 1862–1917* (Cambridge: 1981), 329–363. On the attitude of the Zionist movement to Marxist ideology, see Gideon Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology* (Hanover, N.H.: 1995), 166–235.

41. AŻIH, CKŻwP, wydział kultury i propagandy, t. 129, Biuletyn ŻAP, Łódź, 12 May 1945.

42. "Na straży pierwszego maja w Polsce," *Zew młodych: pismo ruchu szomrowego* 1, nos. 3–4 (Łódź) (March–April 1946), 1–2.

43. Yitzhak Zuckerman, *A Surplus of Memory: Chronicle of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising* (Berkeley: 1993), 582.

44. AŻIH, CKŻwP, Prezydium, protocol 35 (8 May 1946), 72.

45. All of the Jewish political parties officially declared their support for the Lublin government, which was dominated by the Communists. At the first conference of the Bund in newly liberated Lublin, members declared their willingness "to cooperate with democratic parties on the programmatic basis of the July manifesto of the PKWN." The conference declared that it was necessary "to strive for unity of the movements of the working class in Poland" and hence supported cooperation between the PPR and the Polish Socialist Party (Polska Partia Socjalistyczna [PPS]). See *Biuletyn Bundu* (April 1945), 12–13, quoted in Józef Adelson, "W Polsce zwanej ludowa," in *Najnowsze dzieje żydów w Polsce w zarysie (do 1950 roku)*, ed. Jerzy Tomaszewski (Warsaw: 1993), 436–437. The same nominal support was expressed by a group of activists in the Orthodox Agudat Israel, who tried to no avail to obtain permission from the government to resume its activities in Poland. See AAN, Prezydium KRN, protocols 11–20, 1946 (letter to the KRN presidium; application signed by Szymon Cukier, Mojżesz Kopyto, and Filip Granatsztejn).

46. AAN, KRN, Biuro prezydyjne, wydział prawny, t. 148, 6–7 (program pracy referatu dla spraw żydowskich przy KRN, Warsaw, March 1944).

47. *Konstytucja i podstawowe akty ustawodawcze polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej* (Warsaw: 1978), 12.

48. The government's initiative in creating the office is evident in a letter sent by KRN delegate Szymon Żoła at the beginning of 1944 to the regional national council in Garwolin, in which he urged the need for a special committee to take care of the needs of Jewish survivors. See AAN, KRN, Prezydium, t. 1/47, s. 1. See also AAN, PKWN, 1/47, 27 (letter from S. Hershenhorn to E. Osóbka-Morawski), Lublin, 10 Sept. 1944. See the reports of M. Szulkin, "Sprawozdania z działalności referatu dla spraw pomocy ludności żydowskiej w Polsce przy prezydium PKWN," in *Biuletyn ŻIH* 1 (1971), 75–90.

49. See the bylaws of the Central Committee of the Jews in Poland, in AAN, MAP 788, 57–61; and *Zarys działalności CKŻwP za okres od 1 stycznia do 30 czerwca 1946 r.* (Warsaw: 1947), 5–6. On the origins of the Committee, see David Engel, "The Reconstruction of Jewish Communal Institutions in Postwar Poland: Central Committee of Polish Jews, 1944–1946," *East European Politics and Societies* (1996), 85–107. See also *Dzieci żydowskie oskarżają* (Warsaw: 1993), 35–36, 111; and AAN, MAP 786, 30–34; *ibid.* 787, 81–89.

50. Department of Oral History, the Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 15 (4).

51. AAN, MAP 788, 6–13. According to Dobroszycki, the government's reluctance to forcibly restore Jewish communal property accounts for its unwillingness to allow the reestablishment of the prewar Jewish religious framework. See Dobroszycki, "The Jewish Community in Poland, 1944–1947," 12.

52. See Weinryb, "Poland," 287.

53. *Ibid.*, 259.

54. *Ibid.* See also Yehuda Bauer, *Out of the Ashes: The Impact of American Jews on Post-Holocaust European Jewry* (Oxford: 1989), 76–78.

55. At the end of 1949, the government ordered organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Joint Distribution Committee to cease operations. In March 1950, Poland withdrew from the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development and the International Monetary Fund. In June 1950, it quit the International Labor Organization. See Weinryb, "Poland," 237–238. See also Dominik Zamiatyła, *Caritas: działalność i likwidacja organizacji 1945–1950* (Lublin: 2000).

56. Weinryb, "Poland," 300.

57. Bauer, *Out of the Ashes*, 168–169.

58. Irena Hurwic-Nowakowska characterized the path of the Jewish institutions in highly ideological terms:

Jewish institutions increasingly tend to follow the patterns of the social life of the country and resort less and less to models offered by traditional Jewish social life. Jewish institutions operating today exhibit a blend of vestiges of their traditional customs and a number of new elements and prevailing attitudes. . . . Before the war, Jews in Poland manifested a high degree of institutional development. Today the need for such institutionalization no longer exists. New social conditions render the autonomous and self-governing Jewish institutions superfluous . . . those Jews who are most prone to maintaining the traditionally separate character of Jewish institutions are leaving for Israel (*A Social Analysis of Postwar Polish Jewry*, 50).

59. See Bożena Szaynok, "The Bund and the Jewish Fraction of the Polish Workers' Party in Poland after 1945," *Polin* 13 (2001), 221–223.

60. See AAN, MAP 790, 27. Initially, the Communist attitude toward the state of Israel was somewhat positive. But this soon changed (both in Poland and in all the satellite countries) with the publication of an article by Ilya Ehrenburg in *Pravda* on September 23, 1948, in which he declared that the solution to the Jewish question was to be found in the Communist order of the Soviet Union, not in Israel. Ehrenburg's article was reprinted in Poland in *Folksshtime*, 8 Oct. 1948.

61. Weinryb, "Poland," 305.

62. *Folksshtime*, 14 Nov. 1950.

63. Cała, "Mniejszość żydowska," 272–273. Similarly, following the reforms of 1956, both the Joint Distribution Committee and ORT were allowed to resume their activities in Poland.

64. See David Engel, "Patterns of Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1944–1946," *Yad Vashem Studies* 26 (1998), 43–86.

65. It must be stressed that representatives of the government often employed the same argument. For example, in response to an appeal sent by the Provincial Jewish Committee in Lublin to the mayor of Lublin in late March 1946, the mayor sent an unofficial letter to the representatives of the local administration in which he argued that the issue of antisemitism needed to be treated as an urgent matter, since it was in the interest of the Polish state to educate the Poles in the direction of peaceful coexistence with the Jews (AP in Lublin, UW Lubelski, WSP 50, 12 April 1946).

66. AAN, KRN, t. 73, 25 (protocol of the third session of the Religion and Nationality Commission), 8 Nov. 1945, Warsaw.

67. AŻIH, CKŻwP, wydział kultury i propagandy, t. 129, Biuletyn ŻAP, Łódź, 12 May 1945

(7th session of the KRN, 11 May 1945). See also Berman's speech at the Religion and Nationality Commission on November 8, 1945:

The Jewish population knows that the reactionary elements are committing these [crimes] and that this is a general struggle, not only against the Jews; but this does not change the fact that the reactionary elements are trying to destroy them [the Jews] and that the information about it is filtering abroad, hurting Poland's interests (AAN, KRN, t. 73, 56–57 [30 Jan. 1946], Warsaw).

68. See the manuscript of a speech prepared for radio broadcast by Adolf Berman, DRI, P70/25, Paris, 9 Oct. 1945.

69. M. Bentow, "Bankructwo iluzji," *Mosty* 8, no. 3 (Nov.–Dec. 1946), 3.

70. Zuckerman, *A Surplus of Memory*, 670. Other attempts by the Central Committee included imploring the government to issue a decree against antisemitism, assisting the victims of anti-Jewish violence, and organizing the evacuation of the Jews from the towns where they were particularly vulnerable; see *Zarys działalności CKŻWP*, 3.

71. AŻIH, CKŻWP, komisja specjalna, 303/7, 1947, 6 (report of the special commission of the Central Committee of the Jews), 30 May 1947, Warsaw.

72. *Ibid.*, 7–8. Nonetheless, Jewish political leaders in Poland were dissatisfied with the lack of a definitive decree against antisemitism, which, according to Maciej Pisarski, was never enacted as law because of the Communists' fear of arousing adverse public opinion just before the 1947 elections. See Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych, Z6, inv. 1685, f. 105, 47–49; AAN, PRM 133, 34–35 (appeal of the Central Committee of the Jews in Poland to Edward Osóbka-Morawski), quoted in Cała and Datner-Śpiewak (eds.), *Dzieje żydów w Polsce*, 40–42. See also AAN, Prezydium Rady Ministrów (PRM) 133, 68–69 (report of the Office for the Aid of the Jewish Population of the Ministry of Labor) August 1945, quoted in *ibid.*, 31–33. See also Miciej Pisarski, "Emigracja żydów z Polski w latach 1945–1951," in *Studia z dziejów i kultury żydów w Polsce po 1945 roku*, ed. Jerzy Tomaszewski (Warsaw: 1997), 36–37.

73. AAN, MAP 786, 5 (circular of the Political Department of the Ministry of Public Administration), 21 March 1945. In response, the representative of the local administration in Lublin reported that "in connection with the directive, I ordered the heads of all subdistricts under my authority to ensure that the personnel employed there adopt a positive approach to the Jewish population and immediately assist all those returning from forced labor camps to their homes in the territory of various districts of this region" (AP w Lublinie, UW Lubelski, WSP 50, 27 March 1945, Lublin). The representative of the local administration in Radzyń wrote back that he had "instructed the heads of local districts to do their utmost to assist the Jews with money and material goods and with finding apartments. In the case of any persecution or anti-Jewish actions, they should immediately report to the representative, who will immediately respond by opening a case in court" (*ibid.*, 5 May 1945, Radzyń). Also see the complaint by Lejb Sztymbler of the Jewish Committee in Lublin (*ibid.*, 13 March 1945).

74. See "The Situation of the Jews in Poland as Seen by the Soviet Security Forces in 1945," in *Jews in Eastern Europe* 37, no. 3 (Winter 1998), 52–68.

75. AAN, KC PZPR, sekretariat 295-IX, t. 19, 37–39.

76. AAN, Biuro komisarza rządu dla spraw produktywizacji 46, 36. In another report, the same commissar writes about antisemitic sentiments among the Communist party members, which "was not essential but was directed (often because of personal conflicts) against Jews holding offices" (*ibid.*, 62).

77. Goldstein, *The Stars Bear Witness*, 277.

78. Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 27 Aug. 1946 and 19 Jan 1947, cited in Weinryb, "Poland," 251. Also see Shneiderman, *Tsvishn shrek un hofnung*, 145–146.

79. At a session of the KRN, Sommerstein praised the government of Poland, which he claimed "fulfilled its promises and declarations. The government is implementing the full political and legal equality of the Jewish survivors remaining in Poland. . . ." See AŻIH, CKŻWP, wydział kultury i propagandy, t. 129, Biuletyn ŻAP, 12 May 1945, Łódź (7th session of the KRN, May 11, 1945).

80. Ibid., 11 May 1945.

81. Ibid., t. 130, Biuletyn ŻAP 21 (31), 27 March 1945, quoted in Cała and Datner-Śpiewak (eds.), *Dzieje żydów w Polsce*, 274.

82. Hurwic-Nowakowska, *A Social Analysis of Postwar Polish Jewry*, 57.

83. Ibid., 44. On general changes in the occupational structure of the Jews, see Weinryb, "Poland," 266–267. The Committee of National Liberation included a number of Jews and individuals of Jewish origin, as did subsequent governments. Emil Sommerstein headed the Department of War Supplies; Bolesław Drobner, the Department of Press Affairs; and Hilary Minc, the Economic Division. Jews were also apparently admitted to a variety of government offices. Józef Adelson explains that the government preferred to employ Jews because very few prewar Communist activists remained in Poland; the Polish intelligentsia had suffered heavy losses during the war years, and most of those who survived were not considered trustworthy. Polish Jews, however, were known to have no links with the anti-Communist underground. See Adelson, "W Polsce zwanej ludową," 393–394.

84. Hurwic-Nowakowska, *A Social Analysis of Postwar Polish Jewry*, 42. Some Polish Jewish leaders (for instance, William Bein, the JDC director in Poland) lauded the government for admitting Jews into industry. See Weinryb, "Poland," 323, n. 40.

85. Hurwic-Nowakowska, *A Social Analysis of Postwar Polish Jewry*, 44.

86. See leaflets calling for a boycott of the Jewish stores and businesses (AURM, PRM, 5/137, 11, AP in Lublin, UW Lubelski, WSP [letter from the Jewish Committee in Krasnik, 19 March 1945]).

87. It is important to keep in mind (see n. 14) that the government supported Jewish settlement in the western territories of Poland, particularly in Lower Silesia. This support and organizational effort of some Jewish activists allowed creating a relatively strong Jewish center in this region in the initial post-Second World War period. See Jacob Egit, *Grand Illusion* (Toronto, 1991), 44: "My plan was to establish a Yiddish Yishuv in Lower Silesia." See also the letter sent by the Organizing Committee of the Polish Jews in Moscow to the participants of the First Conference of the Jewish Committees in Lower Silesia, in AP in Wrocław, Wojewódzki Komitet Żydowski, 5, 4: "the information from you is very important and valuable for the Jews in the Soviet Union. There are about 200,000 [who] stand on the edge of a return to our homeland. . . . We will be very pleased to come to Lower Silesia."

88. AAN, PKWN XI/6, 16–18 (third report on activities from 18 Sept. to 10 Oct. 1944). Also see Gutman, *Hayehudim bepolin aḥarei milḥemet ha'olam hasheniyah*, 60–61.

89. Goldstein, *The Stars Bear Witness*, 277.

90. See Dobroszycki, "The Jewish Community in Poland, 1944–1947," 10–12.

91. Ibid., 1–16.

92. Weinryb, "Poland," 265.

93. Szymon Rogozin'ski, "Drażliwa kwestia," in *Opinia* 15, no. 2 (25 July 1946), 6.

94. AŻIH, CKŻWP, wydział kultury i propagandy, t. 129, Biuletyn ŻAP, Łódź, 12 May 1945 (7th session of the KRN, May 11, 1945).

95. Central Zionist Archives (hereafter: CZA) (Jerusalem), S 25, f. 1906a, 2.

96. Ibid., 13–15. Sommerstein based his expectations on the speeches at the second session of the KRN on May 2, 1945, the manifesto of the PKWN, and the telegram sent to the conference on July 29, 1945; see AAN, URM, biuro prezydyjne, 5/17, August 1945.

97. CZA S25, f. 1906 a, 8–12.

98. Kersten, *The Establishment of Communist Rule in Poland*, 214–215.

99. See Zuckerman, *A Surplus of Memory*, 662–669; S. Grajek, *Ma'avak 'al hemshekh haḥayim: yehudei polin bashanim 1945–1949* (Tel Aviv: 1989), 423; and Michał Rudawski, *Mój obcy kraj* (Warsaw: 1996), 178–197.

100. Moshe P., "My Aliya in 1949," in newsletter of the Bnei Yaar, Hashomer Hazair archives (Givat Haviva), collection 1–2, box 67, file 1.

101. AAN, KC PZPR, sekretariat 295-XI, f. 49, 124 (report of the provincial committee in Kielce on the May Day celebrations).

102. The referendum was followed by the elections of 1947, which assured the Communist-led government coalition a great majority. It was now free to consolidate its power and impose

its will on the population. The Communists set about eliminating their most formidable opponents, the Socialists, by pressing for unification with them. Ties with the West were progressively cut.

103. See testimony about the appearance of Yiddish-language propaganda posters and the invitation for a propaganda meeting at the headquarters of the Poale Zion-Left in Lodz, in Pinchas Kribus, *Pirkei hayim, 1914–1950* (Mishmar haNegev: 1999), 24.

104. AAN, Spuścizna Szymona Zachariasza, 476/21, 1. It is difficult to establish the voting patterns of the Jewish population in the national referendum. However, according to some observers in Cracow, 40 percent of the Jewish population voted “yes” twice, which amounted to an act of defiance, since the Communists called for three “yes” votes. See Bożena Szaynok, *Ludność żydowska na Dolnym Śląsku, 1945–1950* (Wrocław: 2000), 79.

105. See Hersz Smolar, “Our Contribution in the Electoral Victory of the Democratic Bloc” (“Nasz udział w zwycięstwie wyborczym Bloku Demokrarycznego”), *Biuletyn prasowy wydziału kultury i propagandy przy CKŻP*, no. 2 (Feb. 1947), 3, found in YIVO library, 15/5056.

106. *Ibid.*, 1–2.

107. Zuckerman, *A Surplus of Memory*, 582.

108. Some members of the Hashomer Hazair stressed that they “should never forget what would have happened if the Soviet Union had sacrificed a big part of its budget to better the quality of life instead of developing its industry and science. . . . In the course of the discussions, however, [the members] came to the conclusion that the accusations against the Soviet Union were not justified” (Hashomer Hazair archives, collection 1–2, box 58, file 5 [report from meeting of the local governing body], 5 Nov. 1947).

109. Hurwic-Nowakowska, *A Social Analysis of Postwar Polish Jewry*, 49.

110. *Ibid.*, 113.

Romanian Jewry under Rabbi Moses Rosen during the Ceausescu Regime

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A decade before the fall of the Romanian Communist regime, an English journalist, Joseph Finkelstone, had his first encounter with Romanian Jewry and its leader, Rabbi Moses (Moshe) David Rosen (1912–1994). “I was astonished by what I saw and heard,” he later wrote. Whereas in the Soviet Union, there were “no Jewish religious schools, no Jewish newspapers, and only one synagogue in Moscow,” and where “anyone found teaching Hebrew was imprisoned,” in Bucharest

a Hebrew choir of youngsters welcomed us at the magnificent Choral Temple synagogue. . . . Jewish religious schools were flourishing. The children of Jewish Communists were eager to learn about their Jewish heritage and to make their home in Israel. . . . We discovered that the famous Jewish shtetl, so lovingly described by Sholem Aleichem and made vivid to millions by the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, still existed in Romania. . . . We were thrown into a world of the past [that was] now having to deal with the special problems of living under a strict Communist regime.

In this setting, moreover, “the Chief Rabbi appeared to have extraordinary influence with the authorities,” and Romanian Jews exhibited a “veneration for their Chief Rabbi, [which was] tinged not with fear but with love, as they approached him and his beautiful wife.”¹

Bordering on hagiography, Finkelstone’s account echoes those of numerous western reporters, not to mention the impressions recorded by many western and Israeli religious and political figures. Leaving aside the enthusiasm and the emotion, such accounts attest to a reality: the exceptional situation of Romanian Jews as compared with that of Jews in other Communist countries. Writing in 1985, Michael Shafir, a most reliable political analyst of the region, confirmed this assessment, noting that “in Ceausescu’s Romania, the Jews enjoy what is possibly the greatest measure of autonomy among all the denominations.”² Similarly, the Israeli ambassador in Romania between 1985 and 1989 concluded that

the Jewish minority was the only one among the minorities in Romania to obtain all these rights. Romania did not feel threatened by granting ethnic rights to the Jews, as it had felt threatened by the Hungarian minority Therefore the receptivity to the requests of

[Rosen], who enjoyed foreign support, which allowed him to lead the Romanian Jewish community during the Ceausescu regime as if it were not a Communist regime.³

Given the situation of the general Romanian population during the Ceausescu regime (1965–1989), this image of a small but flourishing community is both remarkable and perplexing. Romania under Ceausescu was one of the most repressive nations in the Communist bloc. In addition, its economy during the mid-1970s and 1980s was in an accelerated process of deterioration. The lack of basic foodstuffs and the impoverishment of a large portion of the population, combined with the absolute control of the Securitate (secret police) and the paranoid nature of the Ceausescu dictatorship, caused a majority of the Romanian population to feel that their country was a prison from which escape at almost any price was desirable. To leave Romania, by legal or illegal means, became a kind of collective obsession during the days of Ceausescu.

Ironically, it was Jews (along with Germans) who had the highest rates of emigration. This was because Jews were allowed to leave Romania for Israel, thanks to a government emigration policy that functioned intermittently even during the first days of the Communist regime, and which at times was in clear contradiction to the official Soviet line. As noted by Rosen both in his memoirs and in correspondence with American Jewish leaders, many Romanians desperate to emigrate went so far as to seek to convert to Judaism (most of these requests were rejected); there were also a number of incidents in which fake marriages were arranged with Jews or false documents were presented to the authorities to prove the applicant's alleged Jewish origin. In order to qualify for an emigration permit, some Romanians even attempted to move their parents' bones from Christian cemeteries to the Jewish cemetery of Bucharest.⁴

No less envied was the situation of elderly Jews who received social and material support and medical assistance. Aided by the American Joint Distribution Committee, Rosen established a network of old-age homes and kosher restaurants offering free lunches to the poor. The contrast between the services available to Jews and the lack of such services for the general population did not go unnoticed. Andrew Billen, for instance, visited a Jewish community shelter in Dorohoi in 1990 and noted the difference between that place and similar institutions as they were maintained in Ceausescu's time: "To be old, sick and without a family in Ceausescu's Romania, meant for most being consigned to unsanitary lunatic asylums or to hospitals where the limbless, as 'half-people,' slept two to a bed. By comparison, Dorohoi's modest home for 17 Jewish pensioners is a place of comfort and luxury, certainly of love, where hospitality is extended even to outsiders."⁵

Communist Romania, then, particularly during the era of Ceausescu, can be included in the category of oppressive regimes under which Jews had a seemingly preferential status. The challenge, as many writers and scholars have noted, is to understand how and why this situation came about.⁶

Following the Second World War, the Jewish population of Romania was a tragic remnant, reduced by almost half, deprived of civil rights and property, and impoverished by the savage plundering organized by Ion Antonescu's regime. As many as 420,000 Romanian Jews, including those of northern Transylvania, had fallen victim to the

Holocaust.⁷ In 1945, the Jewish population of Romania stood at 430,000; by 1965, as a result of mass emigration, approximately 100,000 remained.⁸ During the years of the Ceausescu regime, as emigration continued, the Jewish community dwindled still further, and by 1989, it numbered a mere 19,000.

In the context of the general poverty caused by the war, exacerbated by a prolonged drought and the enormous war debts imposed by the Soviets, the situation of the post-war Jewish population was made even worse by the state policy of delaying the return of houses and other Jewish-owned property.⁹ Jews were especially penalized by Communist reforms, particularly the nationalization of major commercial and industrial sectors. As a result of these “reforms,” a large number of Jewish artisans and traders lost their livelihood. Jews with relatives abroad were also stigmatized and discriminated against. Finally, because so many Jews filed emigration applications, the community as a whole was castigated for being “Zionists” or “imperialist agents.”

Although emigration became a privilege accorded, at least intermittently, to the Jewish population even during the first decade of Communist rule, not all Jews were permitted to leave. The authorities prevented the departure of highly educated persons or those with special skills needed for the new socialist economy. Moreover, the general policy toward Jewish emigration was inconsistent and often contradictory. On the one hand, a Soviet “anti-Zionist” campaign would lead to government limitations on emigration; on the other, international protests could result in a loosening of policy. Some party leaders argued that encouraging Jewish (and other minority-group) emigration would lessen the possibility of ethnic tension or would open up jobs for the general population. Other leaders, however, worried about the possible blow to Romania’s prestige. Opinions were fiercely divided on the emigration issue, and the outcomes of various power plays within the Romanian Communist leadership were reflected in the regime’s constantly shifting policy.¹⁰

Between 1952 and 1956, Jewish emigration was virtually halted. This period corresponded to the great anti-Zionist campaign waged by the pro-Communist Jewish Democratic Committee, during which hundreds of Zionist activists were arrested. There was also a marked rise in antisemitism during this time, manifested, among other things, in the removal of many Jews from important positions in the upper echelons of the Communist party.

Previously, in the immediate postwar years, Romanian Jews had benefited from an unprecedented opportunity to enter and advance within the Romanian Communist hierarchy. Jews became ministers and heads of departments, in this way gaining both power and privileges. Moreover, they were well represented in the party’s *nomenklatura*, holding important positions as ideological leaders. They were recruited, as a preferred element, in the security apparatus, and many held positions in the local political or administrative hierarchies. The most powerful Jewish figure during the initial postwar period was, of course, Ana Pauker, the minister of foreign affairs. Others, however, also held very influential and powerful positions, among them Josef Chisinevski, Leonte Rautu, and Nicolae Moraru.¹¹

This new situation caused a radical change in the nature of antisemitism. After reaching extreme manifestations in the official policy of the second half of the 1930s and during the war, antisemitism (now forbidden by law and condemned by party ideologies) adapted to the new context. The prevailing opinion among the general pop-

ulation was that the regime imposed by the Soviets was the work of the Jews, the “proof” being the Jews’ astonishing prominence in the new political hierarchy. But soon thereafter, a “new” form of antisemitism made its appearance in the upper echelons of the Romanian Communist party—based on both the Stalinist and the traditional Romanian models. Starting in the 1950s, a process of “romanianization” took place with the aim of “improving” the ethnic composition of the party. Internal party documents that recently have become accessible reveal that romanianization of the party was envisaged from the outset. In 1945, for instance, a prominent party leader, Vasile Luca (himself an ethnic Hungarian), told a group of party activists:

If we think dialectically, then we shouldn’t complain that, in our actual situation, we have a political line of sorts not to promote Jews in the leadership of party organizations. And every Jewish Communist has to understand this . . . because of the disaster we had in Moldavia. [There the] party was made up only of Jews; the various organizations, the police, and the administrative apparatus were all Jewish. And then people began asking: “What’s going on here? Is this a Jewish state or a Romanian state?” And this is continuing to go on in many places.¹²

Luca’s speech was the first indication of what became a continuous process of marginalization that was accelerated in the 1970s and 1980s—which, paradoxically, was accompanied by an improvement in the status of Jewish community life.

During this time, older Jewish party activists, either retired or removed from their positions, enjoyed the same privileged status as other veteran Romanian Communists, and some of them were even granted permission to emigrate. Meanwhile, the exclusion of many Jews from the center of power was “compensated” for by a certain liberty of action and autonomy for Jewish internal organizations. In fact, the regime accepted the granting of autonomy to the small Jewish community precisely because it was constantly diminishing in number and was therefore no longer a problem in terms of competition. Rosen, who became chief rabbi in 1948, was the main architect of the policy of consolidating and gaining autonomy for Romanian Jewish institutions. However, his success in this area was the outcome of other factors as well, notably Romania’s desire for a cordial relationship with both Israel and other western countries.

During the 1960s, relations between Romania and Israel steadily improved. A significant turning point was the raising of diplomatic representation to the embassy level in 1969—in obvious contrast to the deterioration of Israel’s relations with other Soviet-bloc nations after the Six-Day War. The main concerns of Israeli diplomacy were to encourage a more liberal policy on emigration and to secure the release of Zionists who had been imprisoned during the 1950s. Israel closely followed developments within the Romanian Jewish community and intervened when necessary to obtain more favorable conditions. These diplomatic intercessions were supported by the western media and by American Jewish organizations.

Recently published documents of the Romanian Foreign Affairs Office confirm that, following a decade of total identification both with the official Soviet line and with Soviet propaganda, Romanian diplomacy became “emancipated” in the 1960s. A report of 1960, for instance, describes “normal diplomatic relations, cold and honest” between Romania and Israel, but notes as well signs of a more favorable attitude

toward Romania (“the press, radio, and public attacks have disappeared almost completely”).¹³ A decisive moment was Rosen’s first visit to Israel in 1962, which led to a significant change in attitude on the part of the Israeli diplomatic establishment; previously, the chief rabbi had been viewed as nothing more than a tool of the Communist regime.

Even before Ceausescu took power, the situation of the Jews began to be different from that of other Communist-bloc countries. A more favorable western and Israeli approach to Romania was manifested in a number of economic benefits accorded to the regime, alongside an avoidance of outright criticism. A “top secret” report of 1964 noted that Israel had suggested using its influence with the United States in order to improve American economic policy vis-à-vis Romania (an offer that seemed to indicate that Israel was not above using to its own advantage the antisemitic myth regarding undue Jewish influence).¹⁴ In 1966, Israel supported the nomination of Corneliu Mănescu, the Romanian minister of foreign affairs, to the presidency of the 22nd session of the U.N. General Assembly. Romania’s readiness to facilitate Jewish emigration, and its independent and relatively pro-Israel stand both immediately before and during the Six-Day War, resulted in Israel’s refraining from any intensive examination of Romanian domestic policy. Essentially, Israel was indifferent to anything not directly related to the Jewish community. During the 1970s, in particular, it became clear that Israeli diplomacy supported Romanian foreign policy while pointedly ignoring the domestic front.

A similar development marked Romania’s relations with the United States. From 1975, the most effective diplomatic weapon employed by the United States against Soviet-bloc countries was the Jackson-Vanik amendment, which linked the granting of “most favored nation” (MFN) tariff status to a given state’s policy on human rights—particularly the right to emigrate. MFN status was renewed annually, following intensive and mostly behind-the-scenes diplomatic activity. Since Romania suffered from a chronically negative balance of payments, it was vital to secure this favored economic status. Accordingly, Rosen was regularly “mobilized” by government authorities to activate his close ties with American Jewish organizations. During the 1980s, such mobilization became increasingly important as political repression became more severe.¹⁵ Rosen believed that his successful endeavors on behalf of the Jewish community justified his fidelity to the Romanian cause, despite criticism voiced by individuals both in Israel and elsewhere in the West. In retrospect, it is clear that Israel and the United States made a similar tactical decision to support the dictatorial Ceausescu regime as a means of ensuring the continuation of its pragmatic and “liberal” foreign policy.

Romanian Jewry’s “privileged” status was actually quite ambivalent, since privilege was essentially the flip side of a policy of marginalization whose basic aims were political profit and propagandistic manipulation. For instance, the impression of normal Jewish life being maintained in the small communities of Moldavia provided visitors with a nostalgic reminder of the countless East European shtetls that had been destroyed during the Holocaust. Meanwhile, the seeming vibrancy of the shrinking Romanian Jewish community, as eagerly displayed to foreigners, worked to offset the harsh image of Ceausescu’s regime.

The most envied privilege—that of emigration—best expressed the ambiguity of

the Jews' status in Romania. In his memoirs, the Romanian-born Jewish mathematician Egon Balas recalls a colleague who exclaimed "how odd it was that Jews, who had been traditionally discriminated against, now had an enormous privilege and advantage over non-Jews in that they could apply to emigrate."¹⁶ In fact, this "liberal" policy was also quite profitable, since international Jewish organizations paid a secret "ransom" (in U.S. dollars) for every Jew leaving the country. Similarly, the smooth functioning of Jewish communal institutions was assured not by the Romanian state but rather by the Joint, which subsidized communal operations—and, in the process, brought substantial profits to the state in the form of advantageous currency exchange rates.

Essentially xenophobic, Ceausescu's nationalist doctrine viewed the voluntary departure of the German and Jewish population as the best and most profitable way both to remove "foreigners" from positions of influence and to "ameliorate" the country's ethnic mix. Paradoxically, as has been seen, Romania's "humanitarian" emigration policy also put the Communist regime in a positive light, contributing to Ceausescu's being lauded in the West for his "independent" foreign policy (other important factors were his refusal to break diplomatic relations with Israel and his condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia). This in turn fed Ceausescu's ambitions. He aspired to become a mediator in international conflicts, especially in the Middle East, and had megalomaniac visions of becoming a candidate for the Nobel peace prize.

In fact, far from being liberal, Ceausescu's chauvinist Communist ideology incorporated disguised and explicit antisemitic themes. Although the regime refrained from making use of standard antisemitic propaganda such as the myth of a world Zionist threat, it permitted—and sometimes encouraged—antisemitic outbursts in the press. The most violently antisemitic articles were those written by Corneliu Vadim Tudor, a journalist and poet who was also a zealous supporter of Ceausescu, and who later became the leader of the extremist and antisemitic Greater Romanian party.¹⁷ Such articles, however, did not lead to violence against Jews. Similarly, although chauvinism and xenophobia characterized most of Romanian society, they were rarely on public display and were generally unnoticed by western observers. The fact that Romania's serious economic crisis, exacerbated by the replacement of a pseudo-liberal "national Communism" with "national Stalinism,"¹⁸ was leading to an increasingly harsh dictatorial regime was for many years largely unnoted in the West.

Communist Romania was at its most repressive when Rosen was appointed chief rabbi in 1948. Totally subservient to the Stalinist line, the government went along with the Soviet Union's virulent anti-Zionist campaign and did little to combat anti-semitism. Given these circumstances—along with the fact that his predecessor, Alexander Safran, had been dismissed from his post and forced to flee Romania—Rosen was initially viewed with a good deal of suspicion by the local Jewish population and by Jewish leaders abroad. However, this so-called "red rabbi" eventually fared better than anyone else in dealing with the new Communist leaders and with heads of the pro-Communist Democratic Jewish Committee, the only legal Jewish organization at that time.

Oscillating between conformist gestures and acts of courage characterized by diplomatic finesse, Rosen succeeded in preserving Jewish communal life almost unhindered. Although Jewish schools and hospitals were nationalized, educational frameworks such as the *talmud torah* continued to function, and synagogues remained the natural site for religious and cultural activities. Romanian Jewish children could be taught Hebrew and were allowed to learn about Jewish holidays and religious traditions. In return for this relative freedom, the regime demanded little more than declarations of support that were routinely delivered from the synagogue pulpits.

In 1964, Rosen received an additional appointment as the president of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania, a position that further enhanced his prestige. Three years later, he succeeded in gaining government approval for the Joint to operate once again in Romania. With its assistance, as has been seen, the chief rabbi established and maintained a number of religious and social welfare institutions that catered in particular to elderly and infirm Romanian Jews.¹⁹ Playing on its desire to establish good relations with the West, Rosen also persuaded the government to allow renewed ties with the World Jewish Congress and other international Jewish institutions.

The outcome of all of these efforts was a Jewish enclave within the Communist bloc that discreetly but effectively maintained an authentic Jewish way of life. Those connected to the community, whether directly or indirectly, were able to preserve a Jewish identity not subverted by Communist education or militant Soviet-style atheism. Nor was the Romanian Jewish community obliged to espouse anti-Zionism or hostility toward the state of Israel. Rosen himself supervised and mediated the smooth running of the aliyah process. He relentlessly promoted the departure of Jews to Israel rather than to other places abroad, and he took great pride in being the leader of a community that was dwindling because of settlement in the land of its forefathers rather than because of assimilation. If not exactly the “architect of his own immortality,” as proclaimed by the title of a volume recently sponsored by the Federation of the Jews of Romania,²⁰ Rosen was certainly the architect of Jewish communitarian life inside the Communist bloc.

In 1956, Rosen initiated the publication of *Revista Cultului Mozaic* (The journal of the Mosaic cult), which featured articles written in Romanian, Yiddish, English, and Hebrew. The journal was much more than its title (dictated by the government) suggested: it was both a means of connecting Romanian Jewry with the rest of the Jewish world and a forum for Jewish intellectuals who were disenchanted with Communist internationalism. Rosen was also the guiding spirit behind the establishment of a museum of Romanian Jewish history in what was formerly a synagogue. Among the museum’s exhibits were photographs of massacres that had occurred during the Holocaust years—a daring move, since any discussion of the Holocaust that raised issues of Romanian responsibility was considered taboo.

A center for documentation and research on Romanian Jewish history was also founded, and conferences on Jewish cultural topics were regularly held in Bucharest and in other communities. Annual Hanukah and Pesach celebrations were not only opportunities to strengthen Jewish identity and communal cohesion, but were also showcase events designed to impress Rosen’s many foreign guests.

In the name of “urban planning,” the Romanian government had ordered the de-

struction of churches and synagogues in Bucharest, among them several with cultural and historical value. Rosen went to great lengths to preserve the synagogues, mobilizing international Jewish organizations, the Israeli embassy, and other western embassies. He realized that external pressures were likely to be more effective than localized efforts, given Ceausescu's sensitivity regarding his world image, and he in fact succeeded in preventing the destruction of most of the synagogues.²¹

In these and other instances, the Romanian chief rabbi obtained concessions that no other East European Jewish leader, religious or Communist, was able to claim. Rosen's unprecedented achievements were the outcome of an unusual and successful strategy of accommodation with Communist leaders, a kind of pragmatic ambivalence that functioned uninterruptedly from 1948 until the fall of the Communist regime.

In 1978, Seymour Gross, a U.S. visitor to Romania, analyzed Rosen's methods in a report sent to the chief rabbi:

Rosen's message is that Judaism is not incompatible with a socialist state. Sitting next to the [Romanian] minister of religion and listening to Rosen made me wonder whether we [visitors] were being used, and how much of what Rosen said was a necessary obeisance in the direction of the power of the state. I still do not know [but] . . . his real-life accomplishments are substantial, rhetoric notwithstanding. . . . We wonder, are we part of some larger, stage-managed affair—say, the most favored nation status for Romania that is being reviewed at this moment in the U.S. Congress? There is no need for cynicism. Probably two things are going on simultaneously, each with a life and purpose of its own, yet in some way related.²²

Rosen's behavior toward those in power was not guided solely by pragmatism or communal concerns. He also aspired to emulate medieval Jewish leaders who, by virtue of their loyalty, were in a position to obtain important concessions. In Rosen's words: "There was also a moral question. The Romanian government had allowed the Jews to leave, had granted freedom for Jewish education, and had allowed the entry of the Joint. How could we Jews fail to help such a government? How could we return evil for good?"²³ While not the "red rabbi" some accused him of being, Rosen did have obvious left-wing sympathies and was suspicious of the Right, even the democratic Right. Traumatic events of his youth—in particular, the massacres of Jews in Iasi and in Bucharest in 1941—led him in the direction of Soviet-style antifascism, even if he eventually came to understand that antisemitism could be found at both extremes of the political spectrum. Notwithstanding, he preferred a "liberal" Communist regime to a fragile democracy. Rosen was convinced that democracy in this particular area of Europe sooner or later brought instability and, in its wake, nationalist and antisemitic forces.

Indeed, Rosen always feared that pogroms and persecution were just around the corner. The bloody images from Iasi and Bucharest both haunted and guided his behavior and decision-making. Like many Jews of his generation, Rosen believed that supporting those in power was the only means of ensuring the Jews' peace and security; upon Ceausescu's fall, he was genuinely convinced that disaster was imminent for the Jews.

The weightiest accusation made against Rosen, one that he faced both at the be-

ginning of his career and at its end, was that of collaboration with the Communist regime. Rosen consistently defended and justified his policies, noting time and again that he would “make a pact with the devil” if this were for the good of the Jewish community for which he was responsible. Actually, Ceausescu became “the devil” in Rosen’s eyes only after his downfall in late December 1989. Until that point, Rosen was steadfast in praising the dictator’s courage and “strong internal measures.” In an interview with a *Washington Post* correspondent in 1983, for instance, Rosen argued that “I prefer an atheist regime doing the will of God by saving our lives to a priest who pretends he is a man of God but who is destroying us . . . Ceausescu has to be strong. I respect him because he believes in what he is doing.”²⁴

In contending with antisemitism, Rosen’s strategy was to appeal to the highest authorities, at times even directly to Ceausescu himself. In his contacts with the western and Israeli press, he always portrayed Ceausescu as a sincere opponent of antisemitism. Essentially, however, Rosen operated on two opposing fronts. On the home front, he repeatedly protested antisemitic acts and pressed for official condemnation and a promise to punish the culprits. At the same time—while all the while defending the government—Rosen did nothing to discourage protests from abroad, to which the Romanian authorities were particularly sensitive.

In 1984, when a journalist from Radio Free Europe questioned the efficacy of his approach, Rosen responded with a polemic published in *Revista mea* in which he described the aftermath of the publication of an antisemitic article:

The president of Romania received me in a very friendly manner, he listened to me with solicitude, he told me that he understood my distress [and] that he had personally asked for the confiscation of the volume *Saturnalii*, that the author [Corneliu Vadim Tudor] was punished, [and that] since that day—28 April 1984—Vadim’s name has not appeared in any publication, and he promised me that such things will not happen again. What was I supposed to do in the face of such a straightforward accounting given by the highest-ranking representative of the state? Shouldn’t I have declared that I was satisfied? Why should I have had any doubts . . . in view of such a clear-cut declaration?

Rosen then went on to enumerate with pride his many achievements under Ceausescu before concluding: “We assert our Judaic heritage, the love of Zion, freely, without fear Why have doubts when receiving the promise of such a president?”²⁵

Here, as in many other statements, it is clear that Rosen was motivated, above all, by the perennial question: Is it good for the Jews? Especially in later years, Rosen repeatedly defended his support of the government with this rationale. As noted, he also stressed the importance of expressing gratitude for benefits bestowed on the Jews by those in power. In his interview with the *Washington Post*, for example, Rosen appeared to be sincere rather than cynical when he noted: “For all these favors we have to pay them. My duty is to pay them Doing what I am doing is not only an act of good citizenship. Not doing it would make [me] a traitor to my community.”²⁶

Only after Ceausescu’s death did Rosen express explicit criticism of the Romanian dictator, in terms that again evoked the “good of the Jews.” “What Jewish leader,” he wrote in his memoirs, “would not have been prepared to approach even Hitler if by doing so he could save the lives of millions of our people? I am a rabbi, not a prophet. Neither I nor anybody else could have foreseen how Ceausescu would develop.”²⁷

A decade after his death, Rosen remains a controversial figure, particularly among Romanian Jewish intellectuals. In the course of his long tenure as chief rabbi, Rosen had first to overcome suspicions of his being pro-Communist. His successful maneuvering with government officials eventually gained him his community's trust, and for many years Rosen was revered by a majority of Romanian Jewry. Nonetheless, the chief rabbi was not immune to criticism. Many Jewish intellectuals could not identify with the communal institutions he promoted, considering them too parochial and lacking any cultural (as opposed to religious) dimension. Rosen's authoritarian style was another source of frustration and discontent. Most serious, however, were the compromises he made in order to preserve the special status of Romanian Jewry—most importantly, the freedom to emigrate.

Nestor Ratesh, a journalist at Radio Free Europe, expressed a widespread feeling in 1983 when he commented:

Sometimes I have a feeling that [Rosen has] gone overboard, doing more for the government than he should or had to. But it's the end result that counts—but perhaps not when speaking about a rabbi, for whom the end would not justify the means. It's a tough question: How much compromise is too much? The fact is that he has saved and improved lives . . . His main fault is perhaps that he doesn't always know where the balance is between his loyalty to the regime and his service to the community—where one ends and the other begins.²⁸

Rosen himself never seems to have considered the possible limits of acting “for the good of the Jews.” By the final years of Ceausescu's rule, he was virtually alone in his defense of the regime, maintaining his loyalty even when this brought him in conflict with U.S. and Israeli diplomats.

In the initial post-Communist period, Rosen's ambiguous relationship to Ceausescu became the subject of heated discussion in the Romanian press. Whereas previously he had been criticized by some within the Jewish community and in the West, he now assumed almost demonic dimensions in the newly emergent antisemitic press and among extremist intellectual circles.²⁹ Rosen's frequent appearances in the Romanian press and in television debates, in which he continually stressed the suffering of the Romanian Jews during the Antonescu period, prompted hostility that was often expressed in harsh antisemitic rhetoric.

Two contradictory images of Rosen gradually crystallized in Romanian public discourse. Among the chief rabbi's supporters was Ion Iliescu, the former high-ranking Communist official who became Romania's new president. In one sign of official favor, Rosen was received with great pomp as an honorary member of the Romanian Academy. For his part, Rosen continued to protest vehemently against antisemitic attacks even as he praised the new president for his warm attitude toward the Jewish community—this, despite the fact that Iliescu's supporters included some of the main antisemitic agitators.³⁰ Meanwhile, former opponents of Ceausescu, who in time formed an intellectual opposition to Iliescu's regime, were scathingly critical both of Rosen and of the Jewish community as a whole.³¹ Rosen was castigated for being Ceausescu's “pawn” and for being concerned only with the welfare of his own community; he was accused as well of continuing this opportunistic policy toward the new regime.

In April 1995, a year after Rosen's death, Alexander Safran, who had been forced

to flee about 50 years earlier, made his first visit back from Geneva (where he served as chief rabbi) to Romania. Invited to speak to the Romanian parliament, Safran was presented as a hero: a victim of the Stalinist Communist regime who applauded the spirit of tolerance and humanism of the Romanian people. He was seen as a leader opposed to all that Moses Rosen had stood for, a staunch anti-Communist and a Jewish religious figure who was sensitive to the suffering of the general population, not simply that of the Jews. Safran's characterization of the Romanian people as "good, sweet, and gentle" cemented the overwhelmingly favorable impression of Rosen's predecessor.

In fact, persuasive arguments can be made both for and against Rosen's leadership of the Romanian Jewish community. What seems indisputable is that a dictatorial regime steeped in duplicity provides particularly fertile ground for a degree of moral corruption among those who choose to collaborate with it, whether because of fear or out of a desire to gain profit or privilege. In the case of Rosen, such privilege was sought for the benefit of an entire community. As a result of a combination of circumstances—not least, Rosen's exceptionally pragmatic leadership—Romanian Jewry attained a favored minority status whose main privilege, paradoxically, was the freedom to leave.

Notes

1. Joseph Finkelstone, preface to Moses Rosen, *Dangers, Tests and Miracles: Memoirs* (London: 1990), 5.
2. Michael Shafir, *Romania: Politics, Economy and Society* (London: 1985), 157.
3. Yosef Govrin, *Yahasei yisrael-romaniyah beshilhei 'idan Ceausescu: mireshumav shel shagrir yisrael beromaniyah* (Jerusalem: 2001), 191.
4. See Rosen, *Dangers, Tests, and Miracles*, 290–293.
5. Andrew Billen, "Exodus: The Last Jews of Romania" *Observer* supplement (April 1990), 19.
6. See, for instance, Michael Shafir, "Jews and Antisemites in Romania since the Death of Rabbi Rosen," *East European Jewish Affairs* 2 (Winter 1994), 147–155; Charles Hoffman, *Gray Dawn: The Jews of Eastern Europe in the Post-Communist Era* (New York: 1992); Liviu Rotman, "The Politics of the Communist Regime concerning the Jews: Contradictions, Ambivalence and Misunderstanding (1945–1953)," in *The Jews in Romanian History*, ed. Ion Stanciu (Bucharest: 1996), 230–247; Robert Levy, *Ana Pauker: The Rise and Fall of a Jewish Communist* (Berkeley: 2001); Norman Manea, *Casa melcului* (Bucharest: 1999); Govrin, *Yahasei yisrael-romaniyah beshilhei 'idan Ceausescu*. For an interpretation of Rosen's Jewish policy under Ceausescu, see Leon Volovici, "National Communism and Jewish Politics: Romanian Chief Rabbi Rosen's Miracles and Dilemmas," in *Jewish Centers and Peripheries: Europe between America and Israel Fifty Years after World War II*, ed. Ilan Troen (New Brunswick: 1999); see also André W.M. Gerrits, "'Jewish Communism' in East Central Europe: Myth versus Reality," in *Vampires Unstaked: National Images, Stereotypes and Myths in East Central Europe* (Amsterdam: 1995), 169.
7. See Jean Ancel, "Romania," in *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, ed. Yisrael Gutman (New York: 1990), 1298.
8. On the history of Romanian Jewish emigration to Israel, see Carol Bines, *Din istoria imigrărilor în Israel* (Bucharest: 1998).
9. See Liviu Rotman, "Romanian Jewry: The First Decade after the Holocaust," in *The Tragedy of Romanian Jewry*, ed. Randolph L. Braham (New York: 1995), 287–331; Levy, *Ana Pauker*, 164.

10. Emigration policy was also an issue that could determine the fate of Romanian Communist politicians. Ana Pauker, for example, supported a more liberal policy on Jewish emigration, and this was eventually used against her. See Levy, *Ana Pauker*, 163–193; Andreea Andreescu, Lucien Nastasă, and Andreea Varga (eds.), *Evreii din România (1945–1965)* (Cluj: 2003).

11. See Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Arheologia terorii* (Bucharest: 1992), 199–205; Pavel Câmpăneanu, *Ceaușescu, anii numărătorii inverse* (Iasi: 2002), 180–195.

12. Quoted in Levy, *Ana Pauker*, 236–237.

13. *Romania—Israel. Documente diplomatice*, vol. 1, 1948–1969 (Bucharest: 2000), 184–185.

14. *Ibid.*, 222.

15. See Rosen, *Dangers, Tests and Miracles*, 245–259.

16. Egon Balas, *Will to Freedom: A Perilous Journey through Fascism and Communism* (Ithaca: 2000), 425.

17. On antisemitic articles in the officially sponsored Communist press, see Michael Shafir, “The Men of the Archangel Revisited: Antisemitic Formulations among Communist Romania’s Intellectuals,” *Studies in Comparative Communism* 16, no. 3 (1983), 223–243; Katherin Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu’s Romania* (Berkeley: 1991), 209–211; Norman Manea, “The History of an Interview,” in his *On Clowns: The Dictator and the Artist* (New York: 1992), 125–178.

18. See Vlad Georgescu, *Politică și istorie: Cazul comuniștilor români, 1944–1947* (Munich: 1983); Vladimir Tismaneanu, “Understanding National Stalinism: Reflections on Ceausescu’s Socialism,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 32 (1999), 155–173.

19. Financial assistance was also provided to some non-Jewish Romanian families who had saved Jews during the war, and to a number of intellectuals who were regarded as being sympathetic to the Jews.

20. *Moses Rosen, arhitectul propriei sale veșnicii* (Bucharest: 1997).

21. See Yosef Govrin, “Destinul evreilor din România—diferit de cel al evreilor din restul Diasporei de Est,” in *ibid.*, 37–39.

22. See the report written by Seymour Gross, Nov. 1978, Central Archives of the History of the Jewish People (Jerusalem) (documents of the Office of the Chief Rabbi of Romania), 6, 13.

23. Rosen, *Dangers, Tests, and Miracles*, 257.

24. Quoted in Charles Fenyvesy, “A Rabbi’s Politics of Cooperation: Moses Rosen, Lobbying for Romania,” *Washington Post*, 21 Feb. 1983, C1, 14.

25. [Letter of Dr. Moses Rosen], *Revista mea* 1114, (7 Sept. 1984), 7.

26. Quoted in Fenyvesy, “A Rabbi’s Politics of Cooperation.”

27. Rosen, *Dangers, Tests and Miracles*, 243.

28. Quoted in Fenyvesy, “A Rabbi’s Politics of Cooperation.”

29. On newly emergent antisemitism, see George Voicu, *Teme antisemite in discursul public* (Bucharest: 2000); *idem*, *Zeii cei răi: cultura conspirației în România postcomunistă* (Iasi: 2000), 79.

30. See, for example, the critique of Ileana Vrancea, “Tunelul comunist al României la ora iubirii de evrei,” *Dialog* 119–123 (Jan.–May 1991).

31. See Gabriel Andreescu, “Roșu și negru” 22, no. 37 (15 Sept. 1998), 13; Paul Goma, “In dialog cu Laszlo Alexandru,” *Timput*, 8 Aug. 1997, 12–13.

Essays

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The Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia and the Evolution of the St. Petersburg Russian Jewish Intelligentsia, 1893–1905

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Established in 1863 by Baron Evzel Günzburg and other wealthy St. Petersburg Jewish merchants who had recently been granted the right to reside permanently in the capital, the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia (known as OPE, its Russian acronym) was the first—and for two decades the only—legal and nationwide institution of Russian Jewry. During its 63-year existence, OPE was a vital force on the Russian Jewish cultural and educational landscape. Its founders (soon joined by *maskilim*, primarily from Odessa, and by sympathetic non-Jewish government officials) set as their initial goal the integration of ordinary Jews into Russian society.¹ Although the demand for expanded legal rights was never made explicit, OPE leaders believed that once Jews were educated and appeared more “like Russians,” they would receive full legal rights as citizens of the Russian empire.

Over the years, OPE expanded and evolved. In 1867, a branch was established in Odessa, whose Jewish community was less wealthy than that of St. Petersburg, but at the same time more daring in its attempts to foster both religious reform and russification. (As will be seen, the two communities were often in competition.²) The government for many years refused to permit the organization’s further expansion. Only in 1898 was a branch in Riga opened, followed by a branch in Kiev in 1903. In 1908, the restrictions were eased, and OPE was allowed to establish branches wherever at least 25 dues-paying members were to be found. At its peak, the society had 29 branches that were distributed among large cities and in far-flung places such as Tomsk, Akkerman, Riga, and Samara.³ All general meetings, however, took place in St. Petersburg, and members of the Steering Committee were all from the capital.⁴

During its first two decades, OPE subsidized the publication of books, in Russian and in Hebrew, on “useful” subjects such as general science, world history, lexicology, and grammar, and also arranged for the translation of Jewish religious works into Russian.⁵ The bulk of its budget, however—some two thirds of an average annual expenditure of 9,229 rubles in the 1860s—was allocated to Jews seeking higher edu-

cation.⁶ Russian Jewish university students, totaling only 129 in 1865, were expected to serve as models for their co-religionists: proof of what Jews could become, given propitious circumstances.⁷

OPE's leaders, the so-called *shtadlonim* (literally, "intercessors"), derived their political influence from their wealth and, more importantly, from their connections with government officials. At the same time, being dependent on the government's goodwill for privileges such as the right to live outside the Pale, they were limited to urging reform rather than making explicit demands. Accordingly, they publicly supported only those activities that facilitated economic improvement, leaving demands for political representation on the sidelines. Nevertheless, they were optimistic concerning the future of Russian Jewry, expecting that Alexander II's early reforms would continue, perhaps even at an accelerated pace.

As it turned out, such optimism was misplaced. In 1867, a reform was enacted that gave select Jewish artisans the right to live outside the Pale.⁸ This, however, marked the last of the tsarist reforms with regard to the Jews. Gradually it became clear that the link between education and rights was illusory. Despite a gradual increase in the number of Jewish university students in the 1860s, followed by a surge in enrollment in the wake of the recruitment regulations of 1874 that bestowed various privileges upon students (the most important being a shortened term of compulsory military service),⁹ the government refused to pursue further emancipatory measures. Blocked by government policies, OPE found itself bereft of any purposeful ideology and fell into a kind of paralysis. In his 1889 review of Leon Rosenthal's publication of OPE documents from the 1860s and 1870s, Simon Dubnov offered a gloomy assessment:

Who thinks today about this institution, [recalling] that it actually exists, who is interested in its activities, who expects its initiative or help in any major social project of any kind? The Society for Enlightenment, which not long ago stood in the center of Jewish intellectual life, has been pushed by the force of events into a far corner and itself seems to hurry there "to find peace," like an aged invalid who has outlived his life. One might assume that it longer lives, even though it has not yet actually died . . .¹⁰

Dubnov was perhaps too pessimistic. During the 1880s, OPE's budget and membership actually rose, albeit slowly.¹¹ Yet it is true that the organization produced no major social initiatives during that decade, nor did its priorities change; by the late 1880s, the proportion of its budget allocated to students in institutions of higher education had even increased, to slightly more than 70 percent.¹² A shift of policy occurred only in 1893, when OPE decided to increase significantly its support for Jewish elementary schools.¹³ This decision represented a new agenda for the organization, which during the course of the following decade became a vibrant institution committed to a national Jewish cultural renaissance.

What led to OPE's change of focus? Clearly the rise within the society of young members of the Russian Jewish intelligentsia such as Leontii Bramson, Saul Ginzburg, Maksim Vinaver, Petr (Pinchas) Marek, Solomon Vol'tke, and Mikhail Kreinin, played a role. Nevertheless, the older generation of leaders did not lose their prominence, and it appears that they, too, were fully committed to change. A sizeable percentage of OPE's budget even after 1893 came directly from Baron Horace Günzburg (Evzel's son), which indicates that he approved of the society's changed character.¹⁴

Moreover, the list of members of the St. Petersburg Steering Committee for 1902 included both older and younger figures: apart from Baron Günzburg (the chairman), there were older leaders such as Avram Harkavy, Jacob Gal'pern, Lev Katsenel'son, and Mikhail Kulisher, alongside younger activists such as Vinaver, Alexander Braudo, Baron David Günzburg (Horace's son), and Avram Tanenbaum.¹⁵

At the 1902 meeting of OPE's provincial representatives, veteran member Mikhail Kulisher gave the introductory presentation, declaring that "the Steering Committee should not limit itself only to subsidizing, but [should] also influence the internal structure of the school." Moreover, "the Steering Committee usually holds to the principle that its attention should be focused primarily on provincial areas and not on the large centers of Jewish population."¹⁶ In fact, since 1893, OPE's budget had been undergoing a shift in this direction. Whereas, in 1881, the society had allocated more than 10,000 rubles to university students and only 2,000 rubles to schools, by 1893, it provided 18,673 rubles to a total of 437 university students and nearly half that amount (9,152 rubles) to elementary schools; by 1905, elementary schools—almost all of them in the Pale—were receiving more money (some 47,000 rubles) than were students (31,310 rubles).¹⁷ Although the sums for schools were paltry before 1900, they were multiplied many times over by grants from the Jewish Colonization Association (ICA). This organization provided OPE with extra annual funds: 26,000 rubles in 1900; 40,000 rubles in 1902; and 56,000 rubles in 1906. The extra money allowed for a dramatic increase in subsidies: 742 rubles per school in 1902, compared with an average subsidy of 75 rubles in 1897 and 93 rubles in 1899.¹⁸

During this period, OPE's organizational structure also underwent expansion and change. In St. Petersburg, several special commissions had been set up by 1905: the Commission for Strengthening the Society's Financial Condition; the Historical Ethnographic Commission; the Library Commission; and the School Commission.¹⁹ This last commission, in particular, had an extensive scope of activities—so much so that it was subdivided into separate departments dealing with such matters as "heders," "teachers," "school curricula," and "school libraries."²⁰ Members of the commission met at least twice a month and hosted about ten lectures each year for members and invited guests.

A closer examination of the St. Petersburg School Commission and the manifold contributions made by Leontii Moiseevich Bramson affords a good illustration of OPE's evolving shift away from integrationism and toward a more "national" Jewish policy.²¹ Born in 1869 in Kovno (Kaunas), Bramson was awarded a degree in law from Moscow University in 1890. He then moved to St. Petersburg, where he played an instrumental role in OPE's School Commission and later became head of the OPE elementary school in St. Petersburg (popularly known as the "Berman" school after its founder, Jacob Berman). In 1898, he took charge of OPE's statistical work; the following year, he became secretary of the Jewish Colonization Association in Russia. In 1905–1906, he participated in the Union for the Attainment of Equal Rights for the Jews²² and was elected to the First State Duma from Kovno, serving as a representative of the left-leaning Trudovik party.²³ Among many other works, Bramson co-edited (with Mikhail Kulisher) the *Volume in the Service of Jewish Elementary Schools* (1896) and was a key contributor to the *Handbook of Questions concerning*

Jewish Education (1901)—both volumes subsidized by OPE—and served as editor of the two-volume *Collection of Articles on the Economic Condition of the Jews of Russia* (1904), which was funded by the ICA.²⁴

Bramson was an advocate of the so-called “productivization of the Jews,” according to which the “Jewish problem” could be solved if Jews were to engage in productive occupations such as manufacturing, crafts, and agriculture (as opposed to trade). This notion was of course popular among Russian *maskilim*, whom Bramson admired. He had special esteem for Nikolai Bakst, the brilliant founder of ORT, the society for manual and agricultural work among Jews; and for Menashe (Mikhail) Morgulus, the founder of Trud, an artisan school in Odessa—about whom Bramson delivered a talk in April 1912 at an OPE gathering in St. Petersburg.²⁵

Bramson’s own views were spelled out at length in his article “On the History of Elementary Education of the Jews in Russia,” in which he delineated three historical periods: up to 1804, the beginning of the reign of Alexander I (during which there was no real organization of elementary education); from 1804 to 1855, the reigns of Alexander I and Nicholas I (when the progress of Jewish educational development was linked to a number of government decrees); and from 1856 to 1894, the reigns of Alexander II and Alexander III (when the Jewish population began to show support for secular education and communities began to take an active role in the organization of new Jewish schools). Leaving aside the first period as one of unfulfilled expectations, Bramson argued that the failures of the second period were derived from the paradox that, on the one hand, the government established special Jewish schools while, on the other, its generally oppressive policy toward the Jews led to deep distrust. “Each new liability, each series of expulsions,” Bramson wrote, “were factors that could not but have an influence on the fate of Jewish schools, which had not yet planted deep roots, and [these factors] significantly slowed their development.”²⁶

In the long run, according to Bramson, the most positive development in Russian Jewish education was the decree of 1873 that led to the closure of many Jewish educational institutions, among them the state-supported rabbinical seminaries in Vilna (Vilnius) and Zhitomir, state-run Jewish secondary schools, and most of the schools providing basic secular education for Jews. This “reform” was designed to encourage Jews to study “in regular Russian schools and universities,” although, beginning in 1887, a numerus clausus limited the number of Jews studying in Russian institutions of secondary and higher education.²⁷ Bramson argued that the closure of government-sponsored schools forced Jews to become much more involved in their own education, from establishing and funding their own schools to determining the curricula of Jewish and secular studies.

The validity of Bramson’s contention is reflected in the figures. By 1898–1900, there were 851 modern Jewish schools in Russia and the former kingdom of Poland (644 of them in the Pale of Settlement), with a total of 96,844 pupils. This was an increase of 355 percent in the number of schools and 354 percent in the number of pupils in contrast with 1880, when there had been only 187 schools and 21,308 pupils. During the same period, there was an increase of only 33 percent in the number of Jews in the overall population, from 4,000,000 to 5,300,000.²⁸

Although OPE deserves credit for its role in facilitating the expansion of modern Jewish education, its primary contribution was not the dispensation of subsidies: its

budget was too small to allow it to maintain any single school apart from the Berman school in St. Petersburg. More important by far was the organization's educational program, which came into its own with the creation of the School Commission in 1895.²⁹ A year earlier, OPE's statistical unit had prepared a lengthy questionnaire that was sent to more than 200 teachers, along with civic and religious leaders.³⁰ Some of the questions dealt with school buildings, teachers, curricula, textbooks, and salaries, whereas others reflected a broader focus on communities and their structure, the attitude of each community toward modern education, the relationship between government officials and the local Jewish population, and the possibility of community support. The information gleaned from responses to this questionnaire proved useful in defining the goals and strategies of the School Commission, whose activities in St. Petersburg were divided into two spheres: the creation of school materials, and aid to local activists.

In the *Handbook of Questions concerning Jewish Education*, OPE offered sample programs for four- and five-year elementary schools, giving a breakdown of how many hours should be spent on secular (as opposed to traditional Jewish) subjects and providing advice about, among other things, textbooks, teaching methodology, and school hygiene. In addition, there were sections devoted to the organization and proper administration of professional schools for artisans and farmers. Since government restrictions at the time prevented OPE from establishing its own schools,³¹ an entire section of the handbook was devoted to legal issues, providing not only a summary of the relevant statutes but also offering sample texts of petitions to open new schools.³² The handbook, it was stated, was the culmination of some six years of hard thinking about the needs of Jewish schools in the Pale.³³

In St. Petersburg, a pedagogical bureau set up by Bramson facilitated contacts between schools with available teaching positions and prospective teachers. More important, the School Commission sought to organize teacher training programs. Only in 1907 was OPE granted permission to establish its own teacher training college in Grodno; until then, the School Commission improvised, giving grants to promising high school graduates and creating pedagogical courses for students in Kiev, St. Petersburg, and Kovno. Because the need for teachers was so great, OPE even offered grants to traditional Jewish teachers of religious subjects (*melamdim*) in order to prepare them for state examinations, although most of the *melamdim* never took the exams.³⁴ In addition, in 1900, OPE entered into negotiations with the Prushim yeshiva in Kovno. This yeshiva was a "kollel" institution providing financial support for the families of the married men who studied there for three or four years; OPE offered to provide secular courses for those who would consider a career in teaching.³⁵ At about the same time, OPE took over the Talmud Torah in Grodno, which later became, in 1907, the OPE Institute for the Training of Teachers. In this school, prospective teachers were required to give practice lessons conducted in Russian, Yiddish, and Hebrew.³⁶

Under Bramson's supervision, the position of traveling inspector was created in 1900. An OPE representative traveled through the Pale of Settlement examining OPE-subsidized and other schools (including heders) and making suggestions for their improvement; the aim was to provide a bridge between the central organization in St. Petersburg and the communities of the Pale.³⁷ In the same spirit, local teachers and

Jewish leaders were invited to come to St. Petersburg for consultations in 1902, and summer courses were held for Jewish teachers in 1904 in Belaia Tserkov in Ukraine.³⁸

In defining the proper content of schools, in developing teacher training programs, and in assisting local activists in opening schools, OPE helped bring about both the expansion and the modernization of Jewish education. While it is hard to quantify such achievements, the establishment of dozens of local organizations devoted to Jewish education beginning in 1908 (when the government allowed such activities) testifies to OPE's influence.³⁹

Many OPE initiatives expressed specific Jewish concerns beyond that of setting up Jewish-sponsored schools. OPE's "ideal" school program (which was realized in the Berman school) devoted considerable time to traditional Jewish subjects. In the "preparatory" (first year) grade, for example, 16 weekly hours were devoted to Jewish subjects, including Hebrew language (six hours), Bible, translation of prayers, Jewish law, and Jewish history; in the higher grades, 13 weekly hours were devoted to Jewish subjects.⁴⁰

To be sure, the St. Petersburg branch of OPE refrained from explicitly championing "national" goals. In 1902, when the "ideal" school program was published, OPE in St. Petersburg simply noted, without further explanation, that it had decided to promote only those programs in which "Jewish subjects are given a comparatively large number of school hours and in which . . . the academic plan of the [Jewish] subjects mentioned is broader and fuller."⁴¹ Yet other modern Jewish elementary schools—including the schools subsidized by OPE in Odessa—devoted as little as two to five weekly hours to Jewish subjects. Dubnov, for his part, lauded the "national character" of the St. Petersburg school program in comparison with the "assimilationist" program of the Odessa OPE.⁴²

What impeded the creation of a truly national program at this time was the absence of a strategy for dealing with the traditional heder. At the 1902 meeting with provincial representatives held in St. Petersburg, opinions were divided on the subject. Some delegates supported OPE involvement in heder reform, but others were skeptical about the feasibility of undertaking such a large effort, especially given the organization's limited budget. In the end, the issue was left open, as OPE leaders (to their credit), did not wish to commit the organization to any program it could not carry out. Over the course of the decade, however, the necessity for reform became increasingly apparent, and by 1912, heder reform had become part of OPE's educational program.⁴³

Of course, not all of OPE's activities were successful. One failure in particular, involving the establishment of a school for artisans, illuminates the complicated attitude of the St. Petersburg School Commission toward Jews in the Pale. As noted, in 1896, OPE took control of the Berman elementary school in St. Petersburg. Opened in 1865, this school had served mainly the children of retired soldiers and so-called city dwellers (*meshchane*) rather than the children of merchants. Bramson wanted to expand the curriculum and create a special school for artisans, with classes devoted to metalwork, woodwork, and timber cutting for boys, and tailoring and embroidery for girls. Moreover, unhappy with the lack of space in the school, he proposed that the St. Petersburg Jewish community build a three-story building on the site next to

the main St. Petersburg synagogue, on Offitserkaia and Bol'shaia Masterskaia Streets. In 1894, Baron Horace Günzburg contributed 40,000 rubles to start the project.⁴⁴ By the time it was finished in 1908, the building—housing both the elementary and the artisan schools—had cost between 102,000 and 108,000 rubles. Providing the bulk of the money for the project were the leading 300 Jewish families in the capital.⁴⁵

Bramson's goal was to make the school a model for similar institutions to be established in the Pale. As noted, this school offered OPE's "ideal" five-year elementary school program—but Bramson wanted more. His plan was that, following graduation, students would be invited to begin their studies at the artisan school, whose program would be four years for boys and three years for girls.⁴⁶

By 1898, there were 457 pupils at the school, most of them studying free of charge. The five-year program was quite rigorous for its time, including courses in Hebrew, Jewish religion, biblical history, Russian language, arithmetic, Russian history, geography, natural history, penmanship, and singing. On the secondary level, matters were more complicated. Bramson was eager to encourage students from the Pale to earn a diploma from the artisan school because holders of a certificate of "skilled artisan" (*podmaster'e*) were allowed to live anywhere in Russia.⁴⁷ But why did future artisans first need to acquire a five-year general education? Who was interested in becoming an educated artisan? Certainly not the students who came from St. Petersburg, who were far more likely to continue in a Russian *gymnasium* or else take up better-paying employment. Artisans, after all, even skilled artisans, earned meager salaries of between 32 and 36 rubles a month, and also had a comparatively low social status.

Thus, it was mainly children from the Pale who wanted to attend the artisan school. This situation was problematic. For one thing, such children needed to obtain special exemptions in order to live in the capital, which took time and effort to arrange. In addition, they were not well prepared for the five-year general educational program that preceded the artisan program, and school trustees began to complain that they were having a negative influence on the other pupils.⁴⁸ Few of them, in any event, actually finished the elementary school program. In consequence, there were very few students in the artisan school: even in 1906, the year of peak enrollment, it had only 80 students, compared with 390 students in the elementary school.

Although the artisan school received a 9,800 ruble annual subsidy from the ICA, its costs were twice that amount. The deficits had to be covered by the regular school, but in 1904, the school administration decided to separate the two programs. No longer subsidizing the artisan school, the regular school could become financially solvent. The artisan program, however, was forced to close after 1906.

Bramson's idea of creating educated artisans turned out to be an expensive delusion, not least because there was little use for the excellence of craft that students gained in their training: given the enormous competition in the Pale and elsewhere, handicrafts had to be made quickly and often badly in order to bring any profit. But apart from being a chronicle of a failed experiment, the story of the St. Petersburg artisan school illuminates the condescension and resentment of the local trustees toward the "provincial" students. Such students, it was claimed, brought into the school a "foreign element" that could not but "reflect negatively on the pedagogical operation of our schooling."⁴⁹ Furthermore, the cost of providing for students from the Pale

“hardly answered the needs of the Petersburg Jewish population.”⁵⁰ Clearly the trustees saw their subsidy of the provincial students as a costly and not particularly beneficial act of philanthropy.

In their defense, it should be noted that OPE members in St. Petersburg had good reason to complain about their financial burden, as their local dues were used nearly exclusively for projects in the Pale. (All projects in St. Petersburg, including the OPE school, came from proceeds from fixed capital investments or from donations from the capital’s elite.) The community, moreover, had been contributing increasingly large sums in order to finance OPE’s expanded activities, as evidenced by the 41,000-ruble school bill for 1904. At the same time, the resentment expressed toward Jews from the Pale reveals that St. Petersburg activists considered provincials with some prejudice. Inevitably, philanthropy toward the Jews of the Pale bred a kind of patronizing condescension among the capital’s Jewish elite.

After serving for several years on the School Commission and as head of the OPE schools in St. Petersburg, Bramson resigned. “My health is significantly shaken after four and a half years of uninterrupted work in the school,” he wrote in 1904, “and with a feeling of genuine regret, I am forced to inform the Commission that I no longer consider myself capable, in such an exhausted condition, of carrying out those obligations placed upon me, obligations that demand fresh energy.”⁵¹ Nonetheless, as noted, he continued to play an active role in Jewish affairs, both retaining his position as secretary of the ICA and becoming, in the following year, a major leader of the Jewish Democratic Group.⁵²

Another institution that reflected changes in attitudes among the OPE leadership was the Historical Ethnographic Commission. Founded in 1891, this group was the forerunner of the famous Jewish Historical Ethnographic Society, which was established in St. Petersburg in 1908.⁵³ Although not as multifaceted and dynamic as the School Commission, the activities of the Historical Ethnographic Commission also displayed the turn toward a more assertive sense of Jewish identity that evolved among the St. Petersburg Jewish elite from the early 1890s to 1905. As Isaiah Trunk has noted: “Experience has shown that in the life of nations the growth of national feeling is always accompanied by the development of historiography.”⁵⁴

It is generally believed that the Historical Ethnographic Commission came about following publication of Dubnov’s celebrated essay of 1888, “On the Study of the History of Russian Jews and the Establishment of a Jewish Historical Society,” which inspired the members of the St. Petersburg OPE to begin meeting regularly to study Jewish history in Russia.⁵⁵ Maksim Vinaver promulgated this view in his famous memoir, “How We Studied History.”⁵⁶ The truth, however, is that the cultivation of historical study began as early as the initial formation of OPE, whose charter included the goal of encouraging the publication of historical studies in Hebrew and Russian; as early as 1866–1867, OPE put together its *Collection of Articles on Jewish Literature and History*.⁵⁷ This collection was held up for nearly four years by the government censor, who was hostile to research on the Jews in Russia.⁵⁸ In any event, the work’s intended readers—Jews who were both interested in history and fluent in Russian—hardly existed in Russian society of the 1860s.⁵⁹

Another not very successful early venture was the attempt to publish a history of

Russia in Hebrew. Unsatisfied with previous translations, OPE in 1869 commissioned Solomon Mandel'kern, then a student at St. Petersburg University, to produce a Hebrew-language history, complete with a section on the Jews in Russia, by the following year. In the end, three volumes were published, but only in 1875, six years after the original commission.⁶⁰ For several years, this experience acted as a damper on OPE's activities in the realm of scholarly publication.

In 1880, however, Avram (Alfred) Harkavi's request for funds to allow for the publication of historical studies was granted.⁶¹ Born in 1835, Harkavi belonged to the early generation of OPE leaders. A former student at the government-sponsored rabbinical seminary in Vilna (which also taught secular subjects), Harkavi enrolled in the Oriental studies department of St. Petersburg University in 1863 and eventually completed a doctorate there. He also taught at the university, but was forced to give up his position when he refused to convert to Christianity.⁶² Later, he worked as the director of the Oriental division of the St. Petersburg public library and, with the establishment of the Historical Ethnographic Commission, became its head.⁶³

Between 1880–1885, Harkavi was instrumental in publishing two volumes of documents collected by Sergei Bershadskii on the history of Lithuanian Jewry,⁶⁴ along with the fifth volume in Russian of Heinrich Graetz's *Volkstümliche Geschichte der Juden*. At the same time, Leon Rosenthal, a wealthy businessman who was one of OPE's original members, was active in facilitating the publication of works in Hebrew. In 1885, a commission was established to compile and publish *Haasif*, a collection of articles commemorating the centenary of Moses Mendelssohn's death. Toward the end of the 1880s, Rosenthal also published the two-volume Hebrew translation of OPE documents from the 1860s and 1870s (which, as will be recalled, prompted Dubnov's critical assessment of the organization's resembling "an aged invalid").⁶⁵

According to OPE archival records, the first proposal to create a Historical Ethnographic Commission was made in the OPE general meeting of 1887, when Harkavi suggested establishing a body for the "collection and study of material concerning the history of the Jewish people in general and Russian Jews in particular" as a means of honoring Heinrich Graetz on the occasion of his 70th birthday.⁶⁶ After drawing up a more detailed proposal, Harkavi received a 150-ruble allocation for the project.⁶⁷ Four years later, in the OPE report of 1891, pedagogical, legal, and economic arguments were advanced in support of the proposed commission. "One should acknowledge that the knowledge of the past fate of one's own people and a broad acquaintance with its past, especially in that country which for thousands of years was the fatherland for a large part of Jewry, is one of the main constituent parts of a genuine education," it was noted.⁶⁸ Therefore,

desiring to devote our weak forces to producing a scholarly literary service for Judaism, the individuals on the [attached] list . . . intend to publish a "Russian Jewish annual" (or a series of separate Jewish scholarly works). In addition to Jewish history, bibliography, and the like, we envision placing a compendium of facts and information in the annual that will deal with all questions concerning the condition of the Jews in Russia.⁶⁹

Although the annual was never published, the Historical Ethnographic Commission was officially launched in 1891. Two years later, in a talk before the general OPE

membership, Harkavy noted that “in all the corners of our country one cannot find a single work of scholarship, so that our two-thousand-year history [in Russia] lies untouched and unknown.”⁷⁰ The following year, in a lecture to OPE members titled “From the History of the Culture of Russian Jews,” such scholarship was put on display, as Harkavy drew attention to the history of Jewish book publishing in Eastern Europe from the 16th century onward. Using archival material that had been uncovered by members of the Historical Ethnographic Commission, he argued against the perception among enlightened Jews that East European Jewry at the time of the Khmelnytskyi uprising was culturally backward. In fact, Harkavy argued, both hasidic Jews in southwest Russia and in Poland and *mitnagdim* in Lithuania had been avid book publishers; documentation had been found for no fewer than 62 publishing houses:

I must add that [the compilation of] a full catalogue of Jewish books printed in our fatherland even during the most heated polemics . . . has proven to be profoundly instructive for the history of the cultural development of Russian Jews in connection with other issues. Such a catalogue bears witness to the fact that even in those God-forsaken shtetls, about which we are accustomed to thinking that no one could expect anything except darkness and fanaticism, intellectual work was carried on and books were published. [The catalogue] visually demonstrates that the Jews had spiritual interests everywhere and always, and that the need for knowledge, for understanding the essence of Judaism and the historical fate of the Jews, did not expire in Israel.⁷¹

Harkavy's valorization of Russian Jewish history may seem apologetic, but it is important to recall that most enlightened Jews were known to have profoundly negative feelings about both hasidim and *mitnagdim*. It took courage for Harkavy (standing before a group of people who had consciously broken away from the Pale and its religious and communal shackles) to claim that the world of the shtetl had its own unique culture that belonged to modern Jews as well, and that was therefore worthy of study. It is true that others, notably Dubnov, had come to the same conclusion.⁷² Nonetheless, this lecture given under OPE auspices signaled an attitude that would gain dominance in the following decade.

At least until 1881, elite, educated Jews viewed their identity in terms of acculturation into Russian society. They were generally loath to identify themselves with their poor brethren in the Pale, preferring to view themselves as part of a multinational Russian intelligentsia. Even among the few scholars of Judaism, studying the distant past was preferred. Trained as rabbinic scholars, they were at home in the Talmud; modern historical methods were foreign to them. And in any case, the documents for the study of modern Jewry were not yet available, most of them being located in the hands of individuals who did not understand their value. It was not until the 1890s that Jewish intellectuals such as Harkavy urged the study of Russia's Jewry as a means of legitimating the unique contribution of their own culture.⁷³

Under Harkavy's guidance, the Historical Ethnographic Commission set itself the goal of collecting and organizing material, found in Russian books and archives, on Russian Jewry. In 1893, members of the commission began work on a collection of laws and decrees relating to the Jews, which came out in three volumes between 1897 and 1903. Containing “more than 2,450 decrees and fragments from inscriptions, ma-

terials, and reports,” this work was meant to “help the scholar find his way in the maze of printed documentation.”⁷⁴

Such historical research appears to have galvanized the participants’ sense of Jewish identity. Many of them belonged to the highly acculturated St. Petersburg elite. Meeting in each other’s homes twice a month for more than a decade, they would read the acts and decrees they had prepared over the previous fortnight. Vinaver describes how participants competed with each other to find antisemitic expressions in the legal documents they researched:

One looking into the crowded room . . . would be amazed at the scene before him. Ten or fifteen people would appear, each with a packet of cards, which each took out of his pocket with pride, showing off the abundance of his catch. And the reading began. The unfortunates who had not succeeded in catching a single mention of the word *zhid* [in their documents] would look depressed and confused, and would ask everyone to take them at their word that they had indeed read through the fat tome—but alas, entirely in vain.⁷⁵

In addition to researching tsarist documents, the commission hosted between 10 and 12 lectures a year by members and invited guests. Since members were working mainly with official documents, many of the lectures reflected legal matters. For example, in 1897, Vinaver spoke on land ownership in the 15th and 16th centuries, and Vol’tke presented a paper on the condition of Jewish artisans. In 1900, Akiva Ettinger spoke about Jewish farmers in Bessarabia, while Katsenel’son spoke on religion and politics in the biblical period. Some of the members—themselves lawyers—found the work of the commission helpful in their own work, especially when they attempted to improve the legal condition of the Jews in appeals to the First Department of the Administrative Senate.⁷⁶ Except for Harkavy, none of the members of the commission were trained historians. Such lack of training, however, was typical of the time; even famous scholars such as Simon Dubnov, Iulii Gessen and Israel Tsinberg (who were also members of the commission) did not have a university degree in history.

Not surprisingly, the Historical Ethnographic Commission gave pride of place to earlier Russian Jewish intellectuals, creating as it were a pantheon of figures who embodied OPE’s newly evolving national values. Hagiographic accounts were presented on such national Jewish cultural figures as Osip Rabinovich, Judah Leib Gordon, and Isaac Baer Levinsohn.⁷⁷ But there were also talks on less well-known figures who also embodied nationalist thinking. In one talk, for instance, Katsenel’son spoke about the *maskilim* Kalman Shulman and Abraham Baer Gottlober. According to Katsenel’son, these two Hebrew writers from the 1840s–1880s had contributed to Russian Jewry by expressing skepticism about russification and secularization, fearing that modernized Jews were alienating the following generation from Judaism. Speaking about Gottlober—and himself—Katsenel’son noted:

More than anything else, the radical change in the education of the younger generation and the removal of the Jewish language [i.e., Hebrew] from the curriculum depressed him. And really, either we do not care a whit about Judaism or it is dear to us, and if we want to keep our children within the fold of our dear religion, then we should not neglect the cement that connects the future with the past, that is, language and literature. The short

instruction book [used in Jewish schools] about the Jewish religion in Hebrew is too pitiful an instrument in the struggle against the temptations awaiting our children. Being a Jew is sometimes a difficult act—moreover, it is not an act of a single minute, but chronic, one that lasts a long time. Whoever prepares his son for this kind of heroism must provide him with a strong shield against which all the arrows of temptation may be deflected. Such a shield can only be Jewish ethics, acquired from the living source of the nation's literature.⁷⁸

Katsenel'son's viewpoint, it appears, was the rule rather than the exception. As indicated in the records, members of the Historical Ethnographic Commission were more concerned about the loss of Jewish identity than about how to attain successful acculturation. Proposals to publish works of Jewish literature in Russian, for instance, were motivated by the argument that such works would help "restrain assimilation." Accordingly, during this period, OPE members proposed new translations into Russian of the Talmud and the Hebrew Bible, while at the same time making plans to publish a new textbook of Jewish history that would "make it easy for young Jews to become acquainted with the history of the Jews through the work of the best scholars, and also to become acquainted with the best literary monuments of ancient times."⁷⁹

Commission meetings that had begun in private apartments in the early 1890s became livelier and more disputatious by the end of the century. Vinaver writes that

with time we moved to our permanent home in that large, somewhat dark hall upstairs in the Jewish school. At first it was somewhat uncomfortable and empty; there were too few of us. But gradually the audience grew. A permanent contingent of listeners who filled the hall was formed, a permanent small circle came into being of individuals who constantly presented and discussed the presentations. Those who attended our meetings remember the heated arguments that took place, especially when Katsenel'son argued from history to defend the apolitical nature of the Jewish people and condemned to death every attempt at a political resurrection, or when someone, under the pretense of "ethnography," spoke about his trip to Palestine and defended the practical potential of the Zionist program.⁸⁰

As seen in Vinaver's account, in the years just prior to 1905, OPE served as a multifaceted venue for discussions among Jewish intellectuals of differing orientations about such issues as Zionist politics, national identity, and the role of Yiddish in education. In this sense OPE was exceptional among Jewish organizations, where hostility between various factions (for instance, Bundists versus Zionists) was the rule. In fact, OPE was a rare instance of a kind of national parliament without political power, a training ground for democratic rule and political organization. Decision-making in OPE was democratic; the leadership was elected by its members, and important decisions were often brought before the entire membership for consultation and confirmation.⁸¹ OPE's legacy proved valuable in 1905–1906, when the commitment to democratic principles was retained in subsequent political organizations such as the Jewish Democratic Group and the Union for the Achievement of Equal Rights for the Jews, both of which included a number of OPE members.⁸²

OPE's general political orientation was moderate, certainly to the right of the Bund. On its steering committee were so-called liberals, members of the Constitutional Democratic party, such as Vinaver, Genrik Sliozberg, and Gregory Landau; General Zionists such as Petr Marek, Mikhail Kreinin, and Boris Brutskus; and socialists such

as Bramson, Mark Ratner, and Maksim Krol'. Despite the general orientation toward the center, moderation did not necessarily prevail during 1905. During the early months of that year, OPE's membership debated what if any position the organization should take vis-à-vis the strikes and demands for political power that were being raised by various Russian organizations. Under the influence of Vinaver and Krol' (and against the advice of Baron Horace Günzburg), OPE sided with the Union of Unions in calling for the overthrow of the tsarist regime.⁸³ This spontaneous support for the revolutionary left evaporated after the October pogroms, and especially after the dissolution of the First Duma, when it became clear that the tsarist government had endured.

Although OPE in its later phases included Zionists and diaspora nationalists in its ranks, there remained room for confirmed integrationists such as Baron Horace Günzburg. Notwithstanding, as has been shown, a general pro-nationalist attitude took hold among many in the years before 1905. In addition to the assignment of many hours for Jewish subjects in OPE-supported schools and increased interest in Jewish history, increased national feeling was expressed in a greater respect for Yiddish, which was accepted as an official language of the society in 1906 and used as the language of instruction in OPE's teacher training school in Grodno.⁸⁴ In addition, there were signs of a more positive attitude toward the heders, which members began to view not so much as an incorrigible and embarrassing institution, but rather as the locus of many traditional virtues.⁸⁵

Given that OPE turned out to be politically "unreliable," it may seem puzzling that the government nonetheless allowed it to grow and develop in an autonomous fashion. The answer lies in the way OPE provided services for the Jewish community that the government itself ignored, such as the establishment of schools and teacher training programs, curriculum advice, and information about student hygiene and health.⁸⁶ To be sure, the government was prepared to deny OPE any activity it deemed threatening. For example, it refused to allow OPE to found a theological seminary in St. Petersburg to train modern rabbis, and it interfered with OPE's attempts to establish summer schools for Jewish teachers. Local authorities constantly harassed activists, and before 1908, as noted, OPE often found itself stymied in its attempts to create branches in various cities.

In its work in both the Historical Ethnographic Commission and the School Commission, OPE called for a strongly positive Jewish identity. Although it is difficult to distill a single attitude from among the many ideological orientations held by its leaders, one common position can probably be identified: a majority of OPE members appeared to repudiate the identity of "Russian Jew" (*russkii evrei*) and no longer imagined themselves, or hoped to become, members of the Russian nation. Rather, they considered themselves to be "Jews in Russia" (*evrei v Rossii*), composing an independent national group within the Russian state, similar to other ethnic minorities such as Poles, Ukrainians, and Latvians. Still committed in principle to the goal of integrating the Jews in Russia, these intellectuals now insisted on national rights in addition to individual rights, especially in the areas of school curriculum and programs for adult education, and the organization of museums, lectures, and cultural societies.

It is clear that OPE's activities between 1893 and 1905 revived the stagnant organization and made it one of the most important Jewish institutions in Russia. At the

same time, OPE served as an important model for later political struggles and social organizations among Russian Jews. The creation of organizational networks, the expansion of links with representatives from the Pale, and the sharing of resources and information created networks that later proved invaluable in other contexts. Such links, for example, were very useful in the development of Jewish political parties after 1905 and in facilitating aid for Jewish refugees during the First World War. Vinaver notes:

And it seems to me, when I remember the atmosphere of that large hall, when I remember the sonorous voices of the young section heads loudly declaiming the decrees from their notes, it seemed to me that our original consideration was not mistaken, that, with this peaceful activity, we prepared ourselves for wartime.⁸⁷

None of these activities would have taken place had there not been an explosion of energy among the St. Petersburg branch of OPE, whose members changed the face of their community—from one dominated by integrationist bankers and notables, to a nationally oriented cultural and organizational center of pre-First World War Russian Jewry.

Notes

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1. For a list of OPE's early members, see "Protokol obshchikh zasedanii chlenov OPE za 1863–1865," in the OPE archive in the State Historical Archive RGGA, St. Petersburg (hereafter: OPE), 1532/1/11, list 45; for the original charter, see *ibid.* 1532/1/1, lists 3–4; also see Elias Cherikover, *Istoriia Obshchestva dlia rasprostraneniia prosveshcheniia mezhdru evreiami v Rossii* (hereafter: *Istoriia OPE*) (St. Petersburg: 1913), 42.

2. On OPE in Odessa, see Peter W. Shaw, "The Odessa Jewish Community, 1855–1900: An Institutional History" (Ph.D. diss., The Hebrew University, 1988), 88–104.

3. Apart from the towns and cities already mentioned, OPE had branches—not all of them particularly active—in Balt, Bobrusk, Byelostok, Vilna, Voronezh, Homel, Dvinsk, El'ts, Elizavetgrad, Kazan, Kishinev, Kursk, Minsk, Mogilev, Orel, Perm, Pinsk, Slutsk, Taganrog, Tomsk, and Kharkov. See the annual report *Otchet Obshchestva dlia rasprostraneniia prosveshcheniia* (hereafter: *Otchet OPE*) (St. Petersburg: 1911), 11.

4. With initial membership dues of 25 rubles, OPE was for years controlled by Russian Jewry's wealthy elite. Over time, however, the dues were lowered, first to 10 rubles and eventually to three. Moreover, "intellectuals," including scholars, rabbis, editors, writers, and scientists, were given honorary membership and exempted from dues. "Trustees" were those who contributed at least 500 rubles a year, whereas "honored members" contributed at least 100 rubles annually. See Cherikover, *Istoriia OPE*, 45.

5. Among the works subsidized by OPE were Kalman Schulman's nine-volume history, *Divrei yemei 'olam* (1867–1884); an appendix on natural science (edited by Hayim Slonimskii), that appeared in the Hebrew weekly *Hameliz*; and selections from the Talmud.

6. See appendix to Cherikover, *Istoriia OPE*, 256. On attempts to improve elementary school education for Russian Jews in the 1860s, see Steven Zipperstein, "Transforming the Heder: Maskilic Politics in Imperial Russia," in *Jewish History: Essays in Honor of Chimen Abramsky*, ed. Ada Rapoport-Albert and Steven Zipperstein (London: 1988), 87–110.

7. See “Prosveshchenie evreev v Rossii,” in *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia: svod znaniĭ o evreiakh*, 16 vols. (St. Petersburg: 1907–1913), 13:50.

8. Previously, Jewish military veterans and those who had received a university degree had been given the right to live outside the Pale. On legislation concerning the Jews during Alexander II's reign, see Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: 2002), 23–44.

9. On Jewish students in modern educational institutions during the 1860s and 1870s, see “Prosveshchenie evreev v Rossii,” 49–50; see also Semion Krieze, “Batei sefer yehudiyim basafah harusit berusiyah hazarit,” (Ph.D. diss., The Hebrew University, 1994), 51–124. On tsarist discriminatory policies in the realm of Jewish education, see S. Solomon Pozner, *Evrei v obshchei shkole: k istorii zakonodatel'stva i pravitel'svennoi politiki v oblasti evreiskogo vo-prosa* (St. Petersburg: 1914), 77–134. For most, compulsory military service was five years, but there were shorter periods of service for individuals who had studied in a Russian school or university. See Yehudah Slutsky, “Takanon ḥovat haẓava hakelalit 1874 vehayehudim,” *He'avar* 21 (1975), 3–18, esp. 6. On the revised military regulations of 1873, see “Voennaia sluzhba v Rossii,” *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, 5:670–671.

10. Kritikus [Simon Dubnov], “Itogi ‘obshchestva prosveshcheniia evreev: literaturnaia letopis,’” *Voskhod* 10 (1891), 41.

11. In 1889, there were 740 members, compared with 557 in 1881. OPE expenditures rose from 27,832 rubles in 1883 to 41,000 rubles in 1889. See *Obshchestvo dlia rasprostraneniia prosveshcheniia mezhdū evreiami v Rossii* (hereafter: *OPE*) *za piat' desiat let (kratkii istoricheskii ocherk)* (St. Petersburg: 1913), 14.

12. *Ibid.*, 13.

13. The fund for schools began with 4,000 rubles, which was dispensed only to schools in which the Russian language was taught. See *OPE*, 1532/1/11, list 102–1–3. It is interesting to note that at about the same time (1892), Günzburg's bank went bankrupt following a rush by creditors. The Günzburgs, however, remained wealthy; they owned gold mines in Siberia, which at about this time produced sizable profits.

14. On Baron Günzburg's role in the budget, see *OPE za piat' desiat let*, 12. Although it has been asserted that Günzburg, occupied with business matters, left many decisions to assistants, both the memoirs of Saul Ginzburg and *OPE* protocols describe his continuous presence and decisive influence. See Shaul Gintsburg, “Di familiye Baron Gintsburg: drey doyles shtadlones, tsedoke un haskole,” in *idem*, *Historishe verk*, vol. 2 (New York: 1937), 143–144.

15. See *Otchet OPE za 1902* (St. Petersburg: 1903), 1. Although there appears to have been no “generation gap” between younger and more veteran members of *OPE*, the two groups did differ on other matters, notably concerning the Defense Bureau (Byuro zashchity), a Jewish vigilante group that was supported by many of the younger Jews, but not by Baron Günzburg. See Jacob Frumkin, “Iz istorii russkogo evreistva,” in *Kniga o russkom evreistve ot 1860-kh godov do revoliutsii 1917 g.*, ed. Jacob Frumkin, Gregor Aronson, and Alexis Goldenweiser (New York: 1968), 63; in English, *Russian Jewry (1860–1917)*, trans. Mirra Ginsburg (New York: 1966).

16. Kulisher's speech is found in *Protokol soveshchaniia komiteta obshchestva dlia rasprostraneniia prosveshcheniia mezhdū evreiami v Rossii s inogorodnymi chlenami 25–27 Dekabria 1902 g.* (St. Petersburg: 1903), 4.

17. *Otchet OPE za 1881/1893/1905–1906 g.* (St. Petersburg: 1882, 1894, 1907).

18. See Elias Cherikover, “Obshchestva dlia rasprostraneniia prosveshcheniia mezhdū evreiami v Rossii,” in *Evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, 13:61. Baron Günzburg was the head of the ICA office in St. Petersburg. On the relationship between the ICA and *OPE*, see Steven Rapaport, “Jewish Education and Jewish Culture in the Russian Empire, 1880–1914” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2000), 82–85, 100–102. Also see Gur Alroey's article, “Bureaucracy, Agents, and Swindlers: The Hardships of Jewish Emigration from the Pale of Settlement in the Early 20th Century,” in this volume, pp. 224–229.

19. On the St. Petersburg commissions, see *OPE* 1532, 1/182, list 71.

20. *Ibid.*, 1532/1/47, list 9.

21. My use of the word “national” reflects the way in which Russian Jewish liberals un-

derstood the concept: nearly identical with the idea of an autonomous area for Jewish endeavors, but referring as well to the struggle for civic rights for Jews. Liberals viewed the struggle for Jewish rights as “national” since Jews were particular victims of tsarist repression, such that the overthrow of the tsarist regime was expected to bring about the possibility of national renewal.

22. The Union for the Attainment of Equal Rights for the Jews (*Soiuz dlia dostizheniia polnopraviiia evreiskogo naroda v Rossii*) was a coalition of Jewish political parties (politically right of the Bund) that was established in 1905 with the aim of organizing an effective Jewish bloc in the First Duma. See Christoph Gassenschmidt, *Jewish Liberal Politics in Tsarist Russia: The Modernization of Russian Jewry* (New York: 1995), 22; Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862–1917* (Cambridge: 1981), 161–165.

23. For more on Bramson, see *Rossiiskaia evreiskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 1 (Moscow: 1994), 160–161.

24. In Russian, these works appeared as *Sbornik v pol’zu nachal’nykh evreiskikh shkol* (St. Petersburg: 1896); *Spravochnaia kniga po voprosam obrazovaniia evreev: posobie dlia uchitelei i uchitel’nits evreiskikh shkol i deiatelei po narodnomu obrazovaniuu* (St. Petersburg: 1901); and *Sbornik ob ekonomicheskome polozenii evreev v Rossii* (St. Petersburg: 1904).

25. Bramson’s talk on Morgulis was later published as *Obshchestvenno-kul’turnaia deiatel’nost’ M.G. Morgulisa* (St. Petersburg: 1912).

26. Leontii Moiseevich Bramson, “K istorii nachal’nogo obrazovaniia evreev v Rossii,” in *Sbornik v pol’zu nachal’nykh evreiskikh shkol*, 280, 324.

27. For the government’s explanation of the reform, see “Izvlechenie iz ob’iasnitel’nykh svedenii k polozeniiam o evreiskikh nachal’nykh uchilishchakh i o evreiskikh uchitel’nykh institutakh,” in *Vestnik russkikh evreev* 20–21 (1873), 618. Members of the russified Jewish intelligentsia were pleased that, as a result of the reform, Jews would finally leave the “dark corners” of the shtetl and enter Russian educational institutions. See Il’ya Trotskii, “Evrei v russkoi shkole,” in *Kniga o russkom evreistve*, 355.

28. See Rappaport, “Jewish Education and Jewish Culture in the Russian Empire,” 52. In this fine work, Rappaport comes to his conclusion after comparing a variety of statistical sources; the information he acquired through much hard work has significantly eased my own research on the organizational history of OPE.

29. The first description of a “School Commission” is found in the report of the society from 1895. In earlier reports, we find language such as “activity in elementary education.” See *Otchet OPE za 1895* (St. Petersburg: 1896).

30. *Ibid.*, 38–40.

31. One of the first charters sent by OPE leaders to the government in the early 1860s included a provision that the organization be allowed to open its own schools. The government rejected this demand; as a result, most Jewish-run schools were privately owned and received a subsidy from OPE. Only in 1908 was OPE granted the right to open its own schools. See Cherikover, *Istoriia OPE*, 41.

32. *Spravochnaia kniga po voprosam obrazovaniia evreev*, 17–20.

33. *Ibid.*, iii.

34. See *Otchet OPE za 1894*, 29–30.

35. OPE, 1532/1/214, lists 11–16. Negotiations broke down when agreement could not be reached concerning the number of hours of secular studies to be offered, the extent of OPE’s financial contribution, and the organization’s intention in making its offer. On the Prushim yeshiva, see the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: 1972), 16:769.

36. OPE, 1532/1/493, list 23.

37. Among the inspectors were such illustrious individuals as Dr. F. Lerner, Pavel Marek, and Chaim Fialkov. A portrait of the last individual can be found in Hirsz Abramowicz, *Profiles of a Lost World: Memoirs of East European Jewish Life before World War II*, ed. Dina Abramowicz and Jeffrey Shandler, trans. Eva Zeitlin Dobkin (Detroit: 1999), 126–131.

38. See Kulisher’s speech welcoming guests to the 1902 convention, published in *Protokol soveshchaniia komiteta OPE*, 4–5.

39. One can obtain a good picture of the intense activity of Jewish society in the “chronicle” section of every issue of the *Vestnik obshchestra rasprostraneniia proveshcheniia mezhduevreiami*, which began publishing in November 1910.

40. See *Spravochnaia kniga po voprosam obrazovaniia evreev*, 121–125.

41. *Ibid.*, 121.

42. Simon Dubnov, “O natsional’nom vospitanii: pis’ma o starom i novem evreistve,” *Knizhki voskhoda* 1 (Jan. 1902), 94. Dubnov undoubtedly took the opportunity here to attack leaders of the Odessa branch of OPE, whom he hoped to overthrow in upcoming elections. Nonetheless, he sincerely admired Bramson’s efforts.

43. See the OPE-sponsored pamphlet *Sovremennyi kheder po obsledovaniiu obshchestva dlia rasprostraneniia proveshcheniia v 1912* (St. Petersburg: 1912), 3–5.

44. See “K istorii St. Peterburgskikh evreiskikh uchilishch,” in archive of L. M. Bramson, the Central Historical Archive of URSR in Kiev, 992/2/5, list 95.

45. *Ibid.*, list 19.

46. According to Bramson, this would be “three schools in one.” *Ibid.*, list 14.

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.*, list 123.

49. *Ibid.*

50. *Ibid.*, list 50.

51. *Ibid.*, list 78.

52. The Jewish Democratic Group (*Evreiskaia demokraticheskaia gruppa*), established in 1907, was a successor to the Union for the Attainment of Equal Rights for the Jews. It was politically left of Dubnov’s Jewish People’s Group (*Evreiskaia narodnaia gruppa*), especially in its commitment to social justice.

53. Dubnov describes the significance of the OPE commission in the later creation of the Jewish Historical Ethnographic Society in his article “Uchreditel’noe sobranie i publichnye zasedaniia evreiskogo istoriko-etnograficheskogo obshchestva,” *Evreiskaia starina* 1 (1909), 158. This article was first presented as a lecture at the organization’s first meeting on November 16, 1908.

54. Isaiah Trunk, “Istoriki russkogo evreistva,” in *Kniga o russkom evreistve*, 21.

55. Dubnov’s essay was published as a pamphlet, *Ob izuchenii istorii russkikh evreev i ob uchrezhdenii russo-evreiskogo istoricheskogo obshchestva* (St. Petersburg: 1891).

56. See Maksim Vinaver, “Kak my zanimalis’ istoriei,” in *Evrei v rossisskoi imperii XVIII-XIX vekov: sbornik trudov evreiskikh istorikov*, ed. Aleksandr Lokshin (Jerusalem: 1995), 63–72; originally published in *Evreiskaia starina* 1 (1909), 41–45. Vinaver also credits the lawyer A. Abraham Passover, both for his idea of publishing a volume about tsarist legislation on the Jews and for organizing various lawyers and assistants to engage in historical research. At the first meeting of the Historical Ethnographic Commission, Vinaver recalled, the tasks were divided into eleven areas, although he could remember only eight of them (historical, judicial, economic, literary, internal life of the Jews and schooling, physical life, medicine, and emigration). Only the historical and economic areas of study were eventually pursued.

57. In Russian, the two-volume work was titled *Sbornik statei po evreiskoi istorii i literature, izdavaemyi obshchestvom dlia rasprostraneniia proveshcheniia mezhduevreiami v Rossii* (St. Petersburg: 1866–1877). For a good summary of OPE’s early approach to aiding historical research, see Shmuel Feiner, *Haskalah and History: The Emergence of a Modern Jewish Historical Consciousness*, trans. Chaya Naor and Sondra Silverston (Portland: 2002), 209–210, 243–244.

58. See Cherikover, *Istoriia OPE*, 81–82.

59. Letter from Lev Levanda to Isaac Zal’kind, cited in Alfred Landau, “Iz perepiski L. Levandy,” *Evreiskaia biblioteka*, vol. 9 (St. Petersburg: 1901), 56.

60. See Feiner, *Haskalah and History*, 215–216; according to Feiner, it took more than a decade for the project to come to fruition.

61. See *OPE za piat’desiat let*, 12. The unknown author of this work claims that Harkavy established a Historical Commission in 1881, but I have found no documents confirming this assertion.

62. See "Avram (Al'bert) Iakovlevich Garkavi," *Evreiskaiia entsiklopediia*, 6:180.
63. A festschrift to honor Harkavy's work was published in 1908, *Festschrift zu ehren Dr. A. Harkavy. Aus Anlass seines am 20 November 1905 vollendeten siebzigsten Lebensjahres*, ed. David Günzburg (St. Petersburg: 1908; rpt. 1980).
64. Three volumes were ultimately published as *Russko-evreiskii arkhiv* (St. Petersburg: 1882, 1884, 1908). The first two volumes had the same subtitle: *Dokumenty i regesty k istorii litovskikh evreev*; the third volume was subtitled *Dokumenty k istorii pol'skikh litovskikh evreev*.
65. See *Otchet OPE za 1885* (St. Petersburg: 1886), 5; Leon Rosenthal (ed.), *Toledot hevrat marbei haskalah beyisrael beerez rusiyah*, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg: 1886–1890).
66. See *Otchet OPE za 1887* (St. Petersburg: 1888), 6.
67. See *Otchet OPE za 1888* (St. Petersburg: 1889), 7.
68. Harkavy claimed that the Jewish community in Russia was thousands of years old, established "by Jews who migrated from the region of the Black Sea and Caucasus, where their ancestors had settled after the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles." See *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 7:1342. Harkavy's theory is fully expressed in his book *O iazyke evreev i o slavianskikh slovakh, vestrechaemykh u evreiskikh pisatelei* (St. Petersburg: 1865).
69. *OPE 1532*, 1/35, list 1.
70. See *Otchet OPE za 1893*, 53. Harkavy, however, acknowledged the fine work of historians on Polish Jewry, which he said revealed an even starker contrast with the lack of such work on Russian Jewry.
71. Avram Harkavy, "Iz istorii kul'tury russkikh evreev," in *Sbornik v pol'zu nachal'nykh evreiskikh shkol*, 108.
72. An early sympathetic portrayal of Hasidism is already found in Eliezer Zweifel's book, *Shalom 'al yisrael* (Zhitomir: 1868). Dubnov's article is titled "Vozniknovenie khasidizma," *Voskhod* 3–4, 6–7 (1888).
73. Dubnov stresses this point in his long essay "Istoriograf evreistva: Geinrikh Grets, ego zhizn' i trudy," *Voskhod* 8 (1892), 36–38.
74. *Registy nadpisi: svod materialov dlia istorii evreev v Rossii*, 3 vols. (St. Petersburg: 1897, 1901, 1903); the latter two volumes were later published by the Jewish Historical Ethnographic Society as one volume in 1908. The quote is from Trunk, "Istoriki russkogo evreistva," 21.
75. Vinaver, "Kak my zanimalis' istoriei," 70.
76. On the relationship between the legal and historical professions among Russian Jews, see Benjamin Nathans, "Conflict, Community and the Jews of Nineteenth-Century St. Petersburg," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Osteuropas* 44 (1996), 103–105. Known in Russian as the Pervyi department pravitel'stviushchego senata, the First Department of the Administrative Senate was the administrative arm of the tsarist bureaucracy. According to Genrik (Henry) Sliozberg, a Jewish lawyer, petitions in defense of Jewish interests found a good deal of sympathy there. See Sliozberg, *Dela minuvshikh dnei: zapiski russkogo evreia*, 3 vols. (Paris: 1933), 2:1–2, *passim*.
77. The talks were given, respectively, by Iulii Gessen, Baron David Günzburg, and Saul Ginzburg.
78. *Otchet OPE za 1898* (St. Petersburg: 1899), 37–38.
79. *Ibid.*, 22.
80. Vinaver, "Kak my zanimalis' istoriei," 74–75.
81. For many years, it is true, the St. Petersburg branch dominated the organization. General meetings took place in the capital city, their agendas set by the Steering Committee. On occasion, the Steering Committee refused to acknowledge demands for greater responsiveness on the part of the provincial rank-and-file. In time, however, there was an increase in the number of debates held at general meetings and in the number of issues brought to a floor vote.
82. Apart from Bramson (whose role has already been mentioned), Vinaver, Dubnov, and Sliozberg were also members of the Jewish Democratic Group and the Union for the Achievement of Equal Rights for the Jews. For more on these groups, see Gassenschmidt, *Jewish Liberal Politics in Tsarist Russia*, esp. 49–54.

83. A copy of the proclamation accepted by OPE members and published in the newspaper *Rus'*, no. 53 (27 Feb. 1905) can be found in OPE 1532/1/422, list 32.

The Union of Unions (Soiuz soiuzov) was formed in late 1904 by members of the Union of Liberation party. It was envisioned to be "the organization of the professorate, as well as of doctors, lawyers, engineers" and other professionals. See Samuel Kassow, *Students, Professors, and the State in Tsarist Russia* (Berkeley: 1989), 219.

84. See Il'ya Trotskii, "Samodeiatel'nost' i samopomoshch' russkogo evreistva," in *Kniga o russkom evreistve*, 535. For a list of subjects in which applicants for the program had to be proficient, see "Protokol zasedaniia kommissii po narodnomu obrazovaniiu pri komitete obshchestva dlia rasprostraneniia prosveshcheniia," in the archive of the Vernadsky Ukrainian State Library, Near Eastern division, 321/3/2027.

85. Although the 1902 meeting of provincial leaders of OPE had decided that the task of reforming the heder was financially and pedagogically unfeasible, many of them complimented the institution. Lev Katsenel'son, for instance, noted that

the substitution of all heders for correctly organized schools would demand such enormous costs that it would not be feasible for any nation. The strength of the traditional heder lies precisely in its simple arrangement and low cost. . . . On the other hand, the modern school, which has brought much good to the Jewish people, leaves much to be desired in the area of Jewish teaching. Such masters of Hebrew, which the heder produced, the modern school has so far not produced.

A full transcript of this meeting is found in OPE, 1532/1/20, list 58; an abridged transcript was published as *Protokol soveshchaniia komiteta OPE* (see n. 16).

86. A similar argument concerning the zemstvos and their role in Russian society can be found in Thomas Fallows, "The Zemstvo and the Bureaucracy," in *The Zemstvo in Russia: An Experiment in Local Self-Government*, ed. Terence Emmons and Wayne S. Vucinich (Cambridge: 1982), 177–241. Fallows makes a useful distinction between the "political" and "administrative" functions of the zemstvo, which apply to any other quasi- or fully independent social institution in tsarist Russia.

87. Vinaver, "Kak my zanimalis' istoriei," 76.

Bureaucracy, Agents, and Swindlers: The Hardships of Jewish Emigration from the Pale of Settlement in the Early 20th Century

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On a March day in 1912, an eight-year old boy named Leon Kaplan approached the information bureau of the Jewish Colonization Association (ICA) in his hometown of Odessa and asked the local representative for financial assistance so that he could join his parents in New York. Why his parents left him behind is unclear; probably bureaucratic obstacles or an eye ailment forced them to leave him temporarily with relatives in Odessa. Because Leon already had the ticket for his passage, the representative gave him 13 rubles to cover the cost of a train ride from Odessa to the port of Libau (Liepaja). Of this sum, 11.40 rubles were for the actual train ticket and the rest for food and drink on the long, wearying journey across the Pale of Settlement from south to north. Leon reached Libau in early April, and a few days later he boarded the *Lituania*, owned by the Russian American Line, and sailed to New York. On April 16, the ship docked at Ellis Island, where his mother was waiting to bring him to his new home in America.¹

In going to America, little Leon unwittingly became a participant in one of the most significant phenomena in modern Jewish history. More than 1.5 million Jews migrated overseas from Eastern Europe from the start of the 20th century until the outbreak of the First World War, seeking to flee from the unbearably harsh conditions that were their lot. Behind the impressive numbers lie the individual migrants—whether heads of households or single people—whose personal distress prompted them to leave their familiar surroundings and seek a better future in the democratic, liberal countries of the West.

Mass emigration from tsarist Russia, the result of economic misery and antisemitism, actually began in the 1880s. Jewish emigrants left Eastern Europe in three waves: the first beginning in 1881, the second in 1890, and the third in 1904. The third wave was the largest and most significant of the three: from the start of the 20th century until the outbreak of the First World War, 1.2 million Jews moved to the United States—fully 70 percent of the total Jewish immigration to America from 1880 onward.

The third wave of emigration began in the wake of the Kishinev pogrom of April 1903. In contrast to the pogroms of 1881–1882, which had been characterized mainly by property damage, the Kishinev pogrom and those that followed exacted a heavy toll in loss of life. Forty-seven Jews were killed in Kishinev in 1903. In Zhitomir, 29 Jews were killed in 1905; that same year, close to 100 were killed in Kiev; and on October 18, 1906, some 800 were killed in Odessa.² Between 1903 and 1907, more than 600,000 Jews left Russia for the United States. Emigration exceeded 100,000 in 1904, and in 1906—a record-breaking year in terms of Jewish emigration—more than 150,000 Jews headed for the United States.³ The number of emigrants during those years was even greater, of course, since hundreds of thousands more left for Argentina, South Africa, Australia, and Palestine. Moreover, there were many people who began the emigration process but, in the end, remained in Europe because of bureaucratic or financial difficulties.

The story of the Koheles family is typical. In November 1912, David Koheles wrote to the information bureau of the Palestine Office in Jaffa, setting out the difficulties faced by his family and the family's intense desire to emigrate to any place that would offer a more secure future.⁴ The family consisted of ten persons: the mother and father (both 53 years old), six sons, and two daughters. David, the eldest son, was 27 years old, a graduate of "pedagogic courses" who directed a Jewish school in the Mohilev province. The second-eldest son had completed three years of military service and now, together with a younger brother, worked for a village dealer in lumber. The two brothers earned a total of 25 rubles a month. "It is essential to add," Koheles wrote, "that these last two were shoemakers until recently and knew the work thoroughly; they left it only about three years ago because it does not provide a livelihood."

The youngest son, aged 8, went to school. Of the remaining children, two sons aged 17 and 15 had no occupation and, like their two younger sisters (aged 12 and 6), stayed home. "The father of the family is a shoemaker whose craft brings in only a scant income, and even this with great difficulty, because of the large number of artisans and also the tremendous competition among them," Koheles added. The family had lived in poverty for many years, "finding their sustenance with difficulty, because their children were young. Only recently, after the children have grown older and have started helping with their collective capabilities, have things started to improve." It was hard for the family to earn a livelihood near their original place of residence, and they had moved to a small village, Zaharin, in the province of Mohilev. There they leased a small parcel of land, grew vegetables for subsistence, and worked as small traders. Like many other poor Jewish families in the Pale of Settlement, the Koheles family also experienced the open hatred of local farmers.

"Members of the family are decent and honest, and the siblings have very good relationships with one another, without any differences of opinion," Koheles wrote. Moreover,

[a]ll the family members are hardworking and agile, adapt to all kinds of work, and do not abhor any kind of work, so long as it brings in an income. And even though the family has a livelihood, albeit obtained with difficulty, they are not content, and their present situation is that any eventuality and disaster is expected, and it is impossible to provide for the future. The family has no solid ground under its feet, and their lives are hanging

in the balance at a time when you are entirely dependent on the landowner, who has the power to evict you at any moment. They are forced to suffer insults from the village farmers and to flatter them at a time when you bleed at the sight of their cruelty.

After describing his family's composition, financial situation, and attempts at survival in the face of the economic and social difficulties characteristic of the period and the area in which they lived, Koheles came to a somewhat hesitant conclusion:

In light of all this, it occurred to the family to leave this country and to set their sights on a different country that would be kinder to them. We, the family members, know that it will not be easy to achieve our goal, but we are relying on our strength [so that], after much hard work, we will succeed. We do not aspire to a life of luxury, and we are not seeking easy jobs. We only yearn for a quiet, satisfying life. We are not dreamers but rather are prepared to make sacrifices, provided that our future will eventually be secure and firm, and that the ground will not collapse under our feet.

If the whole family would be unable to emigrate together at one time, Koheles wrote:

we have decided that the older sons should emigrate first—the second- and third-eldest, and myself—and that the rest of the family will come later. Our family capital stands at approximately 800 rubles If possible, your opinion on this matter would help us make a decision [whether to emigrate to Palestine] and to settle on the land or in some town, [or whether] we would be better off setting our sights on another country, because the living conditions in Palestine are not suitable for us. We feel that we will not fail and will not ruin our position, which is shaky in any event. Please reply without delay. Respectfully yours, on behalf of the entire family, D. Koheles.

The situation of the Koheles family was emblematic of the economic and political reality of East European Jewry at this time. At the beginning of the 20th century, tsarist Russia was home to more than five million Jews, about half of the Jewish people as a whole. Ninety percent of them lived within the Pale of Settlement (the Lithuanian, White Russian, and Ukrainian lands), and in the former kingdom of Poland. With some exceptions, Jews were forbidden by law to leave those designated areas and at times were even forbidden to settle in some of its cities (such as Kiev). Their economic and political status was extremely unstable, and restrictions on their freedom of movement made the situation even more difficult. The tsarist regime frequently declared changes in the defined borders of the Pale, which resulted in a continual sense of insecurity among the Jews, who never knew if they would have to pack their belongings and move elsewhere. More than 75 percent of the Jewish population were concentrated in the larger cities of the Pale, where the majority were employed as small tradesmen and craftsmen.⁵

This economic reality, together with the impact of pogroms and state persecution, caused the Koheles family and many like them to consider emigration. The family was aware of the dangers involved in moving to a new country, and they therefore waited for a response from Arthur Ruppin, the head of the Palestine Office. For them, Palestine was only one option; if not able to settle there, the family was willing to look elsewhere. Indeed, the vast majority of emigrants, as indicated, chose as their country of destination the United States, which in 1912 was still accepting multitudes of European immigrants.

The Bureaucracy of Emigration

After successfully negotiating the difficulties of deciding where and when to emigrate, a family had to liquidate its small business (if it had any), sell whatever property it could not take along, travel to the closest railway station and, from there, continue to a port of embarkation and a ship that would transport family members to their country of choice. A gauntlet of bureaucratic procedures also had to be negotiated, ranging from obtaining a passport from the Russian government, to purchasing rail and ship tickets, to passing medical examinations before being able to board ship. During this excruciating process, emigrants would often encounter questionable and unpleasant characters who would try to exploit their general condition of disorientation, take advantage of them, and steal their money.⁶

Acquiring Passports

Acquiring a passport was one of the most difficult and complex tasks. Russian laws at that time were not effectively adapted to emigration, and regulations differed from region to region. This sometimes led to unsolvable complications and served as opportunities for corruption and unplanned (and often unnecessary) expenditures.

Potential emigrants had first to produce a number of documents, including an identity card and a statement from the police affirming that there was no legal reason to prevent their departure. Male emigrants between the ages of 18 and 21 had to provide proof that they were exempt from the draft or had served their term of military service.⁷ Acquisition of the required documents was itself problematic. Many emigrants were not registered in their places of residence and therefore had no identity card; to acquire one, they had to apply to the municipality in which they were registered, regardless of the distance from their actual place of residence. In other cases, those who possessed identity cards discovered that these were no longer valid, or else did not list other family members. It was only in October 1906 that the law was amended to allow citizens anywhere in the Pale of Settlement to obtain a permanent identity card (with no expiration date) and a passport for themselves and for their families—assuming that they produced all the other required documentation. This amended law, however, was published only in Russian, and because it was disseminated unevenly throughout the Pale, many Jews continued to apply for identity cards according to the old system.

Emigrants could receive a “certificate of probity” from the police only after presenting an identity card, and only if no complaints had been lodged against them or members of their family. All remaining documents that were necessary for the acquisition of a passport were provided at the police station once this certificate had been obtained. Passports listed all family members regardless of age, including wives, children, relatives, and even servants, if the family had any. In cases in which all family members were listed on an identity card, the process was relatively uncomplicated. But when wives and children were not listed, emigrants had to produce their children’s birth certificates, as well as witnesses acquainted with their spouses and children. Because it was standard practice in small towns to record wives and children in communal record books rather than on identity cards, many emigrants had trouble acquiring the necessary documentation.⁸

In the event that her husband had proceeded her to the new country—a common occurrence—the wife faced even greater difficulties in getting a passport. Russian law permitted women to obtain passports only with their husband's authorization. However, many household heads emigrated without leaving their wives a separate passport or a notarized authorization. The problem could be resolved if the husband sent a notarized request for his wife and children to join him. Such a declaration had to be signed by the Russian consul closest to the husband's residence. A second, and often simpler, solution was for the woman to declare to the police that her husband had disappeared. After a short investigation to verify her story, the police would issue a document authorizing her declaration, and she would then be eligible to receive a passport from the governor of the district.⁹

For a potential emigrant unable to produce all of the necessary documents, the bureaucratic difficulties of acquiring a passport were virtually insurmountable. Separate community population records, internal migration, and the resulting distance from the original registration offices, women lacking power of attorney from their husbands, and all the difficulties involved in dealing with the Russian bureaucracy were factors that led emigrants to seek alternative—illegal—means of leaving the country. In so doing, they exposed themselves to a variety of thieves and swindlers who took advantage of their desperate and hazardous situation.

Obtaining Passage Tickets

Seven main ports of departure served the emigrants of this period: Odessa, Hamburg, Bremen, Antwerp, Rotterdam, and Liverpool, and (from 1905), Libau (now Liepaja) on the Baltic Sea. Of the seven cities, Libau was the most convenient for Russian emigrants, since they did not need to cross any international borders to reach it. In contrast to other ports, however, where passports were not required during this period, an emigrant reaching Libau without a passport could not board ship. So, despite the great advantage of easy access to Libau, many emigrants chose to steal across the border under cover of darkness in order to reach other departure points.

Passage to New York from Bremen, Hamburg, Rotterdam, and Antwerp cost 72–73 rubles. For infants under the age of one year, the cost was 5 rubles, while children under the age of 12 paid half-price. Passage from England was less expensive, with a ticket from Liverpool to Philadelphia costing only 65 rubles. The expense of reaching the port itself, however, was much greater. Passage from Libau to New York cost 70 rubles per adult, with infants traveling for 5 rubles and children under 12 traveling half price.¹⁰ The cost for a family of six—a father, mother, and four children—was therefore very expensive, reaching 220–230 rubles, not including train fare and food during the long journey. In real terms, this was an extremely large expenditure for a family earning a livelihood from crafts and small trade, which brought in an annual income of no more than 500 to 600 rubles.¹¹

In order to overcome this financial obstacle, families would often send the head of the household or an older son or other relative to the country of destination ahead of the others. After becoming established there, this relative would send “prepaid” tickets to other family members.¹² The problem with this kind of ticket was that fraud was rampant: the market was full of counterfeit tickets purchased, unknowingly, by

the new immigrants.¹³ Back in Europe, their families often discovered the fraud only upon arriving at a port and finding themselves refused a place on board ship, whereupon they were left helpless and empty-handed in a foreign country.

In other instances, prepaid tickets were purchased in installments from travel companies and were sent to relatives before the balance had been paid in full. If the balance remained unpaid, the company would of course not honor the tickets, and emigrants might find themselves waiting in one of the port cities until the full sum had been paid.¹⁴ Such delays could last many weeks, during which time the families' financial resources would be further depleted. Emigrants could also purchase tickets directly from the various ship company offices located throughout the Pale of Settlement and at the ports of departure. Another possibility was to purchase through an agency that acted as a middleman between the emigrants and the ship company (introducing, again, the possibility of corruption). Payment was usually made in installments following an initial down payment. The names and ages of all passengers were recorded, and final payment would be paid at the port, where the company was committed to place the emigrants on the first ship leaving for their chosen destination.¹⁵

Health Examination

A law passed in the United States in 1882 prohibited the entrance of poor or sick immigrants and obligated ship companies to return unwanted immigrants to their ports of origin, at the companies' expense. The companies quickly concluded that it would be worthwhile to give emigrants a medical examination before they came on board.¹⁶ Emigrants with sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis, or skin or eye diseases such as trachoma were not permitted to leave the border station or board a ship. Emigrants with other disabilities were also refused: the lame, the blind, the deaf, and hunchbacks. Efforts were also made to prevent passage to thieves and other criminals, prostitutes, and "white slave" traders.¹⁷

Conditions at the border terminals were extremely harsh, and emigrants were obliged to wait extended periods of time for the required medical examinations and, afterwards, for the train to the port. Until 1904, many emigrants were refused entry into Germany because the authorities feared that they would spread disease in their cities. From the beginning of 1904, the authorities decided to allow emigrants who had purchased tickets from German ship companies to enter Germany without difficulties or delays at the border crossings. All others, however, including those with prepaid tickets from non-German ship companies, were denied entry altogether and were forced to take alternative routes to the ports of England, Belgium, and Holland.¹⁸

"Swindling Agents"

*Agents of all types—secret officials and officials who own companies, and all kinds of helpers. They sprout up like fungi and cover all localities in the country. Every city has its own agents, as does every town. And cities and towns have not just one agent but rather entire groups of agents who compete, fight, struggle, target, and inform on one another. . . .*¹⁹

As has been seen, for many would-be emigrants, the bureaucratic processes (especially that of acquiring a Russian passport) were impossible to complete. Unclear and contradictory procedures, a closed-minded and arbitrary attitude on the part of officials, and general corruption often doomed a family's efforts to emigrate legally. Therefore, many people sought illegal ways to circumvent the bureaucracy. In response to this need, a new line of work evolved—that of “emigration agents.” These agents were presumably familiar with the mysteries of the emigration process and, for a suitable fee, would promise to solve the emigrants' problems.

Not surprisingly, thieves and swindlers of various kinds often presented themselves as travel agents, taking advantage of innocent people by offering them false promises, and sometimes putting them at grave risk to their lives. These “swindling agents,” known as *agenten shvindler* or *gehayme* (lit. “secret”) *agenten*, constituted a major source of trouble for potential emigrants.

To be fair, many emigration agents were in fact authorized representatives of ship companies who earned an honest living from their work. “Swindling agents” belonged to a different category that included various kinds of “shlemazels,” unemployed traders, wagon drivers, and beggars—alongside petty criminals, white-slave traders, and professional smugglers.²⁰ According to a report that appeared in *Haze-man*, a Hebrew newspaper published in Vilna (Vilnius):

The agents' fraud and deceit regarding preparation of documents for traveling abroad is especially great. Ninety percent of emigrants, if not more, do not know how to prepare these documents for themselves and are frightened to do so. Residents of small cities and towns, and frequently poor urban dwellers, imagine that the process of preparing travel documents is difficult and complex, involving hard work. For this reason, they turn for help to the “omnipotent” agent offering them his assistance. . . .²¹

The most popular form of fraud carried out by the *agenten shvindler* involved issuing a single passport that listed a number of people with no familial relationship to one another. This type of fraud was possible because of a Russian law that allowed the registration of an unlimited number of immediate and distant family members on one passport. Unscrupulous agents, however,

take it upon themselves to prepare the travel papers, but instead of preparing papers for each individual traveler or family, as they had promised and for which they were paid, [they] turn unrelated, distant individuals into one large “family” and arrange for one mutual travel document for everyone. In this way, they make tens of rubles on the side.²²

After obtaining such a passport and setting out on his way, it became evident that “an emigrant cannot move or lift a limb without his new parents, brothers, sisters, and wife and children who were born unto him with the help of the agent, the ‘maker of wonders.’”²³ Such limited mobility often led to arguments and disputes. One part of the group, for example, might wish to spend another day at one of the stops along the way while the others wished to continue. Even greater difficulties awaited them at the port, during the medical examinations carried out prior to boarding the ship:

Here [in the port city], they believe that they have already passed the seven circles of hell and that they can travel on without being disturbed. But this is not the case. When it suddenly becomes known that a member of the large family is unable to travel because of an eye disease or some other illness, all the 12 or 15 others must either stay there or return

home. If one family member listed on the travel document cannot travel because of illness, then, according to law, the whole family cannot travel . . . Their arguments, explanations, and declarations that they are traveling on their own, without any family and without relatives, are to no avail . . . There are many such casualties who, in a moment, are transformed into miserable people because of the agents' insatiable lust for profit and their base aspiration to get rich at the expense of the emigrants.²⁴

Having sold their possessions, purchased tickets, and made the long journey to the port, it might turn out that all had been for naught. In addition, they might have lost touch with their agent just as they found themselves helpless in the face of a new and disturbing situation.

Another swindle was an agent's repeated promises that a passport could be issued not only at their place of residence but also at the port of Libau. Although, as noted, the amended law of October 1906 did allow potential emigrants to acquire a passport anywhere in the Pale of Settlement, Libau was not located within the Pale. Moreover, other necessary documents such as birth and marriage certificates—without which a passport could not be issued—could be obtained only at the person's place of residence:

Until now, emigrants have known that they cannot leave without a passport [*te'udah*], as one had to be acquired in their district of residence. Now, emigrants know that they can have a passport issued here [in Libau]. This seems to be all well and good, but this relief also serves as an obstacle to emigrants. The agents tell them: go and get everything there. But when they arrive here, they learn that they are missing the authorization of the head official of their community and other such documents, without which they cannot get a passport.²⁵

At this stage, the agent back home would take advantage of the emigrants' helplessness by charging exorbitant amounts for procuring the missing documents. Meanwhile, the emigrants were forced to remain in Libau, spending a large portion of their meager savings on food and squalid accommodations. According to the report published in *Hazeman*:

There are hundreds of emigrants who have to stay here for months on end while waiting for a passport, and they are imprisoned in dark, meager quarters like fish in a barrel. Three or four to a bed, males and females in the same room—with no way of maintaining modesty or hygiene.²⁶

In this way, moving from defeat to defeat, the emigrants found themselves in situations that, before beginning their journey, they had never imagined. For example, a woman who was unable to board a ship because of an eye disease was convinced by an agent to bribe one of the sailors on a ship bound for America. She gave the sailor all that she had and waited "with great expectation until the late hour when the sailor was to come and take her to the boat with him." Instead:

The sailor came, sat the woman in a cart, took her outside the city and raped her, after inflicting upon her mortal injuries, beating her head and her face and ripping her clothes to shreds. The woman screamed, but no one heard her because she was raped far outside the city, in a place that people did not frequent. The miserable woman lay lifeless on the sandy beach, stained, desecrated, and injured, and trampled under the feet of the sailor. Only after an hour, when she regained some consciousness, did she begin to sob and wail and rip

out her hair because of her honor that had been taken, and her body that had been defiled.²⁷

In the face of such immense difficulties and dangers, many emigrants attempted to leave Russia by stealing across the border. According to figures published in one of the Russian newspapers at the time and reprinted in the ICA newspaper, *Der yudisher emigrant* in May 1909, 75 percent of all emigrants leaving Russia chose to get out in this manner.²⁸ Those planning to leave from Rotterdam or Antwerp crossed the border between Russia and Galicia, whereas those intending to leave from the ports of Hamburg or Bremen crossed at places alongside the German border.²⁹ Since stealing across the border was a dangerous undertaking, it usually took place at night. But this had its own hazards. Emigrants were known to get lost or to lose their belongings in one of the rivers that they crossed. They were sometimes caught by soldiers patrolling the border, and in such cases, their local guides would disappear, leaving them shocked and helpless.

The crossing points, moreover, were bottlenecks that naturally attracted the “swindling agents,” who often awaited would-be emigrants as they disembarked from the trains. According to *Der yudisher emigrant*, the very active town of Sosnowiec had the “most dishonest and dangerous agents of all.” One of these agents, a professional nicknamed Fishli, was “an artist in his field.” Impersonating a rabbi, he would join groups of emigrants shortly before their arrival in Sosnowiec. He would become friendly with the travelers, promise to help them cross the border, and persuade them to give him their money. Upon their arrival in the town, Fishli would disappear and the emigrants could do nothing but cry that “Rabbi Hayim had stolen their money.”³⁰

The most common form of exploitation took place as the emigrants were in the midst of crossing the border, when they were no longer certain of their exact location. At this point, agents would demand an additional sum for their services beyond what had already been paid. Frightened of being abandoned in the heart of the forest or of being caught by soldiers on patrol, the emigrants had little choice but to pay:

When a Jew finally reaches the village on the border, the agent’s cronies come and get more money out of the emigrant under various pretexts. The emigrant has no choice but to pay After midnight, hired farmers, the likes of whom the emigrants would never come near even in the streets of a crowded town, come and take the poor frightened [travelers] “into their care” to a place that seems terrible to them. They are afraid of everything around them, frightened of their escorts and the border guards. The hired [escorts] take advantage of these feelings, abuse them, and drain their blood and the remainder of their money. Some make it to their desired “shores” empty-handed, while others are left by their caretakers without crossing the border.³¹

Another common form of swindle, ticket fraud, was regularly reported in the Jewish press. In January 1909, for example, *Der yudisher emigrant* reported on an agent named Moshe Mafter who worked in the Kiev district. Mafter had undertaken to send a group of six emigrants to Argentina. He was paid 400 rubles for his services and in turn gave the emigrants a letter addressed to the Karlsberg ship company attesting that he had received payment for tickets of passage. Upon reaching Hamburg, the emigrants presented the letter to the company representative, only to discover that payment from the agent had not arrived. Similarly, a mother of two children aged 9 and

14 paid an agent 225 rubles to arrange passage to Winnipeg. The agent assured her that she would receive the tickets in Vilna and, from there, would be able to continue to the port at Libau. Upon arriving in Vilna, however, the woman learned that the agent had transferred only 195 rubles. The miserable woman wrote to her husband in Canada, asking him to pay the balance as soon as possible. It took eight months for her husband to reply that he did not have the equivalent of 30 rubles to send to her. The woman and her two children were thus forced to remain in Vilna until, eventually, they received assistance from the ICA's information bureau.³²

The most contemptible and dangerous agents were the white slave traders who sold women into prostitution. In contrast to other *agenten shvindler* who were solely after the emigrants' money, those who traded in women also harmed their prey both physically and psychologically. Many of the white slave traders were Jewish. Figures published by the Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden (Ezra) organization in 1913 reveal that of 124 "Russians" tried for white slave trading, all but 20 were Jewish, and of 93 immigrants who entered Argentina who were known to be slave traders, 80 were Jewish. The situation was even worse in Galicia: there, of 39 people arrested for trading in women, 38 were Jewish. Only in Germany was the number of Jews involved in the white slave trade relatively low (19 out of 182).³³

The white slave trade was more specialized and complex than other types of swindling activity. Some of the traders actually courted and married their victims before selling them and then vanishing. Others specialized in obtaining counterfeit documents, while others organized border crossings and bribed authorities, or else escorted the women to their ultimate destinations. An in-depth discussion of the burgeoning trade in women lies outside the scope of this essay.³⁴ What can be noted are some of the primary factors that led to this trade: the intense poverty in Eastern Europe; the impact of migration from villages to towns and cities; and emigration itself—all of which broke up families—alongside the demographic imbalance between men and women resulting from the mass emigration, which led to the demand for women.

Thus, great danger awaited girls who attempted to emigrate on their own. Since Russian law did not permit women to acquire an individual passport, lone female emigrants were forced to cross the border illegally. In this precarious position, they were exposed to agents of the white slave trade, who were usually young and attractive. Spotting a young woman traveling alone, an agent would approach her and begin to ask friendly questions. Soon the conversation would turn to stories of women traveling alone who had been raped by soldiers at the border crossings, or who had met other terrible fates such as drowning in the river. The agent would convince the girl to join him in one of the hostels along the border, at which point her fate was sealed.³⁵

In other cases, women would meet agents in the course of being delayed at the border. In such a situation, *Der yudisher emigrant* reported, "they spend many days in one room, and, as there is nothing else to do, they play cards or other games, which allow them to get better acquainted." The crowded and harsh conditions that were characteristic of border stations made the work of these traders easier:

It is known that in Misolovitz [on the German border] there are no buildings designated for accommodating emigrants. There [at the border station], women and men, children and the elderly, and girls and boys sleep, waiting entire days. Sometimes the waiting hall is so full that even the supervisor of the crossing station decides to send some of the em-

igrants to private homes [in exchange for payment]. He puts up emigrants in his apartment for two marks a night. In one room that was separate from that of the other emigrants, five young men and five girls slept. They did not know each other, meeting in Misolovitz for the first time. It cannot be determined whether or not the boys behaved improperly, but it can be assumed that they were not indifferent to each other and that something happened there Whatever the case, it is easier for girls to become good material for white slave traders under such circumstances.³⁶

In sum, emigrants suffered a good deal from those eager to profit from their confusion and distress. Having severed their ties to their home country and sold their possessions, the emigrants often found themselves helpless in a strange environment. Families sometimes reached the point of knocking at the doors of private homes in the border towns in search of help. As an article in *Hazeman* put it:

God's curse has been cast upon the Jews of Russia. As if there weren't enough casualties of pogroms—casualties of emigration must also be added. This is a curse meant especially for us A Jew fleeing because of fear falls into the trap set for him by those who trade in humans. These leeches have cost us dearly, sucking emigrants' vitality, blood, and money, and have also caused casualties.³⁷

Aiding the Emigrants: The ICA Information Bureaus

Given the bureaucratic difficulties, the widespread activities of swindlers, and the resultant family tragedies, a number of Jewish institutions felt obliged to become involved in aiding potential emigrants. The first institution to do so was the Jewish Colonization Association (ICA), initially founded by Baron Maurice de Hirsch in 1891 to promote Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe to the New World. Jewish emigration from countries of persecution was the cornerstone of the ICA's activities. Beginning in 1899, for example, the ICA created a number of settlements in the Argentine provinces, where colonists were provided with equipment, instruction, and financial assistance; even a network of schools was established. In Eastern Europe, legal authorization to operate within the Pale of Settlement was obtained in 1894, and this facilitated the opening of an emigration department that was headed by an attorney by the name of M. Bergman.

The emigration department began to appoint representatives in various centers in the Pale and to publish general information booklets for emigrants. However, the relatively small number of emigrants at the time—and Bergman's sudden death shortly after the department was established—led to a suspension of activities.³⁸ Several years later, following the Kishinev pogrom in 1903 and the subsequent growth in emigration, the ICA decided to establish an information bureau in St. Petersburg. In that year, under the leadership of Shmuel Yakoblevich Yanovsky, the ICA became the main Jewish institution handling emigration affairs. From the outset, Yanovsky wrote, the information bureau enjoined emigrants

not to rely on the suggestions of relatives who suggest traveling to their places of employment; not to be swept along with the throng of emigrants heading for the large, beautiful cities across the ocean; not to fall into the traps of agents promising wonders and miracles; not to set out without consulting an eye doctor; not to board the train without

first showing an authorized representative all required paperwork; not to carry clothes with no value all the way to America; not to petition any benefactor or committee, whether at the location of origin or in countries of transit, except for ICA committees and designated representatives³⁹

Within a few years, approved ICA emigration information bureaus had been established in all large cities and in various border towns within the Pale of Settlement. In 1906, there were 106 information bureaus; by the following year, the number had grown to 296. By 1910, there were 449 bureaus, and three years later the number had increased to 507.⁴⁰ The information bureaus operated within a hierarchical structure: each unit worked independently but could avail itself of the resources of the regional office or, in particularly complex cases, the central office in St. Petersburg. The large regional bureaus were run by committees consisting of three to ten members, whereas bureaus located in small towns or villages had one or, at most, two authorized representatives.⁴¹

A regional congress was held every few months with the aim of discussing common problems and possible solutions. These meetings also facilitated the transmission of messages and requests from the central committee in St. Petersburg to the local bureaus. In September 1910, a five-day general congress was held in Libau that included a tour of the port and of a passenger ship on the Libau-New York line, in order to familiarize the delegates with the conditions and difficulties of sailing.⁴² A similar congress was held in May 1913 in Vilna. At the congresses, strategic decisions were taken on important issues such as offering medical assistance for emigrants, aiding them in acquiring passports and in purchasing tickets, providing protection for female emigrants, and increasing the efficiency of the bureaus.

One of the primary goals set out by the Information Bureau of St. Petersburg was to combat the "cunning of the agents and their swindling."⁴³ The battle was waged on two main fronts. Local bureaus reported fraudulent activities directly to the authorities, while at the same time offering free assistance to the emigrants, in this way competing with the agents. The information bureaus also confronted swindling agents, published their names, and publicized their fraudulent schemes. Representatives often succeeded in assisting emigrants who had been led astray and, in consequence, had lost their money. A typical case was that of a 28-member extended family from Odessa who had traveled hundreds of kilometers to Libau at the suggestion of an agent. Upon arriving, the emigrants realized that the name of one family member listed on their ticket did not appear on their passport, and they were prevented from departing. Their complaint was submitted to the Odessa bureau, whose representative succeeded in locating the agent and recovering not only the passage money but also the family's travel expenses.⁴⁴

As indicated by their name, the main goal of the information bureaus was to offer reliable information and assistance in negotiating both the tortuous Russian bureaucracy and the logistics of purchasing tickets and traveling to a port. They were not primarily in the business of providing financial assistance, although aid was available in the form of discounts for train and ship tickets. *Hazeman* reported that:

[e]migrants knock on the doors of the ICA committee and beg them to have mercy upon them and save them from disgrace and from dying of starvation. However, the committee cannot actually help and offer suitable assistance to such a large number for weeks or

months. They are asked the question, “how did they leave their homes without a penny in their pockets, and whose help did they rely upon when leaving their homes?” They answer innocently or bitterly that their agent had agreed to provide everything they were lacking, and that they now do not understand why the heads of the bureau are not responding to their requests, their supplications, and their cries.⁴⁵

To prevent such situations, the information bureaus stressed the importance of obtaining all necessary documents before purchasing tickets. In fact, emigrants were given discounts on train tickets and ship passage only upon presentation of a valid passport. The process, however, took time, and there were occasional complaints:

But there is another reason why a Jew might turn to an agent for help in acquiring a passport: he is neither able nor interested in making it to the bureaucratic offices and producing all the required certificates This is especially difficult for residents of small towns located far away from the major city of the district. They know that months will pass between the sending of their request and the arrival of their certificate, and they sometimes need to leave immediately [T]his obstacle must be addressed by the ICA organization dealing with issues of emigration At the very least, departments in border towns must expand their activities to include both helping emigrants obtain necessary documents and being in contact with ship owners, so that they know that they are being observed by a watchful eye and thus cannot abuse emigrants as they often do. If the bureaus were to do this, they would save the Jewish emigrants from the plague of the agents.⁴⁶

To streamline the process, the central bureau in St. Petersburg printed a standard passport request letter in Russian, which was especially helpful to emigrants who were illiterate in that language. In addition, local representatives made contact with government officials to request that they ease the application process. Special efforts were made on behalf of women whose husbands had emigrated without giving them the power of attorney. After intervention by the ICA bureau in Odessa, the mayor of that city published a circular announcing that he was “aware of the terrible situation of Jewish women whose husbands emigrated to America.” The mayor was willing to allow women to be issued passports if they provided “all necessary documents: a marriage certificate, an official letter from the local rabbi, and police authorization that the husband had, in fact, gone to America,” and at the same time asked the police chief not to place any unnecessary obstacles before these unfortunate women.⁴⁷

Local bureaus also mediated between emigrants and ship companies and were often able to obtain discounts. Such discounts, as noted, were offered only to emigrants who held valid passports; in addition, they had to prove that they did not suffer from any disqualifying illness and that they could cover the expenses of the journey. Those receiving discounts traveled either third- or fourth-class, depending on the ship. As opposed to all other facets of the information bureau’s operations, the direct contacts between the companies and the local bureau were unsupervised by the central bureau in St. Petersburg, on the theory that such flexibility enabled local representatives to get the “best deal” for the emigrants—this, despite the fact that a few representatives apparently embezzled some of the money involved in these transactions.⁴⁸

Information bureaus also helped with the cost of the train journey in cases where emigrants had prepaid ship tickets but could not afford to reach the port of departure. Between 1907 and 1914, the ICA spent tens of thousands of rubles on train tickets for

needy families. For instance, Esther Mindes, a “black-haired, blue-eyed seamstress” from the town of Korets in Volhynia, was traveling with six children: Rebecca, aged 16; Rosa, aged 11; Mariom, aged 9; Chassja, aged 7; Scheindel, aged 3; and Munjas, aged 2. Her husband in Boston had sent tickets for the ocean passage and she had to reach Hamburg in early January 1909. She was given 11 rubles—enough to enable her and her children to reach the port safely. On January 13, 1909, five of the seven family members who had started the journey arrived at Ellis Island. For reasons that are not clear, the two eldest girls, Rebecca and Rosa, were not registered with the immigration authorities, and we do not know what happened to them.⁴⁹

As noted, U.S. laws designed to restrict the entry of emigrants with certain diseases were strictly enforced. Nonetheless, emigrants were usually unaware of their health status, and this put them at risk of being forced to return to their previous homes. Agents, for their part, often allowed emigrants to begin their journey while ill, knowing full well that they would not be able to board a ship or enter the country of their choice. Thus, an essential task of the information bureaus was to encourage emigrants to have an examination by a general physician and an eye specialist before setting out.

Within the ICA, a debate soon arose over whether it was enough for the information bureaus to provide a medical examination, or whether they should also be offering medical assistance. Decisions were made at the 1910 and 1913 congresses that “the Central Bureau will provide support for local committees to provide for the medical needs of children of poor emigrants stemming from various illnesses, particularly head leprosy.”⁵⁰ According to Yanovsky, the ICA solicited Jewish eye specialists to provide medical assistance to emigrants and even sent doctors to the primary ports of departure in order to learn the details of the pre-boarding examination. The ICA also sent doctors “to the universities of Berlin and Koenigsberg to study and specialize in trachoma.” Their return to the Pale of Settlement, wrote Yanovsky, was advantageous not only for emigrants but for the population as a whole.⁵¹ The central bureau later requested a number of hospitals in major cities throughout the Pale to treat and assist emigrants. One important medical center was in Gomel, where, of the 1,700 emigrants examined before beginning their journey, 600 received treatment. Of the 2,400 emigrants examined in 1910, more than half (1,300) were found to be ill and unable to emigrate. In addition, at the Mishmeret Holim hospital in Vilna, “a special room was set up in which the children of the poor are treated for free . . . as are children of the emigrants passing through Vilna.”⁵² In smaller cities and towns, the ICA funded eye clinics that provided emigrants with inexpensive (or sometimes free) professional examinations. “Illnesses were discovered in the case of many emigrants,” wrote Yanovsky, “and they had to wait a great deal of time until they recuperated. The Bureau has learned that all emigrants that were treated entered the United States without difficulty, and not even one was returned to his or her place of origin.”⁵³

In addition to its assistance in obtaining passports, discounts on the ticket prices, and medical care, the central bureau in St. Petersburg distributed information on the subject of migration throughout the Pale of Settlement. Battling the “black market” of information provided by agents, it published a wide variety of guides and self-help booklets that were then distributed by the regional and local bureaus. Many of these were free, or sold for a nominal sum. “Every piece of information that was published,

every practical piece of advice, and every bit of help in acquiring a travel certificate was a blow to the agents. Emigrants started to understand that the bureau helps emigrants and is dedicated to emigrants, without profit.”⁵⁴

Bureau publications were printed in Yiddish and Russian.⁵⁵ The most widely circulated booklet, available for a mere six kopeks, was *Algemeyne yedies far di vos viln forn in fremde lender* (General information for people wanting to emigrate to foreign countries). Briefly and simply, it explained what emigrants needed to know before setting out, providing practical advice and a short description of various destinations. The booklet advised emigrants not to begin their journey without a certain amount of money and provided information about currency exchange rates, border crossings, and the threats posed by fraudulent agents. There were details about where to purchase ship tickets and the dangers of “prepaid” tickets. The process of obtaining a passport was set out, as was practical advice on what to bring along. Basic information about the United States, Canada, South Africa, South America, Australia, and Palestine was included; even the subject of how best to deal with seasickness was addressed. This booklet was first published in 1906 and was subsequently reprinted and updated in 10,000 annual copies.⁵⁶ There were also separate booklets providing more detailed information on specific countries (Argentina, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Chile, and, of course, the United States). These provided a geographical description with an attached map, as well as information on the country’s climate, wildlife, local population, currency and exchange rates, agricultural work, other occupations, living costs, and the cost of tickets from various ports.

The most comprehensive of these booklets was that dealing with the United States, which was updated annually in a 6,000-copy edition. It presented information on various cities (with an emphasis on employment opportunities). The ICA’s policy was to discourage immigrants from concentrating in large cities and to persuade them instead to settle further inland.

In 1907, the ICA began publishing *Der yudisher emigrant*, a biweekly newspaper that focused exclusively on emigration issues and provided updated information on a variety of important issues, as well as on the main countries of destination. Baron David Günzburg served as editor until his death in 1910, at which time Shmuel Yanovsky took over. Each issue featured one or two major articles on topics such as “Commerce and Industry in Argentina,” “Trachoma,” “The Financial Crisis in the United States,” “Bremen Port,” or “Emigration from Bessarabia.” There were also announcements from the bureaus, emigrants’ questions and responses, warnings about agents, and a table of ships’ rates, sailing times, and intermediary stops. Relative to the period in question, the paper had an extremely wide circulation, reaching 5,000 copies in 1906; 50,000 copies in 1907; and a high of 70,000 in 1908. After 1908, circulation ranged between 50,000 and 60,000.⁵⁷ Given that each copy was undoubtedly read by any number of secondary readers, the circulation was actually much higher.

The number of emigrants contacting information bureaus increased over time, as the bureaus became more sophisticated in the services they offered and as the emigrants’ initial suspicions regarding ICA representatives faded. In 1906, of 157,000 immigrants entering the United States via the port of New York, only 38,000 (24 percent) had been assisted by the information bureaus. Two years later, 32,000 of a total of 45,000 immigrants to the United States (70 percent) had availed themselves of the

services offered by the information bureaus, and in subsequent years, the number increased to about 75 percent.⁵⁸ With the outbreak of the First World War, emigration from Russia was halted for several years, and the information bureaus gradually closed down.

In the wide-ranging literature on the mass Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe from the 1880s until the outbreak of the First World War, the individual is often lost amid statistics and quantitative studies. This essay has attempted to present a more human dimension by focusing on the individual men, women, and children who together constituted the mass of East European Jewish emigrants and who—with their own subjective decisions and actions—brought about one of the most significant turning points in modern Jewish history.

Notes

I would like to dedicate this essay to the memory of Golda Finkler-Lehrer Jacobowitz (1914–2004).

1. The story of Leon Kaplan is authentic, put together from a combination of archival sources and the computerized database of Ellis Island, which contains the names of 22 million immigrants who arrived at Ellis Island between 1892 and 1924 (as recorded by volunteers from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). On Leon's appeal to the information bureau in Odessa, the financial assistance that he received, and his voyage from Libau, see the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (hereafter: CAHJP), (Jerusalem), ICA/37a; for the price of the train ride from Odessa to Libau, see "Korrespondenzblatt des 'Centralbureaus für jüdische Auswanderungsangelegenheiten,'" (Berlin), 23 Sept. 1909, Central Zionist Archives (hereafter: CZA) (Jerusalem) A36/95b. The voyage lasted 11–12 days, so that Leon presumably left Russia on April 4 or 5, 1912; on voyage times from Libau to New York, see *Der yudisher emigrant* 8 (1 March 1911), 16. For the date of Leon's arrival in Libau, and his arrival in New York and his reunion with his mother, see <www.ellisland.org>.

The Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People lists thousands of names of people who received assistance from the ICA information bureaus—which, as will be seen, were scattered throughout the Pale of Settlement. The case of Leon Kaplan is one of hundreds in which I was able to check the ICA's records against the computerized database of Ellis Island. Such a cross-check makes it possible for historians to follow individual migrants from the time they set out until they arrived at their destination, and also allows for a better understanding of the arduous migration process.

2. See Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics* (London: 1981), 135.

3. See Liebmann Hersch, "International Migration of the Jews," in *International Migrations*, ed. Walter Willcox and Imre Ferenczi (New York: 1931), 474.

4. See David Koheles to Arthur Rupp, 11 Nov. 1912, CZA, L2/133/3. The unprecedented magnitude of migration from the start of the 20th century until the outbreak of the First World War led to the establishment of various information bureaus designed to assist and support immigrants and their families. In Palestine, there were two such information bureaus, one located in Jerusalem (funded by the World Zionist Organization) and the other in Jaffa (funded by the Odessa Committee), whose files contain thousands of letters. See Margalit Shilo, "The Information Bureau of Menahem Shenkin in Jaffa during the Second Aliya Period," *Zionism* 17 (1993), 39–70; Gur Alroey, *Imigrantim: hahagira hayehudit leerez Yisrael bereishit hameah ha'esrim* (Jerusalem: 2004), 60–77.

5. See Isaac Rubinow, *Economic Conditions of the Jews in Russia* (bulletin of the U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor) (Sept. 1907), 491, 493.

6. On the basic emigration process, see Pamela S. Nadell, "The Journey to America by

Steam: The Jews of Eastern Europe in Transition," *American Jewish History* 71 (Dec. 1981), 269–284; idem, "En Route to the Promised Land," in *We are Leaving Mother Russia*, ed. Kerry M. Olitzky (Cincinnati: 1990), 11–24; on agents, see idem, "East European Jewish Emigrants and the Agents System, 1868–1914," in *Studies in the American Jewish Archives*, ed. Jacob Rader Marcus and Abraham J. Peck (Cincinnati: 1984), 49–78.

7. See CAHJP, ICA 34a; also see "Vi azoy bakumt men an oyslendishen pas?" *Der yudisher emigrant* 3 (14 Dec. 1907), 9. While the process described was that of the northwestern region of the Pale of Settlement, it was similar in other regions.

8. See "Vi azoy bakumt men an oyslendishen pas?" 9.

9. Ibid., 10.

10. See the ICA booklet *Di fareynigte shtaten fun amerika—algemeyne yedies un onvayzungen far di vos viln forn in dem land* (St. Petersburg: 1908), 6–8; also see the booklet *Algemeyne yedies far di vos viln forn in fremde lender* (St. Petersburg: 1905–1906), 54. Prices did not increase significantly in the years following 1908. See, for instance, *Der yudisher emigrant* 15 (1 Feb. 1913), 8–9.

11. See Yaakov Leshtchinsky, "Statistikah shel 'ayarah aḥat," *Hashiloah* 12 (1902–1904), 93.

12. Shmuel Yanovsky, the director of the Information Bureau of St. Petersburg, notes in his essay "Emigration" that half of the emigrants had prepaid tickets. On this subject, see Shmuel Yanovsky archive, CZA, A156/26 (p. 30).

13. See *Algemeyne yedies far di vos viln forn in fremde lender*, 14.

14. Ibid.

15. See *Di fareynigte shtaten fun amerika*, 11–12.

16. See Zosa Szajkowski, "Sufferings of Jewish Immigrants to America in Transit through Germany," *Jewish Social Studies* 39 (1977), 106–107.

17. See *Di fareynigte shtaten fun amerika*, 16–17.

18. See Szajkowski, "Sufferings of Jewish Immigrants to America in Transit through Germany," 108.

19. "Haemigraziyah derekh ḥof Libau," *Hazeman* 123 (6 July 1907), 3.

20. See "Rayze notitsen—ostreykhishen grenits," *Der yudisher emigrant* 2 (18 Nov. 1907), 13.

21. "Haemigraziyah derekh ḥof Libau," 3.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid. For additional cases, see the CAHJP, ICA file 34a.

25. "Haemigraziyah derekh ḥof Libau," 3.

26. Ibid.

27. "Me'arei hamedinah," *Hazeman* 157 (8 Aug. 1907), 3.

28. *Der yudisher emigrant* 8 (14 May 1909), 8.

29. CZA, A156/26 (p. 22).

30. "Fun der preysich-rusisher grenitz," *Der yudisher emigrant* 1 (28 Jan. 1909), 3.

31. "Halalei haemigraziyah," *Hazeman* 144 (17 July 1907), 2.

32. "Agenten shvindler," *Der yudisher emigrant* 1 (28 Jan. 1909), 14.

33. See "Der froyen handl un emigratsye," *ibid.* 23 (2 Jan. 1913), 1–2.

34. See Victor Mirelman, "The Case of White Slavery in Buenos Aires," *Jewish Social Studies* 46 (1986), 145–168; Edward Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice: The Jewish Fight against White Slavery, 1870–1939* (Oxford: 1982).

35. "Der froyen handel un emigratsye," 3.

36. Ibid., 4.

37. See "Halalei haemigraziyah," 2; also see "Lishkot modi'in lenodedim," *Hayom* 139 (13 Jan. 1907), 2.

38. CZA, A156/26 (p. 4).

39. Shmuel Yanovsky, *Criticism, Reminiscences, Selected Writings* (Tel Aviv: 1947), 15.

40. CZA, A156/26 (p. 6).

41. Ibid.

42. "Der Liboyer tsuzamenfor," *Der yudisher emigrant* 8 (11 Oct. 1920), 1–14. On the Vilna congress, see "Der Vilner tsuzamenfor," *ibid.* 10 (29 May 1913), 1–16.
43. "Haemigraziyah derekh hof Libau," 3.
44. "Di bedaytung fun der arbet fun informatsyones byuro," *Der yudisher emigrant* 4 (28 Dec. 1907), 14.
45. "Haemigraziyah derekh hof Libau," 3.
46. "Halalei haemigraziyah," 2.
47. "Oysvanderung khronik," *Der yudisher emigrant* 3 (28 March 1908), 20.
48. "Di arbet fun informatsyones byuro," *Der yudisher emigrant* 18 (11 Oct. 1910), 15.
49. On Esther Mindes' appeal to the information bureau and the names of her children, see CAHJP, ICA/35a. A description of her appearance and that of her children can be found in a document of the U.S. immigration authorities at Ellis Island; see <www.ellisland.org>.
50. "Have'idah haemigraziyonit haICAit," *Hed hazeman* 102 (8 May 1913), 3.
51. CZA, A156/26 (p. 16).
52. "Have'idah haemigraziyonit haICAit," 3. On emigrants' medical problems, see also Howard Markel, "'The Eyes Have It': Trachoma, the Perception of Disease, the United States Health Service, and the American Jewish Immigrant Experience, 1897–1924," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 74 (2000), 525–560.
53. CZA, A156/26 (p. 17).
54. "Di bedaytung fun der arbet fun informatsyones byuro," 13.
55. A large number of such publications can be viewed at the National and University Library at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
56. CZA, A156/26 (p. 6).
57. *Ibid.* (p. 13).
58. See "Di arbet fun informatsiyones far yudisher emigrantn in yor 1908," *Der yudisher emigrant* 11 (29 June 1909), 2.

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Review Essays

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Trapped in the Middle East Maze

Yoav Gelber, *Palestine 1948: War, Escape and the Emergence of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2001. xi + 399 pp.

Yossi Klein Halevi, *At the Entrance to the Garden of Eden*. New York: William Morrow, 2001. 315 pp.

Martin Seth Kramer, *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America*. Washington, D. C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001. x + 137 pp.

John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: Norton, 2001. xvi + 555 pp.

Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim (eds.), *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. 234 pp.

Perhaps the closest analogy to Arab-Israel peacemaking is the classic labyrinth, with its countless false starts and dead ends; dangerous curves; U-turns; deceptive by-passes; and illusory shortcuts. It is a story of insurmountable political and psychological barriers, turning points, strategic crossroads, missed opportunities—and violent, head-on collisions. Above all, it is a tale of failed initiatives that today finds both Israelis and Palestinians, if anything, more deeply trapped than ever before.

Add to this the frustration of statesmen plying the unpromising diplomatic routes of peaceful conflict resolution, the cumulative despair in each of the wounded yet still warring Arab and Jewish camps, and the conceptual fatigue on the part of academic onlookers. Whatever the case, if judged by the nature of the literature being published of late, it is embarrassingly clear (especially in the wake of the 2000 Camp David summit fiasco and descent into intercommunal violence) that scholarly commentary itself risks becoming sidetracked. It has shifted away from tabling viable strategies to help Arabs and Israelis grope their way forward to a safe exit from the maze. Instead, the principal research thrust these days is demonstrably *backward* in time. By abandoning the search for an escape route and fixating on the Israel/Palestine maze's initial entry point, energies are being diverted from the presentation of possible solutions to the settling of past accounts.

I am convinced that the latter approach is altogether unhelpful and possibly even counterproductive; it makes peace less rather than more likely. Let us be realistic. Exactly when, how, and why did the original clash begin? At whose instigation? Where does the blame lie? Who is the victim, and who the victimizer? The truth is that we are never going to know definitively where to assign culpability for the human tragedy that is the ongoing Israel/Palestine conflict, or for the political mess that is the contemporary Middle East. The roots are too deep, the possible culprits too nu-

merous, the issues too complex and too far removed in time, and the archival records too incomplete.

So here we are, Israelis, Palestinians and outsiders, trapped in the depressing maze—with neither the benefit of clear hindsight and perspective nor the clarity of vision and foresight indispensable for terminating the conflict. With one exception, John Mearsheimer's *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, each of the books reviewed here illustrates this recent pattern of avoiding the crux of the matter, either through its choice of time period and subject matter or by its strident tone and partisan approach. Rewriting history rather than renegotiating a shared future is, if you will, a form of escapism from the problematics of the here-and-now. It is mischievous at best, prejudicial at worst.

The United States, to its credit, is one of the few parties engaged in the contemporary conflict that is working for a solution. Beginning in earnest after 1967, it has inserted itself into the Middle East maze and has been actively engaged in unilateral as well as multilateral attempts at extricating the two directly concerned parties from their self-inflicted impasse. Indeed, going beyond the role of honest broker and facilitator, Washington has claimed the pivotal leadership role of “indispensable” third-party intermediary. In his neo-realist analysis of Great Power behavior in general, and American foreign policy in particular, Mearsheimer provides a genuinely useful service by underscoring one potentially major weakness in America's navigation of the treacherous Israel/Palestine maze. He insists that, for all its good intentions, the United States is at heart an “offshore balancer, not the world's sheriff” (p. 392)—that is, it traditionally seeks to avoid direct involvement and is adverse to risk, and therefore may not necessarily demonstrate the required motivation, determination, and staying power. This is especially true when America is preoccupied elsewhere, or when it encounters Israeli or Palestinian intransigence.

Martin Kramer's *Ivory Towers on Sand* usefully supplements Mearsheimer by pointing to a second crucial reason for America's ongoing difficulties: “the failure of Middle Eastern studies in America.” In the 1950s and 1960s, an earlier generation of regional experts placed their confidence and hopes on the Arab middle class, military modernizers, civil society, and democratization, only to be rewarded with Islamic fundamentalism. Then came Columbia University professor Edward Said's blanket indictment of traditional Western “orientalism” as being deeply prejudiced against the Arabs and Islam—a devastating attack that left Middle East specialists in disarray. More recently, the continuing academic bias of orientalist “Saidians” accounts for a steady flow of misinformation directed at U.S. policymakers and opinion-makers. The representation of Palestinians and Arabs as long-suffering victims of Western racism, American imperialism, and Zionism, Kramer notes, is one of the reigning orthodoxies propagated by these “new mandarins.”

Yet Kramer himself is guilty of intellectual overkill. One may applaud his courage in taking on the entire Middle East establishment. However, forthrightly exposing an opponent's errors and excesses is one thing; to prejudice the counterargument by issuing exaggerated accusations is another. *Ivory Towers on Sand* is not just a critique but a devastating, often caustic frontal assault against the academic profession as a whole. Kramer makes a valid point, for example, when he writes that “the salvation

of Middle Eastern studies lies precisely in looking past the rapid turnover of theories in the social sciences" (including, I would add, those regarding negotiation and peace-making) "to the Middle East itself in all its theory-defying complexity" (p. 122). But why preclude a judicious use of the analytical frameworks of social science, combined with an appreciation for the realities of Middle East history, society, and politics?

Kramer's categorical indictment is so relentless that he leaves the reader with the mistaken impression that "America invented Middle East studies" (p. 5). Such a claim ignores the powerful British legacy that adversely affected U.S. thinking and policy on the Middle East immediately after 1945. At that time, America not only took over responsibility for regional security and for a British-mandated Palestine on the brink of chaos, but also adopted the traditional Whitehall biases that favored conservative monarchs and regimes, moderate, pro-Western Arab nationalism, and Arab unity—thereby misreading the deeper undercurrents of change that would surface with a vengeance both during and after the Cold War era. Iraq under Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda are but two cases in point. In many ways, the U.S. has still to come out from under the shadow of that legacy.

Palestinian victimization, and the theme of innocents dispossessed, predominates in the "historical war" represented here by Yoav Gelber (*Palestine 1948: War, Escape and the Emergence of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*) and in the collection edited by Eugene Rogan and Avi Shlaim (*The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*). The tendency toward bipolarization and entrenched bargaining positions carries over into the arena of academic conflict. As indicated by its subtitle, *The War for Palestine* aims at nothing short of rewriting the history of 1948. But why 1948? With all due respect for its watershed events—the ignominious end of Britain's imperial "moment," Israel's birth, the Arab states' armed invasion and defeat, the disintegration of Palestinian society and its rejection of the "two state solution"—the very selection of this year points to the historians' political bias. After all, why not give the years 1936–1939 their proper due as a defining moment? Arguably the single greatest instance of "ripeness" for a negotiated settlement in the long Palestine narrative took place during July–December 1937, during which time the Peel Commission presented its formula for conflict avoidance through territorial compromise, which was then accepted by the Zionists and rejected by the Arabs, thus setting the stage for 1948.

The reason for the choice of 1948 by Shlaim and Rogan is, of course, quite transparent. Choosing this particular year tacitly endorses the entrenched Palestinian narrative that casts the Palestinians in the role of hapless, guiltless innocents upon whom the greatest injustices were inflicted, and who therefore have every legal and moral claim to full compensation and the right of return in any future end-of-conflict peace formula. This brand of historiography complicates the labors of the peace architects. If only one side, the Zionists, is called upon to courageously "demystify the birth of Israel," as Shlaim puts it (p. 101), without pressing the other side to a similar soul-searching and demystification regarding their aborted state, the net result is asymmetrical peacemaking. No misdeeds; no penalty. No penalty; no felt need for concessions.

Although Rogan and Shlaim conscientiously include Druze, Jordanian, Iraqi, Egyptian, and Syrian perspectives on 1948, the overall discussion is strongly colored by contributions from a pro-Palestinian scholar (Rashid Khalidi), a leading critic of Israel (Avi Shlaim), an Israeli “new historian” (Benny Morris, who has since, belatedly, recanted his views), and, for added “objectivity,” a short but pointed afterword by none other than Edward Said. This last contributor praises the “new critical voices” of the Israeli new historians and their “Arab counterparts” (who remain unnamed), underscores the injustice done to the Palestinians; and reassures us that the evils of 1948 can be redressed simply by converting sovereign Israel and the disputed West Bank and Gaza lands into a “unitary state.” No Jewish state. And no political and territorial compromise.

Shlaim, for his part, essentially reworks his well-known thesis of Israeli-Jordanian collusion in thwarting Palestinian statehood, and of the prestate Jewish community’s being militarily advantaged rather than in the position of an underdog. Even so, what evokes the reader’s stupefaction is not that “Israel’s leaders were aware of the divisions inside the Arab coalition and . . . exploited these divisions to the full in waging the war and in extending the borders of the state” (p. 80), but that the author’s political artlessness should lead him to expect otherwise. As Americans are discovering, the Middle East is a tough neighborhood.

In contradistinction, the essay by Khalidi is refreshing for its candor on at least one cardinal prerequisite for a return to the negotiating table. As indicated, the unpleasant task of introspection must be mutual and concurrent in order for the two sides to engage each other meaningfully. In the midst of sensitively describing the Palestinian community circa 1948 and the underlying causes for its abject failure in the conflict with Zionism, Khalidi renders two contributions. First, he correctly notes (*contra* Morris, Shlaim, and Said) that “in Arab historiography the incapacities and errors of the Palestinians themselves have tended to get relatively little attention” (p. 16); and second, he courageously opts for the internal level of analysis, emphasizing the striking lack of organization, cohesion, and unanimity in the Palestinian polity before 1948. There is, however, no word of criticism about leadership deficiencies, and nothing on the political extremism that came to displace pragmatism. Still, we may applaud Khalidi both for contradicting Said and for his hope regarding “the appearance of Palestinian ‘new historians’ to shatter the ‘myths’ on the Arab side” (p. 17).

Yoav Gelber’s contribution to the literature on 1948 is useful for its detailed chronology of “Israel’s most significant and triumphal” campaign against the Arabs. Significant, yes, but triumphal? This “one long war,” or “war by rounds,” suggests in fact a painful stalemate. For our purposes, the book’s value lies in its shedding light on the loose alliances unfolding in the Middle East (a kind of academic sideshow to the main event). In Gelber’s judgment, it was ultimately the “social, cultural, moral, and technological infrastructure” (p. 14) behind the fighting units, successfully transformed and then applied in the military sphere, that conferred upon the Jews an enormous advantage. Gelber’s description complements Khalidi’s depiction of the internal weaknesses that prejudiced the Arab community’s chances for gaining undivided control of Palestine. Yet, strangely enough, Gelber stops short of explicitly commending the Israeli side of the equation. In particular, he fails to note David Ben-Gurion’s realistic leadership in adjusting goals to means and his acumen in exploiting mo-

mentary openings and convergent interests—best seen in his willingness to play the “Transjordanian option” by yielding the West Bank and acceding to a de facto partition of Jerusalem.

In the contrived dichotomy between “new” and “old” Israeli historians, Gelber (regarded as a charter member of the “old,” traditional school) wages a two-front attack against both his local rivals and the Arab camp. Turning to the former, he claims: “In their handling of the 1948 war, the revisionists have bypassed elementary facts in order to underscore the particular issue of the Palestinians’ ordeal.” A similar charge is hurled at the Palestinians and their homegrown apologists: “Any study describing solely Palestinian suffering is one-sided and incomplete without properly weighing this plain truth: It is their own conduct that gives adequate cause to deny Palestinians the right to the adjective ‘innocent’” (p. 3).

At the moment, it seems that the tangential academic wars, including the urge to re-hash anew the minute details of 1948, have pretty much played themselves out. They do not help one iota in getting Israelis and Palestinians from here to there—that is, from enmity to accommodation. They are a distraction as well as an irritant. But in the interim, what is one to do until that coveted moment of diplomatic opportunity arrives?

Yossi Klein Halevi, a journalist, religious Jew, and resident of Jerusalem safely outside and above the academic fray yet physically caught in the subterranean Arab-Israeli maze, believed that he had come up with his own formula for preserving a degree of personal sanity. Unwilling to go backward but also unable to edge the politicians forward, he tried escaping the cycle of violence on the ground by ascending upward into the spiritual realm. Alas, his effort seems to have been less than a ringing success.

Told in a deeply personal style, Halevi’s account of “one pilgrim’s journey into an alternative Middle East” and search for hope through engaging his fellow “people of the Book”—Christian monastics and Muslim clerics in the Holy Land—is at once uplifting, quixotic, and depressing. Inspiring, because if there is, objectively, a way out of the maze, it is not by Arabs, Christians, Muslims, and Jews mauling and trampling each other. Nor does it lie in reaching out to American or international rescuers. Only the Israelis and Palestinians can save themselves from permanent entrapment, by reaching out toward each other.

For this very reason, *At the Entrance to the Garden of Eden* is both idealistic and disheartening. Along the way, the author treats us to a colorful cast of characters (ranging from three Sufi sheikhs; two nuns; various Armenian and Abyssinian priests; and a non-conformist rabbi, David Froman), as well as to a number of fascinating experiences involving the *shehīnah* (divine presence) and an explanation of the theology of love. Still, like Moses, Halevi never quite gains admission into the promised land, which in this case translates into interfaith encounters, religious empathy, and points of commonality. Back on earth and struggling “to live with an open heart at the center of unbearable tension,” Halevi is forced to admit that “I regularly disappoint myself, unable to exorcise, except for brief interludes, the jinns of fear and rage” (p. 314).

This should come as no surprise, given that the real game is about turf and possession. It seems to me that we are better off without the mystics and the sidetrack-

ing and backtracking historians. It is bad enough that we denizens of the maze are in the hands of Israeli and Palestinian politicians, with their restricted tunnel vision, rather than in the hands of statesmen capable of grasping that faint light still flickering at the end of our shared tunnel.

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Arendt on Eichmann Revisited

Steven E. Aschheim (ed.), *Hannah Arendt in Jerusalem*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. xii + 428 pp.

Barry Sharpe, *Modesty and Arrogance in Judgment: Hannah Arendt's Eichmann in Jerusalem*. Westport: Praeger, 1999. xviii + 170 pp.

Gary Smith (ed.), *Hannah Arendt Revisited: "Eichmann in Jerusalem" und die Folgen*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2000. 312 pp.

Richard Wolin, *Heidegger's Children: Hannah Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. xvi + 276 pp.

There is no end to critical engagement with the work of Hannah Arendt. If the books under review here are representative, and I think they are, two of the major trends in current Arendt studies are a focus on Arendt's formative intellectual influences, particularly that of Martin Heidegger, and a renewed interest in Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963)—especially in Israel, where she has been thinker *non grata* since the book's appearance four decades ago. Specifically, Richard Wolin's *Heidegger's Children* addresses the first issue (although his highly critical treatment of Arendt derives from his objection to the way in which she deals with Eichmann), whereas the other volumes, especially Barry Sharpe's *Modesty and Arrogance in Judgment* and Gary Smith's edited volume, *Hannah Arendt Revisited*, focus on reassessments of Arendt's treatment of Eichmann and the various contexts within which the Eichmann case can be understood. The volume edited by Steven Aschheim, though not confined to Arendt on Eichmann, includes several important essays on that topic. Representing the proceedings of a conference on Arendt in Jerusalem in late 1997, it betokens a thaw in the general Israeli frostiness toward one of its least favorite daughters.

Heidegger's Children is a creatively conceived intellectual history of four of the most prominent German Jewish students of Martin Heidegger in the interwar years—Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse—before Heidegger welcomed the Nazis to power in his inaugural address as rector at the University of Freiburg in 1933. Though Wolin is not interested in such mundane matters, it might have been interesting to know how many doctoral students Heidegger had supervised up to 1933 and how many of them were Jewish. Knowing this, we would know just how representative were these four students of the “magician of Messkirch.” Whatever the case, they were forced in the wake of their mentor's scandalous behavior to “philosophize with Heidegger against Heidegger.” What made this so difficult was that these four students “were as much his contemporaries as they were his juniors” and thus “all accepted, willy nilly a series of deep-seated prejudices concerning the nature of political modernity—democracy, liberalism, individual rights, and so forth—

that made it very difficult to articulate a meaningful theoretical standpoint in the post-war world." Less obliquely, Wolin claims that the work of these four figures, especially that of Arendt (who receives Wolin's most hostile treatment) and even of Marcuse (who seems to be his favorite), has been rendered unusable for a defense of the political values and institutions of liberal democracy because of a Heidegger-induced "flirtation with nihilism" or, less melodramatically, a rejection of modernity (p. 8).

There is much that is eminently sensible about Wolin's position. For instance, it should be recognized by now that it was very difficult for anyone to successfully negotiate the continental (and not just German) higher education system prior to 1945 without internalizing an elitist perspective, whatever one's political ideology. Marcuse, clearly a man of the Left, doubted the capacity of the democratic citizen-body to winnow out dangerous from worthy political ideas. (On this dimension of Marcuse's thought, particularly his controversial notion of "repressive tolerance," Wolin is remarkably silent.) Moreover, the secular and religious messianism that so shaped the future members of the Frankfurt School and other left-oriented thinkers during the Weimar period sat uncomfortably with the Enlightenment-based ethos of American liberal democracy, French republicanism, or the liberal traditionalism of British political culture—another point that Wolin ignores. The interwar years saw liberal democracy under siege from both ends of the political spectrum, not just from the German Right.

However interestingly Wolin's intellectual history of the Heidegger circle is conceived, it lacks a sense of proportion and contains some downright dubious interpretations. Though Löwith was perhaps Heidegger's first and most consistent critic in exposing the links between *Being and Time* (1927) and the National Socialist impulse, Wolin argues that Löwith's apolitical stoicism placed him too close to Heidegger's post-1934 "turn" away from activist political and cultural interventions. Maybe so. But this is hardly the Nazi-sympathizing Heidegger that Wolin wants to condemn. As already suggested, Marcuse gets off pretty lightly, which leads me to suspect that Wolin's harsh treatment of Arendt is another installment in the longstanding rivalry between members of the Frankfurt School and Arendt. Wolin charges Arendt with "anti-democratic bias" (p. 66), a highly questionable verdict. However critical Arendt could be of the culture of liberalism, one can plausibly argue that she became more, rather than less, democratic in her views in the course of her many years of residence in the United States. Nor is it anything but cheap psychologizing to suggest that Arendt's critical stance toward the Israeli government's handling of the Eichmann trial was merely a function of her undying devotion to her one-time lover, Heidegger, and of her desire to exonerate German culture from exclusive responsibility for the Holocaust. Using the familiar technique of guilt by interrogative insinuation, Wolin writes:

Could it have been those allegiances—uncanny and subterranean—that in some way led her to purvey such calumnies about the Jews in the Eichmann book? Could such remarks have been meant to absolve the Messkirch magician of his crimes on behalf of a regime that sought to wipe out the Jews, by insinuating that, in certain respects, they were no better than the Nazis? (p. 57).

The answer to both questions must be a resounding “no!” whatever one may think of Arendt’s treatment of Eichmann—especially given Wolin’s failure to provide either a sustained argument for his position or an in-depth analysis of Arendt’s personality or thought. Although *Heidegger’s Children* is dedicated to philosopher Jürgen Habermas, a second-generation Frankfurt School thinker, Wolin does not follow Habermas in trying to learn from Arendt rather than dismissing her out of hand.

No doubt Arendt found it far from easy to escape Heidegger’s seductive, albeit obscure, teachings. But as Dana Villa suggests in his essay in Aschheim’s collection, Arendt began her most Heideggerian book, *The Human Condition* (1958), with a Heideggerian diagnosis—the failure of modernity—and then reversed or abandoned the conceptual tools with which Heidegger explored those failures. Like Löwith, Arendt emphasized being-in-the-world with others, not the splendid isolation of the Cartesian cogito or the wariness toward others of Heidegger’s *Dasein*. Her whole concept of politics was based on the idea that monopolistic claims concerning truth and special treatment for ethnic, racial, and religious groups were profoundly destructive of the political realm. The latter depends upon dialogue and the ability to think oneself into the position of others (though not necessarily to empathize with them). Thus, for all her emphasis upon the courage and virtuosity of public speech and action, Arendt’s conception of politics is fundamentally foreign both to Heidegger’s “political existentialism” and to German legal theorist Carl Schmitt’s “decisionism” (also often identified as proto-fascist). Finally, in *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), Arendt developed a philosophical anthropology that placed human solidarity at the heart of a new sort of humanism and proposed the normative notion of “the right to have rights” as one of the crucial political implications of her emphasis upon human solidarity. How all this can be read to reflect a state of abject or destructive enthrallment to Heidegger’s thought and person baffles me.

Moreover, by stressing Arendt’s indebtedness to Heidegger to the degree that he does, Wolin seriously underestimates Karl Jaspers’ profound importance in shaping Arendt’s post-1945 thinking. Arendt’s thought, as both Barry Sharpe and Anson Rabinbach note, contains two versions of the philosopher’s relationship to politics. One focuses on the solitary, Olympian, anti-political thinker such as Heidegger and Plato (and perhaps Nietzsche); the other is represented by Socrates, Lessing, and, most importantly, Jaspers. The work of this latter group emphasizes the limits to knowledge and the dangers of philosophic hubris, along with an emphasis upon philosophy as a kind of “thinking with” more than a “thinking against” others. Indeed, Rabinbach and Peter Baehr—both of them contributors to *Hannah Arendt in Jerusalem*—offer valuable correctives to the Heidegger mania by placing Arendt in the context of both Jaspers’ and Max Weber’s work.

As mentioned earlier, there have been some new developments in the analysis of Arendt’s controversial treatment of Adolph Eichmann since the initial firestorm of criticism surrounding *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. One theme pursued by Sharpe and by Susan Neiman in her “Theodicy in Jerusalem” (the latter’s essay appearing in the Aschheim collection) is the way that the Eichmann case forced the concept of judgment to the forefront of Arendt’s political and philosophical concerns, where it re-

mained a preoccupation (indeed, the third part of Arendt's unfinished *Life of the Mind* was to be devoted to "Judging"). Arendt came to realize that it was not Eichmann's (or the Jewish councils') intentions that were crucial to understanding or evaluating their actions; rather, it was their "judgment." Where intentions are almost always a matter of speculation and obscurely private, the judgments of historical actors, as embodied in their actions, are much more visible.

Sharpe's book offers a subtle reading of the various modes of judgment and their accompanying feeling-tone. Where Eichmann, for instance, "modestly" abjured judgment of his superiors at the Wannsee Conference in early 1942 and thus signed on, as it were, to a central position in the Nazi network of mass murder, Arendt "arrogantly" claimed the right to judge not only Eichmann but, more controversially, the Jewish councils (*Judenräte*) in Poland, which in her view failed to obstruct the process whereby the ghettos were emptied and their inhabitants shipped eastward to the extermination camps. Sharpe also notes that whereas Gershom Scholem stressed the need for a certain temporal distance before appropriate judgment could be passed on the councils, Arendt emphasized the need for a certain emotional distance from one's ethnic loyalties in order to avoid special pleading. It is now generally recognized, I think, that Arendt never claimed that European Jews were somehow as responsible for their fate as were the Nazis. Thus, Wolin's canard that Arendt "insinuat[ed] that, in certain respects, they [the Jews] were no better than the Nazis" (Wolin, p. 75) represents a return to the vicious and unproductive polemics of the 1960s. Indeed, in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Arendt herself criticized prosecutor Gideon Hausner for repeatedly raising the "cruel and silly question" of why there had not been more organized Jewish resistance.¹ Her criticism, however one may evaluate it, was directed against the Jewish leadership—not against European Jewry as a whole. In this case, Arendt was hardly siding with elites, as Wolin wants to claim about her generally.

That Eichmann exemplified what Arendt controversially referred to as the "banality of evil" now also seems more palatable, if it is specified that Arendt was referring to how he presented himself to others and to himself, and not to the effects of his decisions. Arendt's claim that Eichmann simply did not, or could not, "think what he was doing" refers to his failure of moral imagination and to his inability to place himself in the position of the other, not to a failure of rationality or logic. Arendt was the last person to see the rationality of intellectual elites as an answer to the moral dilemmas presented by totalitarian regimes. Richard Bernstein's careful analysis of Arendt's shift from the idea of "radical evil" in *Origins of Totalitarianism* to that of the "banality of evil" in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* is also generally accepted, though it seems to me that this dichotomy needs clarification along the following lines: whereas "radical evil" refers to the monstrous effects of Nazi policy under certain historical conditions, the "banality of evil" derives from how Eichmann seemed to conceive of his own actions as lacking moral consequences.² That said, Yaacov Lozowick's contribution to the Aschheim volume, "Malicious Clerks: The Nazi Security Police and the Banality of Evil," makes a convincing argument that, given the kind of ideological indoctrination Eichmann received, it was very unlikely that he was somehow innocent of strong antisemitic feelings. Thus, even if we accept that all Nazis were not vicious antisemites, it is hard to make a plausible claim that Eichmann belongs among those who were unwitting or unwilling in these matters. In short, he and his colleagues

were “no mindless bureaucrats” (Aschheim, p. 221). Of course, Arendt’s defenders might respond that, contrary to Daniel Goldhagen’s claims in *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* (1996), “exterminationist” antisemitism was actually very rare; what was so monstrous—and significant—about Nazis like Eichmann was not their antisemitism as such but their moral heedlessness in facilitating the mass extermination of Jews, which can hardly be explained by antisemitism alone.

But if antisemitism was not enough, what *did* constitute an adequate explanation for Eichmann in Arendt’s eyes? Several of Arendt’s most thoughtful critics focus on what they see as the abstract universalism that prevents her from accepting radical antisemitism as a sufficient explanation for the Shoah. For instance, though Arendt affirmed the right of Israel to try Eichmann, she thought that the charge against him of “crimes against the Jewish people”—that is, of genocide—was inadequate to capture the historical uniqueness of the “bureaucratic murder” and “administrative massacre” that he represented. Michael Marrus suggests that this was why Arendt was not so much interested in Eichmann as a “garden variety anti-Semite” but rather as an example of a new type of “totalitarian bureaucrat” (Aschheim, p. 209). As Arendt herself had observed in the 1940s, such types were responsible for mass murder on an industrial scale but were not guilty of actually carrying it out. As a functionary in the bureaucracy of the modern terror-state, Eichmann and his sort were not merely responsible for genocide but also for “crimes against humanity”; or as Arendt expressed it: “crimes against mankind committed on the body of the Jewish people” (Aschheim, p. 208).

One can begin to see the outlines of the current position-taking on Eichmann and his trial. On one side stands Arendt, who stresses the Holocaust as a peculiarly modern phenomenon growing out of the totalitarian nature of Nazi Germany, with bureaucratic types like Eichmann as the key facilitators. According to her, if Eichmann had to be tried, then he should have been tried for the crimes for which he was responsible and not presented as the key figure in the entire genocidal project of the Nazis. By doing the latter, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and the prosecutors turned the Eichmann trial into a “show trial.”³ By “show trial,” Arendt did not really mean to compare the Eichmann trial with the Moscow Trials, where false charges were directed against defendants. She had no doubt about Eichmann’s guilt. It was rather that the Israeli government wanted the trial to be a site or stage where the public education of the Israeli people and of world opinion could take place. (This, by the way, seems to me an example of where Arendt’s loose phrasing was seriously misleading.) As Shoshana Felman has recently pointed out, whereas the Israeli government wanted to present a “narrative of victimhood” and “heroism” in and through the trial, Arendt insisted that a narrative of Jewish “responsibility” was central.⁴ Though the workings of the Nazi bureaucracy of death seemed inexorable, Arendt objected to the view that absolved the Jews—or anyone—of the responsibility for resisting the Nazis. But it was not that the Jewish councils were “responsible” for the Holocaust. Rather, they were responsible for (not) resisting by any and all possible means. By ignoring the issue of the role of the Jewish councils, Eichmann’s prosecutors were essentially asserting that resistance had been impossible and that victimhood was the appropriate role to assume. Indeed, in *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt had strongly objected to the Zionist commitment to the doctrine of “eternal anti-Semitism.”⁵ It was precisely this doctrine that she saw at work behind the scenes in what she per-

ceived to be Ben-Gurion's stage management of the trial. Arendt's objection to the claim of the inevitability of antisemitism represents an important continuity between *Origins* and *Eichmann*.

Such a detached and almost unbearably rigorous point of view disturbed many people then and now. In his contribution to Gary Smith's collection, Amos Elon describes how Arendt's old friend Gershom Scholem referred to Arendt's lack of *Herzenstakt* and a lack of "love" for the Jewish people. In other words, Arendt's universalist perspective gave the impression of a kind of "heartlessness" (Smith, p. 18). According to this view, Arendt not only was wrong in certain of her judgments, she also failed to find the appropriate tone with which to articulate those judgments: she was tone-deaf to what would injure and what would not. Generally, as Moishe Postone emphasizes in his essay, the whole controversy concerns whether we see *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, as Arendt did, as a "case study of totalitarianism on the level of the individual" and "primarily a report on the Eichmann trial" (as she claimed it was) or as "an historical analysis of the Holocaust" (Smith, pp. 265–266). Put another way, Arendt was as guilty of introducing extraneous issues into her discussion as was the Israeli prosecution, since she was concerned to confirm her own thesis regarding totalitarianism. And as Dan Diner shrewdly notes in his essay in Smith's volume, the issue of whether Eichmann exemplified "banality" or "monstrosity" reflects—and anticipates—the historiographical conflict between the "functionalists" and the "intentionalists," between those who see the Holocaust as the unforeseen result of a complicated and largely contingent set of circumstances and those who see extermination as being present at the very creation of the Nazi project by Hitler. For those who stress the specifically Jewish dimension of the Holocaust, Arendt's emphasis on modernity rather than eternal antisemitism; on totalitarianism rather than the Holocaust; on the bureaucratic mindlessness and the perverse self-effacement of Eichmann rather than his deep-seated antisemitism; on crimes against humanity rather than crimes against the Jewish people—in sum, Arendt's tendency to see the fate of Jews as representative of the perils of modernity indicates a gigantic failure of perception. Of course, Arendt's position is not as simple as I have just made it out to be. But as posed by those who adopt the particularist perspective, the conflict with Arendt seems to be as irresolvable, if less bitter, than the earlier demonizing of her work.

Other aspects of *Eichmann in Jerusalem* need more analysis if we are to continue to discuss this book and the Eichmann trial with any profit. For instance, it is plausible to suggest that Arendt's thesis about Eichmann as a type might be tenable for some, but not all, Nazis. One of the valuable aspects of Theodor Adorno's *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950) was his suggestion that there were several types of authoritarian personalities, that evil, as it were, came in many shapes, sizes, forms, and modes. Insofar as Arendt's book was merely a "report," as she always insisted, her thesis about what Eichmann revealed about the nature of evil might well be qualified in this way. In other words, he represented a type of evil but not the only one. Arendt, however, wanted it both ways. She did not simply offer a report on the trial but also speculated widely about a whole series of matters ranging from questions of historical responsibility to the nature of evil to the collapse of European conscience and beyond. Thus, one of the flaws in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* is Arendt's failure to think through what type of book was needed to deal adequately with such a surpass-

ingly momentous topic. Having introduced questions of moral responsibility, the nature of conscience, and the fact of historical evil, it was intellectually irresponsible to fail to explore these issues with sufficient complexity. For instance, her hostility to the tradition of modern psychoanalytic thought kept her from seeing that certain psychoanalytic notions such as “splitting” or “denial” might have helped explain Eichmann the man. Indeed, the whole notion of ambivalence might be one way to begin to think about Eichmann’s attitude toward Jews, toward whom he felt both a certain attraction and a deep hostility. Arendt’s theoretical equipment—not her intelligence or sensibility—may simply have been inadequate to deal with Eichmann. This might more plausibly be where the legacy of Heidegger (and Jaspers) let her down.

There are also some new historical claims that shed important light on the topic. For instance, Annette Wieviorka points out that the Eichmann trial was perhaps the first time that “witnesses” (*Zeugen*) were made central in the trial of Nazi war criminals. Attending to their testimony, however irrelevant it seemed to Arendt the legal conservative,⁶ represented a momentous shift in focus from perpetrators to victims, from basing a case on the written documents of those who exercised power to focusing on the memories of those who had survived the murderous application of that power. On this issue, Arendt’s objections to the supposedly irrelevant material introduced into the trial proceedings have themselves proven irrelevant and shortsighted.

Finally, I suspect that the time is ripe for some sort of large historical synthesis of the Eichmann case, not just for the sake of Arendt studies but in order to see where the whole issue has left us, and where we have left it, four decades later. For this, the generalizing work of philosophers and political theorists needs to pay more attention to the event itself and to the evidence of historians and political scientists, not just in Germany but also in Israel and the United States. It does make a difference in assessing the trial, and Arendt’s account of it, to learn about its historical importance in terms of the novelty of the use of survivor testimony, as Wieviorka suggests, and the place of the trial in the history of Israel, as Tom Segev’s work has emphasized.⁷ Put another way, memory as well as history, lived experience as well as documented actions, are at issue. Historians may also need to take more account of what was morally at stake in assessing the relative importance of the Israeli government’s emphasis upon Jewish victimhood versus Arendt’s focus upon Jewish responsibility. Finally, the claim either to speak for “the people,” or that the “good” of the people should take precedence over considerations of historical or juridical truth and complexity, should always be regarded with the kind of extreme skepticism that Arendt herself displayed.

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Notes

1. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (New York: 1963), 9.

2. See Richard J. Bernstein, *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Question* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1996).

3. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 2.

4. See Shoshana Felman, "Theaters of Justice: Arendt in Jerusalem, the Eichmann Trial, and the Redefinition of Legal Meaning in the Wake of the Holocaust," *Critical Inquiry* 27 (Winter 2001), 201–238.

5. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2nd ed. (Cleveland: 1958), 5–7.

6. In her article, Shoshana Felman makes the important point that, whereas Arendt's view of the purpose of the trial was quite conservative, her view of modern history as being marked by a radical break with past traditions of thought was itself radical. Conversely, the Israeli government's view was radical (in jurisprudential terms) in that it introduced victim testimony, but at the same time traditional in its emphasis on the historical continuity between present and past antisemitism as the prime explanation for both the Holocaust and Eichmann's actions.

7. See Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* (New York: 1993).

Do the Ties Still Bind? American Jews and Israel

Jerold S. Auerbach, *Are We One? Jewish Identity in the United States and Israel*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001. 248 pp.

Allon Gal and Alfred Gottschalk (eds.), *Beyond Survival and Philanthropy: American Jewry and Israel*. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2000. 264 pp.

Steven T. Rosenthal, *Irreconcilable Differences: The Waning of the American Jewish Love Affair with Israel*. Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2001. 231 pp.

Until the fall of 2001, a growing gap between American Jewry and Israel was readily apparent. For example, the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey indicated that a higher percentage of baby boomers (those born between 1946–1964), as compared with their elders, the “pre-WWII cohort” born between 1925–1945, had never visited Israel, while the latter were significantly more attached emotionally to Israel than the former.¹ Jack Wertheimer quotes Steven Cohen, who found only 52 percent of his respondents agreeing with the statement “Israel is critical in sustaining American Jewish life.” Cohen concluded that while “Israel can be termed ‘very important’ to a fifth to a quarter of American Jews, it is of ‘little importance’ to about a third of the population, and of intermediate importance to just under half of American Jewry.”² Charles Liebman cited a number of other indicators of this trend. For example, a 1998 poll conducted by the *Los Angeles Times* and the Israeli daily *Yedioth Ahronoth* found that only 58 percent of American Jews felt close to Israel—a 17 percent drop from the previous decade. Likewise, in his review of the American Jewish Committee’s study of American Jews, Liebman found a decline of 6 percent in those reporting close feelings to Israel and an increase of 7 percent in those reporting distant feelings (the data are from 1993 and 1997).³

To the authors of two of the three books under review, the reasons for “the disaffection of American Jews” are obvious. Jerold S. Auerbach and Steven T. Rosenthal concur that the source is developments in Israel, although that is the extent of their agreement. Ideologically, they are poles apart, and each is swayed by his particular ideology. Auerbach is conservative both politically and religiously, and he attributes much of the growing American Jewish disaffection with Israel to what he views as the shallowness of American Judaism, as well as to Israel’s not being Jewish enough. Rosenthal, in contrast, is a liberal both politically and religiously, and he identifies the problem as being rooted in Israel’s being *too* Jewish, especially since the ascendancy of the Likud under Menachem Begin in 1977.

Auerbach begins with an autobiographical account of the development of his own

Jewish consciousness. He was raised in a typical Jewishly ignorant liberal household, whose religio-ethnic involvement ceased with his bar mitzvah. His Jewish metamorphosis, which led him to perceive liberalism and secular Zionism as modern strategies of Jewish assimilation, began with a sabbatical year in Israel in the early 1970s. There he became acquainted with religious Zionism, was drawn to it, and came to identify with its militantly conservative faction. Although he does not say so explicitly, he suggests that the religious-nationalist settlers of Kiryat Arba and Hebron are the most authentic Zionists, whereas secular Zionism is Jewishly bankrupt. In contrast to Yoram Hazony, who views Theodor Herzl as *the* authentic Zionist leader (and despite the fact that he refers to Hazony with admiration), for Auerbach, Herzl was an assimilationist whose vision and leadership could only pervert authentic Judaism.⁴ Although Auerbach professes to be an ardent Zionist, the image of Herzl in his book is almost as demonic as that of the staunchly anti-Zionist Neturei Karta sect. It is a shame that Auerbach was not more balanced in his criticism. Such a jeremiad from one who makes claim to represent the only authentic version of Zionism—while himself living in the United States—is not likely to be taken seriously by those who are not already adherents of his school of thought.

On the opposite side of the religio-political spectrum is Steven Rosenthal. A self-professed critic of Israel, his premise is that the “love affair” between American Jews and Israel is now over, as increasing numbers of American Jews are becoming disenchanted with the Jewish state. Rosenthal contends that the roots of this disenchantment lie in Israeli actions and policies that violate American Jewish sensibilities and liberal democratic values. Foremost among these are the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, the Pollard spy case, the handling of the Palestinian intifada of the 1980s, and the longstanding “Who is a Jew?” controversy. According to Rosenthal, American Jews disagree with Israel so strongly on these and, increasingly, on other matters that “irreconcilable differences” have arisen between the two former “lovers.”

One of the problems with Rosenthal’s book is that his polemics get in the way of his own analysis on certain key questions. He begins by recognizing that Israel had special meaning for the generation that witnessed the Holocaust and the rebirth of the Jewish state firsthand, that this generation is dying out, and that those who were born later take Israel for granted and are emotionally less attached to it. He is also aware of the significant increases in the rate of intermarriage and of the declining rates of Jewish education and religiosity in the United States. In his analysis, American Jewish support for Israel, especially after 1967, was simply a way of avoiding complexities:

How much easier to find one’s identity in Israel than in a religion that had become increasingly unfashionable. How much more comfortable to invest one’s emotions in Zionism, where the issue appeared to be that of simple survival, than in the complexities of the political liberalism with which American Jews had so identified. How much more reassuring to identify with the clear military decisiveness of Israel rather than with the ambiguity of the political process in America or the quagmire in Vietnam (p. 32).

Nonetheless, he insists that the decline in emotional support for Israel is due to developments in Israel rather than among American Jews. By implication, if not explicitly, Rosenthal condemns Israel’s actions and views it as having abandoned its pi-

oneering socialist Zionist values, which were much more consonant with the values of American Jewish liberalism.

The limits of Rosenthal's familiarity with Jewish matters manifest themselves in various places, as in his antipathy toward Menachem Begin, who is presented as a figure with no redeeming features. Rosenthal attributes Begin's support among traditional Jews to his "overt religiosity," for which he seems to have no patience and of which he has little understanding. He clearly has no love for Orthodox Judaism. To him, all Orthodox Jews not only hail from Brooklyn but are also right-wing religious fanatics, fundamentalists, and messianists. He writes that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated in Jerusalem rather than in Tel Aviv (by implication, blaming the more "religious" city), and he misspells the names of many Jewish leaders in Israel and in the United States.

Rosenthal's best chapter is his last, in which he analyzes data and other evidence indicating a decline in American Jewish support for Israel. At this point he begins to examine the situation in terms of developments within both American Jewry and Israel. Even here, however, the work is less than satisfying. He is much too brief and incomplete. A more scholarly book would incorporate the relevant material in Rosenthal's first nine chapters as an introduction, and would then proceed to explain American Jewish-Israeli relations in terms of an in-depth analysis of the character and nature of Jewish identity in the United States and Israel. That book has yet to be written.

The lead article in the volume edited by Allon Gal and Alfred Gottschalk (based on papers from a conference sponsored jointly by the Ben-Gurion University Center for North American Jewry and the Ben-Gurion Research Center, together with the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion) comprises a penetrating analysis of the nature of that relationship and what may transpire in the future. This opening article, by Steven Cohen and Charles Liebman, is the most original in the book. The authors begin with the observation, based on surveys, that American Jews and Israelis are becoming increasingly indifferent to each other. The root of this situation lies in the "mobilized model" nature of the relationship—that is, a relationship characterized by political activity and philanthropy. Today's American Jews, however, no longer find meaning in these kinds of activity. After all, Israel is quite secure, and even some prominent Israelis have asserted that Israel no longer needs American Jewish philanthropy. At the same time, contemporary American Jews, like Americans in general, as Robert Wuthnow and Wade Clark Roof argue, are on a "quest" to find purpose and meaning in their personal existence.⁵

As I have noted in my book on Jewish baby boomers, Cohen and Liebman believe that American Jews now find meaning in the private, not communal, sphere. Therefore, Israel will be meaningful to American Jews only when they can find personal meaning in it. How this comes to pass remains to be determined.

All of the works under review were written prior to "Intifada II" and "9/11." Since then, major sociocultural changes appear to have taken place. In the United States, there is now a significantly heightened sense of anxiety concerning the future of global terrorism. For several decades, American social scientists had been writing of a decreasing sense of community and civic involvement alongside increasing individualization and atomization in U.S. society.⁶ Robert Putnam argued, with consid-

erable supportive data, that Americans were increasingly detached from social groups and were less likely to be involved in civic activities. They were less likely to join PTA's, unions, political parties, and a host of other social groups; all this, he warned, had serious implications for the future of American society.⁷ Thus few, if any, would have predicted the tremendous civic involvement that manifested itself after the attacks of September 11. Indeed, Putnam himself wrote an op-ed piece in the *New York Times* precisely on that subject.⁸ Whether this is indicative of a long-term shift remains to be seen. At least for the time being, however, because of the significantly decreased sense of security, it does seem likely that the pendulum has shifted and that there has been an intensified spirit of community in the United States.

For America's Jews, the shift is much more profound. In addition to the Al Qaeda terror against the United States and this movement's overt antisemitism (alongside Palestinian suicide bombings supported by a variety of pro-Palestinian groups), a variety of related issues have shaken the security of American Jewry. The sense of growing antisemitism "out there" was eloquently expressed by Jonathan Rosen in a *New York Times Magazine* article published in November 2001.⁹ And as reported in the paper in April 2002:

Perhaps even more than the conflict in the Middle East, the situation in Europe has shaken American Jews' sense of security. A poll this month showed that more people in France, Italy and Britain sympathized with the Palestinians than with Israel. Statements from the United Nations and the European Union condemning Israeli occupation and the Israeli Army's invasion of West Bank cities, coupled with anti-Semitic attacks on Jewish cemeteries, school buses and a teenage soccer team, have led many to draw parallels with anti-Jewish attitudes abroad in the 1930's.¹⁰

As Steven Bayme, in his essay in the Gal and Gottschalk volume, had suggested might happen, the "mobilized model" relationship between American Jews and Israel has once again emerged as significant, at least among those who are identified with the organized Jewish community. The question is how this renewed sense of connection with Israel can be deepened so that it will remain strong even after there is some resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The underlying recommendations of Cohen and Liebman are even more relevant under the present conditions than they were when peace and prosperity in Israel, as well as in the United States, appeared to be just over the horizon.

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Notes

1. See Chaim I. Waxman, *Jewish Baby Boomers: A Communal Perspective* (Albany: 2001), 81–84.

2. Steven M. Cohen, cited in Jack Wertheimer, "The Disaffection of American Jews," *Commentary* (May 1998), 46. Cohen's data were subsequently published in his *Religious Stability and Ethnic Decline: Emerging Patterns of Jewish Identity in the United States* (New York: 1998), 25.

3. See Charles S. Liebman, "American Jews and Israel: Has the Romance Ended?," *Society* 36 (May/June 1999), 15.
4. See Yoram Hazony, *The Jewish State: The Struggle for Israel's Soul* (New York: 2000).
5. See Robert Wuthrow, *After Heaven: Spirituality in America since the 1950s* (Berkeley: 1998); Wade Clark Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion* (Princeton: 1999).
6. See, for example, Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, updated ed. (Berkeley: 1996).
7. See Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse of American Community* (New York: 2000).
8. See Robert D. Putnam, "A Better Society in a Time of War," *New York Times*, 19 Oct. 2001.
9. See Jonathan Rosen, "The Uncomfortable Question of Anti-Semitism," *New York Times Magazine*, 4 Nov. 2001.
10. Jodi Wilgoren, "Unusually Unified in Solidarity with Israel, But Also Unusually Unnerved," *New York Times*, 22 April 2002.

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Book Reviews

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Antisemitism, Holocaust, and Genocide

Jean-Claude Favez, *The Red Cross and the Holocaust*, ed. and trans. John and Beryl Fletcher. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. xxxii + 353 pp.

Jean-Claude Favez's detailed examination of how the Red Cross responded to the Holocaust, originally published in French in 1989, has at long last reached an English-language audience. *The Red Cross and the Holocaust*, a somewhat abridged version of Favez's *Une Mission Impossible?*, demonstrates how the mission was far from impossible: were it not for the shortsightedness and extreme legalism of its leaders, the Red Cross could have provided more substantial aid to the Jews under Nazi domination.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), an independent agency staffed by Swiss citizens, was established in 1863 for the purpose of assisting prisoners of war, and injured or sick combatants, in accordance with the Geneva Conventions. Although no international treaties specifically provided for the care of civilian prisoners, this task was taken up by the ICRC after the First World War. However, when it came to the plight of Jews in Hitler-occupied Europe, "weary prudence" characterized the attitude of ICRC president Max Huber and his colleagues (p. 19). Red Cross officials frequently responded to news of the Holocaust "in a manner which was both professionally neutral and diplomatically evasive," and in their internal correspondence, "the terms used to describe the unimaginable were at best diplomatic and at worst woefully inadequate" (p. 29).

Typical of their attitude was the response of Suzanne Ferriere, an ICRC official, to a British Red Cross official's inquiry about the persecution of the Jews: "It is a very tragic situation and we cannot do anything about it." Similarly, a proposal made in April 1942 to visit a Nazi detention camp in France was not acted upon because, according to Huber,

in the main the ICRC is a go-between two warring powers and . . . should only intervene in cases falling into this category. As a consequence, these questions concerning the internal regime of a country, while obviously interesting from a humanitarian point of view, are not the specific responsibility of the Red Cross (pp. 150–151).

Favez reveals how the ICRC sometimes hesitated even to pass on information about the plight of the Jews. For instance, a cable from Tel Aviv in March 1940 inquiring about the fate of the Jews of Stettin received this reply from the ICRC: "Sorry unable answer such questions being outside scope of our activity"—even though the Swiss newspaper *Neue Zurcher* had just two weeks earlier published an eyewitness account from its Berlin correspondent about the deportation of Jews from Stettin

(p. 33). When the U.S. State Department sought information in October 1942 to confirm the initial reports of genocide, the ICRC declined to assist its efforts because of its "serious misgivings about passing on information to a government about the fate of people not nationals of the country making the enquiry." "In other words," Favez notes, "since the Jews concerned were not American citizens, the Committee was unwilling to give the U.S. administration any information at all" (p. 40).

At that time, ICRC leaders were engaged in a private debate over whether to issue a public appeal on behalf of the Jews. Once again, they proved themselves to be "wedded to the organization's pre-1939 legalistic standards," as Monty Penkower aptly phrased it.¹ Afraid that a public appeal might violate the ICRC's principle of not discriminating between victims on the basis of ethnicity, or might be seen as straying from its guidelines by delving into a category of victims not specifically covered by existing international agreements, Red Cross leaders decided to refrain from issuing any public statement.

Red Cross headquarters took great pride in the fact that it sent hundreds of thousands of food parcels to individuals detained by the Nazis in prisons and detention camps (such parcels could not be sent to death camps). These packages did provide a modest amount of assistance, albeit to a relatively small number of people. However, the percentage that actually reached the intended recipients is unknown. While the "significance [of the parcels policy] for those who benefited from it should not be underestimated," Favez remarks, "in the eyes of leading [ICRC] figures it became an end in itself and its success overrode every other consideration" (p. 77)—including, above all, organizing or aiding actual rescue attempts.

Although (like others in the Free World) Red Cross leaders were fully aware of the genocide by late 1942, its headquarters repeatedly rejected proposals by Jewish organizations to intervene. For example, Red Cross leaders refused a request by the World Jewish Congress (WJC) to help encourage neutral countries to admit more refugees; they rebuffed an American Jewish Congress entreaty to investigate the massacres; and they even declined to join an appeal by the World Jewish Congress to Allied leaders to put five million pounds at the disposal of the ICRC to aid occupied populations. As late as June 1944, Johannes von Schwarzenberg, the ICRC official in charge of Jewish matters, spurned a World Jewish Congress official's request for help on the grounds "that the ICRC could not protest to the Germans about the Jews because the ICRC lacked official channels of any kind to communicate with the German authorities about the Jews" (p. 80).

Favez's account of the Red Cross' relations with Jewish organizations is less than comprehensive; interested readers will want to consult Monty Penkower's important essay of 1979 on the subject. Among other interesting facts recounted by Penkower is the response of the ICRC representative in Washington, D.C. to a World Jewish Congress appeal in 1944: "We are but a Committee of goodwill. . . . What can we do with a great power which is determined to justify its policy?" Penkower also quotes memoranda by A. Leon Kubowitzki of the WJC in which the Red Cross' attitude toward the Jews under Hitler is bitterly characterized as "a blank wall of stubbornness and bad will."²

Another factor shaping the Red Cross' response to the Holocaust was the desire of its leaders to conform with the wishes of Swiss authorities and Swiss public opinion.

For example, despite the intensification of the refugee crisis in 1938 as a result of the German annexation of Austria and the Kristallnacht pogroms, the ICRC “kept a low profile on the question of Jewish emigration” because the Swiss people strongly opposed the admittance of Jewish refugees to Switzerland (p. 19). Favez reports that the ICRC’s decision of 1942 to refrain from issuing a public appeal specifically on behalf of the Jews was made “under pressure from the Swiss authorities,” who were nervous about any step that might be perceived as compromising Switzerland’s wartime neutrality (p. 279). Red Cross leaders were “not entirely immune from Swiss chauvinism in time of war,” Favez concludes (p. 282). Although the ICRC eventually participated in a limited number of projects involving emigration (but not to Switzerland), its contribution was usually too little, too late. How much more might have been achieved in the area of emigration is uncertain, but in Favez’s view, “it should have abandoned its traditional credentials, kept legal principles at length, and, taking the bull by the horns, should have gone in for untried methods” (p. 115).

As part of the Nazis’ disinformation strategy, officials of the German Red Cross were permitted to visit Theresienstadt, a transit point for Jews being shipped to Auschwitz, in June 1943. A year later, an ICRC representative, together with two officials of the Danish Red Cross, again toured the camp. With Theresienstadt’s flower beds trimmed and its orchestra well rehearsed, the Nazis sought to present the camp as an *Endlager*, or final destination camp where Jewish prisoners lived happily; the ICRC official’s report of the visit seemed to confirm that claim. When, after the visit, “the German government on the one hand, and the World Jewish Congress on the other, sought [the Red Cross’s] endorsement of their arguments or their accusations,” the ICRC “reacted vigorously” to both sides, adopting a stance of absolute neutrality by treating the Nazis and the WJC as if they were equally untrustworthy (p. 45).

In his 1946 review of the Red Cross’ record during the Holocaust, ICRC member Jacques Cheviere excused the organization’s ultra-cautious approach on the grounds that public appeals on behalf of the Jews could have meant “stoking a fire that is ever ready to flare up” (p. 91). Even at that late date, he failed to grasp that the fires had long since flared up, and indeed had been consuming millions while the ICRC stood by.

Favez is the first historian to have been granted complete access to the records of the Red Cross, and he has mined them well. Despite its somewhat stiff translation and the author’s occasional tendency to get bogged down in tangential details, *The Red Cross and the Holocaust* ably documents a crucial chapter in the history of the Shoah and constitutes an important contribution to the historiography of international responses to this unprecedented tragedy.

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Notes

1. See Monty Penkower, “The World Jewish Congress Confronts the International Red Cross,” *Jewish Social Studies* 41 (1979), 246.
2. *Ibid.*, 232.

Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. xvi + 359 pp.

Robert Gellately's new book, *Backing Hitler*, follows two tracks. On the one hand, Gellately looks at key instruments of Nazi terror and coercion—the police, the courts, and the camps—and the policies they pursued. On the other hand, and this is by far the more important and original aspect of the book, he examines both how these instruments and policies of terror and coercion were represented to the German public and how these representations were received. He comes to the devastating and persuasive conclusion that “on balance, the coercive practices, the repression, and persecution won far more support for the dictatorship than they lost” (p. 259).

In arguing that the Hitler dictatorship enjoyed broad popular support, Gellately accepts the traditional conclusions that the success of the Nazi regime in ending massive unemployment and political gridlock at home, and national weakness and humiliation abroad, were essential components of Hitler's popularity. But he adds another key component that has hitherto not received sufficient attention, namely, the pervasive perception that Hitler and the Nazi regime waged a necessary and successful “war on crime.” It does not come as a surprise to learn that the German police were among the first institutions and people to welcome the Nazi establishment of a police state. But Gellately effectively argues that most Germans welcomed this development as well, gladly surrendering freedoms associated with the “degenerate” Weimar democracy in return for the destruction of the “Marxist threat” and the cleansing of German streets of beggars, vagrants, prostitutes, pimps, and habitual and petty criminals. Precisely because the Nazi terror of 1933–1939 was what Gellately terms a “mini-terror” that focused selectively on the aliens and outcasts of German bourgeois society, most Germans perceived it as a positive achievement of the regime, not a personal threat. The Nazis effectively capitalized upon this sentiment, representing the police as “friends and helpers” (to be celebrated in the annual “Day of the German Police”) and the concentration camps as wholesome boot camps offering constructive “work therapy” to the salvageable elements and indefinite confinement to the incorrigible. The creation of new Special Courts and People's Courts to provide “speedy” justice, as well as “police justice” entirely outside the court system, were likewise portrayed and accepted as necessary elements of the “war on crime.”

For the prewar years, Gellately makes skillful and original use of the German press. For the war years, he turns increasingly to a source base he already mastered for his previous book, *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy* (1990)—the surviving Gestapo files of Würzburg, Düsseldorf, and the Palatinate. Here he examines the role of the population in abetting and enforcing the persecution of Jews, foreign workers (especially from Poland), and German listeners to foreign radio broadcasts. He notes that although denunciation was a major factor in all three forms of persecution, it played its most important role in sparking the investigation of fellow Germans listening to foreign radio broadcasts. He also notes that most of the 30,000–40,000 convictions in the military courts for “undermining the will to win” were initiated by Germans denouncing their comrades in arms. In short, even as the

war enabled the Nazis to revolutionize the revolution, popular support for the regime and popular participation in its perversions of justice did not diminish.

Gellately devotes considerable attention to the last year and especially to the final months and days of the Nazi regime. He emphasizes the proliferation of camps in the highly visible “public spaces” of German life, the chaotic and horrendous death marches, and the last horrific spasm of “German on German” terror, in which executions of alleged defeatists and security threats often continued up until the last minutes before the arrival of Allied troops. Despite this last orgy of terror played out openly before German eyes, Gellately argues, the social consensus behind the regime held virtually to the end.

For many years, beginning with Edward N. Petersen’s *The Limits of Hitler’s Power* (1969) and culminating in the wave of *Alltagsgeschichte* (the history of daily life), the Bavarian Project, and the notion of *Resistenz* (selective nonaccommodation), one major thrust of scholarship on the social history of Nazi Germany was to excavate and emphasize the niches in society that remained relatively immune from Nazi penetration. In the past decade, the focus has shifted to examination of the ways in which “ordinary Germans” both supported the regime and participated in its worst atrocities. Gellately’s most recent book is a worthy and important contribution to that scholarly field of investigation.

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Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: 1889–1936: Hubris*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1999. xxx + 845 pp.

Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: 1936–1945: Nemesis*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2000. xlv + 1115 pp.

With each new biography of Adolf Hitler, the same question arises: Do we really need another one? Surely the 120,000 books and essays published on Hitler since the 1930s render this effort superfluous? Ian Kershaw’s answer is not only that a man who became a “paradigm for the 20th century” (vol. 1, p. xix) deserves unceasing interest, but that the aim of his biography goes beyond telling yet again the story of Hitler’s life and personality. Kershaw’s goal is to concentrate on an analysis of Hitler’s power. Instead of asking who Hitler was and what he did, Kershaw asks how was Hitler *possible*—Hitler, that is, as a political and social phenomenon. Kershaw directs his questions at German society, not at Hitler as an individual, since the solution to this puzzle “must be sought chiefly in German society” (vol. 1, p. xii). This strategy of deciphering the interrelationship between Hitler and the German people, a working method that is typical of social and structural historians, explains why the second volume of Kershaw’s biography, which deals with the final nine years of Hitler’s life, is longer than the first volume, which recounted his first 47 years.

Reviewing a biography of some two thousand pages several years after the first volume originally appeared strikes me as being a not particularly useful exercise unless the review focuses on a specific aspect of the author's work. Numerous reviews that have appeared until now have evaluated this erudite biography extensively and mostly in positive terms. Kershaw's innovative approach to explaining Hitler's power (his key phrase, "working toward the Führer," refers to the way in which the Nazi party and the Third Reich carried out Hitler's wishes without the need for explicit orders from him) has been on the whole accepted, and rightly so. Rather than provide another overview of the book's contents or a flattering overall appraisal, I intend to deal with a more narrowly focused issue that is central for anyone concerned with Jewish history.

As Kershaw himself notes: "It is surprising how little anti-Jewish policy and the genesis of the 'Final Solution' figured in . . . earlier biographies" (vol. 1, p. xii.). This comment is true not only for the early biographies but also for more recent histories of the Third Reich, of the Second World War, or even of the 20th century in general. In this regard, Kershaw's way of dealing with Hitler—the use of a "contrafactual approach"—(vol. 1, xxvii) seems to be especially useful. Basically, what Kershaw does is to ask whether, under a different head of state, the discrimination against Jews would have culminated in out-and-out genocide. What he offers in this work is an answer based on up-to-date research, condensed and synthesized within the broad framework of the Hitler-German interaction, that renders irrelevant the historical dispute between "functionalists" and "intentionalists."

The fate of the Jews, Kershaw shows, was determined at a number of major junctures. The first was the boycott of April 1, 1933, which paradigmatically demonstrates both the mechanism of "working toward the Führer" and the limitations of this mechanism. "Hitler's instincts," Kershaw notes, "favored the party radicals" (vol. 1, p. 471), meaning that the initiative, the pressure from below to get the antisemitic cart rolling, was indeed "working toward the Führer." But at the same time, Hitler "was under pressure to act," despite the fact that, for tactical reasons, he was willing to "accept, for the time being, less than the most radical discriminatory measures." The result was that Hitler's role in the boycott was "largely confined to giving his sanction to the legalization of measures already often illegally introduced by party activists" (vol. 1, p. 475). In other words, Hitler and his supporters were both working toward one another and, to some extent, against each other. In this case, at least, Kershaw's terminology of "working toward the Führer" may be a bit confusing. Perhaps a better way of explaining what occurred was that moderates were neutralized by radicals, both from above (party leaders) and from below (the rank and file).

The next juncture, the Nuremberg laws of September 1935, also demonstrates a possible problem with the notion of "working toward the Führer." Again, the pressure from below worked toward Hitler's basic desire, but not toward his short-term political plan. As Kershaw puts it: "The Nuremberg Laws . . . had been a compromise adopted by Hitler, counter to his instincts, to defuse the anti-Jewish agitation of the party. . . . Pressure from below; green light from above; further violence from below; brakes from above, assuaging the radicals through discriminatory legislation brakes" (vol. 1, p. 570). Another example of "working toward the Führer" and the way in which this encouraged initiative from below is manifest in the career of Adolf

Eichmann. According to Kershaw, Eichmann's rise from insignificant clerk to "'manager' of the 'Final Solution' showed how initiative . . . also pushed on the process of radicalisation precisely in those areas most closely connected with Hitler's own ideological fixations" (vol. 1, p. 541).

Once Austria and the Sudetenland had been annexed (with all the increase of population this entailed), the scope of the "Jewish question" broadened, causing in turn a Nazi reassessment of what would constitute a "solution to the problem." The possibility that Hitler "favored Palestine as a targeted territory" since 1937 may be more relevant to a discussion concerning the relationship between Nazism and Zionism, but it is at the same time an important indication of the evolutionary nature of the "solution" even in Hitler's mind (Kershaw reminds us that by October 1941, at the latest, Hitler changed his views on this matter [vol. 2, p. 488]). Since the Jews were seemingly not eager enough to leave Germany after the Anschluss, the regime looked for a way to accelerate emigration. The assassination of German diplomat Ernst vom Rath by a young Jew, Herschel Grynszpan, in November 1938 provided, in Kershaw's words, "an answer to a prayer . . . an opportunity seized upon by Goebbels" with "Hitler's full backing" (vol. 2, pp. 136, 150)—essentially as a means for Goebbels "to win back favour" with Hitler after his embarrassing love affair with the film star Lida Barova (vol. 2, p. 145). Here, too, the complex reciprocity of "working toward the Führer" is clearly demonstrated. Hitler did not personally react to the Grynszpan shooting. Instead, for three days following the incident, he let Goebbels incite the public and get the pogrom started, leaving Goebbels to understand that he was "in agreement with everything." Hitler worked toward the radicalized public opinion, and Goebbels worked toward Hitler's wishes (as did Göring and Himmler); yet *Kristallnacht* took place without any overt intervention on the part of Hitler. Criticism concerning the excessive nature of popular reaction to Grynszpan's deed was therefore not directed against Hitler (vol. 2, p. 150). Again, the working of Hitler and the radical rank-and-file toward each other was directed against the more moderate middle.

Similarly, following *Kristallnacht*, the further radicalization of the *Judenpolitik* was a mixture of Hitler's direct personal involvement and the wish (as expressed in the infamous meeting of the Nazi elite on November 12, 1938, which was devoted to a discussion of the "Jewish Question") to work toward the Führer. The paradoxical outcome was that the SS took over the euphemistically termed "solution of the Jewish question." Thus, both radicalization and deception became part of "working towards" the Führer. Nonetheless, according to Kershaw, there was no "indication that Hitler already had the 'Final Solution' in mind" at this time. Less than three months later, however, the language used by Hitler in his speech to the Reichstag of January 30, 1939—particularly the use of the word *Vernichtung* (extermination)—carried the "germ of a possible genocidal outcome" (vol. 2, pp. 151–152). If the people really wanted to work toward the Führer, and if they took his words seriously, which of course they did, then preparation of the Final Solution and the readiness to accept it were both made possible.

Kershaw's contention is that "Hitler laid down the guidelines [to the Final Solution] in March 1941," such that "self combustion would see to it, that, once lit, the genocidal fires would rage into a mighty conflagration . . . to destroy 'Jewish-Bolshevism.'" This contention answers the much discussed question regarding when the de-

cision to annihilate European Jewry was made, and also affirms that Hitler himself initiated the vicious cycle of “working toward the Führer” in this matter. Once the process had been launched, however, there was “no cause [for him] to participate in the daily business of the dirty work of genocide” (vol. 2, pp. 461–462). Kershaw’s general statement that Hitler was “anxious to avoid committing himself on paper” (vol. 2, p. 33)—which thus allowed for various modes of implementation—is crucial for understanding the process of the Final Solution.

Based on Kershaw’s assessment, what would have been the nature of Hitler’s solution to the “Jewish question” had his war plan been carried out as expected, that is, had Soviet Russia been crushed within weeks in the Barbarossa campaign of 1941? Would the Führer have been satisfied with the expulsion of all Jews of the Third Reich to the East? Kershaw’s very plausible conclusion is that the full-scale, industrialized killing of the Jews “was not in mind” when the Barbarossa campaign began. At the same time, the radicalization of measures against the Jews is easy to understand, given the popular readiness, both in the army and among the German public, to accept a merciless solution. Such radicalization was accelerated under the pressure of the fighting that took place between July and September 1941, and even more so toward the end of the year, as victory proved elusive. In August 1941, Hitler acceded to Goebbels’ wish to have the German Jews wear the yellow star; a month later, he “bowed to pressure to deport the German Jews to the East” (vol. 2, p. 479). But a bit later, under the changed circumstances, “Himmler could take it for granted that he was ‘working towards the Führer’ with his policy of all out murder” (vol. 2, p. 469). For those who listened to Hitler’s speeches on November 8, 1941 or on December 12, 1941, “no order or directive was necessary” (vol. 2, p. 491); the message had been understood. In sum, “Hitler’s role . . . often indirect, rather than overt . . .” was beyond any doubt “decisive and indispensable” (vol. 2, p. 495).

Arriving at this conclusion, Kershaw does not mean to assign exclusive blame to Hitler. On the contrary, based on the dynamics of “working toward the Führer” he has documented throughout, responsibility for the deeds and crimes of the Third Reich rests both on Hitler and on most of the German people.

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Sigmund Tobias, *Strange Haven: A Jewish Childhood in Wartime Shanghai*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999. xxiv + 162 pp.

We are fortunate in having a growing number of published and unpublished memoirs of persons who either lived in Shanghai during the Second World War or else came there as refugees from Central Europe. Whereas most of these memoirs are by men and women who were teenagers during their Shanghai years,¹ the author of the present work was a young child. Sigmund Tobias came to Shanghai at the age of seven, and his memories of being displaced and transplanted differ in many ways from those

of adolescents. His young age at the time accounts for the fact that Tobias' memoir contains only a brief description of the complex arrangements for departure that preceded the family's relocation to Shanghai. His is a very personal record and not an attempt at a factual account of his family's and other refugees' experiences.

Like many other German and Austrian Jewish males, Sigmund's father had been incarcerated in Dachau in 1938; he was released only after his wife managed to book passage for him to Shanghai. Soon after his arrival, mother and child joined him, and the three came to live in one room in Hongkou, the portion of Shanghai's International Settlement where the majority of Jewish refugees had found homes. Together with a number of other Jewish refugee children, young Sigmund attended the Kadoorie School, where instruction was in English; in the afternoons, he learned Hebrew at the *talmud torah* of the Oihel Moshe synagogue. In part because of a tilt of the head (surgically corrected after the war) that made him the subject of taunts, Sigmund did not distinguish himself at school. Instead, following the arrival of a contingent of Polish refugees together with the Mir yeshiva in 1941, he found himself more comfortable among the yeshiva students and began to spend more time with them rather than with his classmates. Eventually overcoming his parents' reluctance—the Tobias family, although observant, had discarded some Orthodox practices while still in Germany—Sigmund, at the age of 10, began to learn full-time in the yeshiva in 1942. Once there, he was exhorted by his teachers not only to become more observant but also to prevail upon his parents to do likewise, a situation that led to a good deal of family friction.

No appreciable changes occurred in young Sigmund's life after December 1941, the start of the Pacific War. To be sure, there were food shortages, illness, and death in the crowded ghetto from the spring of 1943 on. His parents tried to shelter him from these and other worries (including financial difficulties) while he pursued his studies and began preparing for his bar mitzvah. By the time it was celebrated in the fall of 1945, the war had ended and the Americans had arrived in Shanghai. Among them was a rabbi, an army chaplain, who came to Oihel Moshe on the day of Sigmund's bar mitzvah and was visibly moved by the unexpected sight of vibrant Judaism in remote Shanghai.

Sigmund, however, was not destined for the rabbinic or ultra-Orthodox life. When the Mir yeshiva and others departed in mid-1947, the youngster, now 15, found himself at loose ends. It was difficult enough to cope with the loss of a structured and disciplined routine; worse still were the complaints he heard about how the *yeshivot* and their rabbis had received special funds while others were exposed to hunger and illness. Sigmund began to have doubts. Some members of the Tobias family had survived the war in Europe and had made their way to the United States, which provided an opportunity for the youngster to leave for America in 1948. There, after a brief visit to the Mir yeshiva ("when I first walked into the building I had the strange feeling of being an outsider in the place that had been my second home for such a long time" [p. 125]), he knew that he would never return to the life of the yeshiva. It may have been that in Shanghai, he needed to feel like an insider, living in his particular enclave as other outsiders did in theirs. Once in New York, he no longer had this need.

The memoir proper ends here, with Tobias' arrival in the United States. In 1949,

his parents also arrived. Tobias quickly earned a high school diploma and eventually received a doctorate in clinical psychology from Columbia University. Today, he is a professor at Fordham University. The final three chapters belong to the present and to Tobias' return in 1988 to Shanghai, where he gave a series of lectures.

Although marked by a seeming reluctance to explore events and personal relationships in depth, this short memoir is in many ways unique, particularly in its portrayal of the Shanghai yeshiva experience. Tobias notes that the Mir yeshiva became much more than an alternative to the Kadoorie School. For the child and adolescent, the closed yeshiva society provided a haven: its rigidly structured day of study and prayer and its strictly defined boundaries of conduct, the clear definition of what was and was not permitted, must have restored a sense of order to a child lost in the chaos of displacement. In an account of the Mir yeshiva in exile, Rabbi Elhanan Yosef Hertsman describes in vivid detail how, no matter what hardships were imposed by climate and circumstances, Torah study continued from morning until late at night. For the love of Torah, no sacrifice was too great.² It is reasonable to assume that, for the uncommonly sensitive and even fearful child Sigmund appears to have been, the yeshiva provided both security and a sense of self-worth. Moreover, daily life in the yeshiva affirmed the unquestioned authority of the rabbis, whereas his parents' authority, to some extent, had been undermined: not only was Sigmund's father a broken man when he returned from Dachau, but his parents had been unable to protect him against being uprooted and transplanted into a faraway place with unfamiliar ways.

Sigmund was not the only boy who joined the Mir yeshiva to study with the regular students. In other cases, because "rumors spread that somehow the yeshivas were receiving money from abroad" (p. 56), parents signed up their sons in the hope that they would be given better food than what the parents could provide. Tobias goes on to note that his mother always wondered how the yeshiva families could afford meat for the Sabbath even after prices rose precipitously because of inflation. The fact was that members of the *yeshivot*, as Polish citizens, did in fact have access to additional funds, provided in part by the Polish government-in-exile. In comparison, German and Austrian refugees were dependent solely upon money from the Joint Distribution Committee or on whatever small earnings they could scrape together.

This book is an important contribution to the memoir literature about Shanghai, despite some flaws. Even if he was then too young to understand the kind of metropolis Shanghai was, Tobias should have rectified several mistaken conceptions that appear in his book. Hongkou was not a separate part of Shanghai. It was part of the International Settlement, but came increasingly under Japanese control after the start of the Sino-Japanese War in July 1937. British or French visas were not required for landing in Shanghai. The British police (that is, the Shanghai Municipal Police) was not empowered to prevent refugees from entering Shanghai once their ships had docked at International Settlement wharves. Neither could the Japanese *legally* forbid Jewish refugees to settle in Shanghai. Stateless refugees, rather than all Jewish refugees,³ were ordered into the ghetto in 1943. And Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese consul in Kaunas (Kovno), did not defy government orders not to issue transit visas to Jews who eventually arrived in Shanghai, nor was he "removed" from his post or

living in “disgrace” after 1947. He left Kovno because he was reassigned and, after his eventual return to Japan, had a successful career until his death.

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Notes

1. Among the published works in English is that of Ernest G. Heppner, *Shanghai Refuge: A Memoir of the World War II Ghetto* (Lincoln, Neb.: 1993); in German, see Franziska Tausig, *Shanghai Passage: Flucht und Exil einer Wienerin* (Vienna: 2000). Among unpublished memoirs, H.P. Eisfelder’s “Chinese Exile: My Years in Shanghai and Nanking 1938–1947” (1972) is especially worthwhile.

2. See Elhanan Yosef Hertsman, *Mirer yeshiva in goles* (Brooklyn: 1950); also available in the Steven Spielberg Digital Yiddish Library (no. 04595) (Amherst: 1999).

3. See H. Wasmer to Rudolph Haccius, Geneva, 24 June 1943, Central Zionist Archives (Jerusalem) CZ 1125. Wasmer, an official of the International Committee of the Red Cross, mentions specifically “all stateless refugees” in accordance with the Japanese proclamation of February 1943, issued by the Japanese army and navy, which ordered stateless refugees to relocate in the “restricted area.” For the text of the proclamation, see the YIVO archives, Shanghai collection, 1926–1948, reel 2, folder 40.

History and the Social Sciences

David Biale, Michael Galchinsky, and Susannah Heschel (eds.), *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998. 280 pp.

Jews have been prominent in virtually every major leftist movement since the French Revolution. A notable exception to this, curiously, is multiculturalism, at least in the United States. *Insider/Outsider* is a fine collection of essays by some prominent and some less well-known scholars from the fields of history, political science, philosophy, literature, and Jewish studies that well explains American Jews' ambivalence, if not hostility, toward multiculturalism. More significantly, it seeks to transcend these complaints by bringing the Jewish experience to bear on multicultural theory, and vice versa. In this, it surpasses earlier work on multiculturalism and American Jews, such as Marla Brettschneider's edited volume, *The Narrow Bridge: Jewish Views on Multiculturalism* (1996).

In a wonderfully compressed and incisive introduction, the editors trace the Jewish problem with multiculturalism back to the Enlightenment. Jews obtained citizenship in modern Europe contingent upon their acceptance of quasi-liberal terms: forgo their corporate existence, reform their traditions and behavior in accord with local customs, and confine their religious and cultural distinctiveness to the private sphere. While this deal challenged and indeed transformed Jewish life, Jews nonetheless thrived in liberal societies as nowhere else. In the United States, they had a further advantage. There, race rather than ethnicity primarily defined the "other," such that the brunt of marginalization fell disproportionately on blacks, Native Americans, and other people of "color." The Jews, despite their arriving en masse as impoverished, non-English-speaking immigrants at the turn of the 20th century, were seen as "white" and thus quickly came to be included among the privileged majority.

As the editors note, the same was true of the Italian, Polish, Irish, and other European immigrants—yet only the Jews seem to write books on their problem with multiculturalism. The souring of the relationship between Jews and African Americans after the 1960s partly explains the Jewish concern. Also important is the Jews' sense of their own anomalous status: "insiders who are outsiders and outsiders who are insiders" (p. 5). While a sense of marginality is no stranger to the Jews, the editors argue that the perception reaches a new intensity in contemporary America, as it reverberates between several antinomies: unprecedented acceptance versus the desire for Jewish continuity; maintaining Jewish continuity versus redefining the tradition in accordance with equality between the sexes; social acceptance versus emphasizing

the Holocaust and Jewish victimhood; identifying with Israel as a military and economic power or as a vulnerable and beleaguered state. The Jews' problem with multiculturalism also turns on a worry about the Enlightenment. On the one hand, Jews have done extraordinarily well in a system based on individual merit and enterprise and have difficulty understanding why other groups cannot do as well. On the other hand, they know too well that the precariousness of Enlightenment values can lead to Auschwitz.

The book is divided into three sections of four essays each. The first section, "American Symphony or Melting Pot?" treats the place of Jews in definitions of "America." Biale traces the transition from the early 20th century, when the acculturation of the Jews seemed to answer the "problem of Americanization," to the 1960s, when Jews had basically "made it" and African Americans, race-based thinking, and multiculturalism came increasingly to define social conflict and test American ideals, and, finally, to contemporary discussions of hybridity, multiracial identities, and a post-ethnic America. Biale astutely observes how Jews generally share with post-ethnic, multiracial movements a suspicion of the essentialist, rigid identities proffered by multiculturalism. While Jews may have to relinquish their familiar role as the paradigmatic minority, the "instability and multiplicity of Jewish identity" (p. 31) may well benefit Jewish life today.

Mitchell Cohen pleads for a "rooted cosmopolitanism," similarly pressing multiculturalists to recognize the fluidity, hybridity, and transnational nature of cultural attachments, which can happily make their home in an open, tolerant, and democratic America. Cheryl Greenberg brilliantly surveys the collapse of the alliance between Jews and blacks. She notes how both pluralists and multiculturalists fail to take sufficient account of class factors, and she extracts from multiculturalism two lessons for Jews: "that our own status is always liminal and in flux" and "that we have unreflectively enjoyed the privileges of a 'Euro-American' whiteness we have denied" (pp. 82–83). Michael Walzer, somewhat conservatively, serves up "meat and potatoes multiculturalism." Counterposing the "politics of identity" pursued by multiculturalists with the "politics of interest" pursued by Jewish minorities, he argues that only the latter has produced the tangible social, legal, and cultural goods sought by groups. The politics of interest model has worked well for religious minorities, but less so for racial and some ethnic groups with different histories and resource levels. Here the state needs to underwrite its own pluralism and "distribute resources in a roughly egalitarian way" (p. 97).

The second section, "Canons and Counterhistories," evaluates the significance of multiculturalism for the academy and the significance of Jewish studies for multiculturalism. Thematically, this section is perhaps the most original in the book. Susannah Heschel pointedly shows how Jewish studies preempts the disruptive ambitions of multicultural and postcolonial theory—the early discipline of Jewish studies "was not simply a presentation of Jewish history but a counterhistory of the prevailing Christian scholarship [and an effort] . . . to overthrow the standard portrayal of Western history" (p. 102). So for all the mutual angst between Jews and multiculturalists, "multicultural theory itself lies at the heart of modern Jewish experience" (p. 113). If this weren't transgressive enough, Robert Alter peels away the image of the Hebrew Bible as a paradigmatic case of canonical rigidity to expose a much richer

and more playful tradition in the Jewish interpretation of Scripture. Doctrinal authority or the religious canon was more than matched by imaginative appreciation or a literary canon of the text. In the same way, he suggests, presumptive secular canons are likely to be riddled with “contradictory aims and values and not, as many of the new critics of the canon claim, chiefly vehicles for the enforcement of ideological conformity” (p. 148).

Literary scholar Sara Horowitz asks how Jewish studies fits into the new academy and, like Heschel, suggests that it offers resources for “postcolonialist readings” (p. 125). Philosopher Amy Newman closes the section with a disturbing account of the way Judaism is presented in feminist and Afrocentric literature—an “ahistorical and nonempirical” image deriving “from a system of thought that was explicitly anti-Semitic” (p. 152). Michael Galchinsky, Hana Wirth-Nesher, Michael Gluzman, and Naomi Seidman variously explore the theme of the final section, “Diaspora Negotiations.”

Insider/Outsider is an important collection of essays. A question that might have been considered is whether American Jews differ from or resemble other Jewish communities regarding multiculturalism. After all, if the Enlightenment and modern Jewish history are as pivotal to American Jews’ ambivalence toward multiculturalism as this volume claims, some comparative glances may have been in order, if only as checks.

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Martin Gilbert, *The Jews in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Schocken Books, 2001. 376 pp.

The idea of writing the Jewish history of the 20th century was a fortunate one. In the hands of Sir Martin Gilbert, the biographer of Winston Churchill and the author of atlases of Jewish history and works on Zionism and the Holocaust, the outcome could have been more successful. Twentieth-century Jewish history, as Gilbert outlines it, begins with a set portrait of world Jewry around 1900, followed by the major topics of mass migration westward, Zionism, the First World War, interwar antisemitism, the Second World War and the Holocaust, the founding of the state of Israel and its struggles, and the American Jewish success story. Lesser subjects are also treated, although the text as a whole is not lengthy. Gilbert writes fluently and has a large store of unusual data about persons and events that he puts to good use.

However, he is also very careless. His subjects flow into one another almost in free association: the horrors of mass murder by the Nazis, for instance, are immediately followed by a discussion of American Jewish prosperity. Much of his data, including picture captions, must have been cited from vagrant memory. Twenty-six million Jews in 1900? (p. 26)—there were not half that many. And five million Jews in New York City in 1910?! (p. 19). Later, this fantastic figure is lowered, though somewhat

too far, to one million (p. 30). Herzl's funeral in 1904 supposedly drew only 1,000 participants (p. 25), yet in the text we read about trainloads of Jews arriving to the funeral from distant places. And the figure of 235,000 immigrants to England is twice my own, generally accepted, estimate.

Biographical details are also slapdash. Herbert H. Lehman was elected governor of New York not five but four times, and did not hold that position longer than anyone else. Rufus Isaacs, Marquess of Reading, was never Lord Chancellor. Jacob Shatzky took almost a lifetime to write his unfinished history of Warsaw Jewry, and had not begun it, much less finished it, when he enlisted in the First World War. The list of errors is long, and although a reviewer generally wishes to avoid pedantic corrections, it should be clear that Gilbert's book cannot be used as a reliable source of information.

More than half of the book is given over to its excellent photographs, which were assembled by Sarah Jackson and Franziska Payer Crockett from many rare and private sources. Such photographs as Alfred Dreyfus receiving his sentence, the wounded of the Kishinev pogrom, and scenes from the early years of the state of Israel are little, if at all, known. Nonetheless, it must be concluded with regret that *The Jews in the Twentieth Century* is a disappointment.

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Mitchell B. Hart, *Social Science and the Politics of Modern Jewish Identity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000. 340 pp.

The preoccupation with counting the Jews, describing their characteristics, and forecasting their future is as old as the Bible. In this book, Mitchell Hart offers a highly readable and penetrating analysis of the fundamental issues that have animated the professional debate about Jewish demography and statistics since the early 19th century. The author shows how, from Leopold Zunz in the 1820s, Jewish population studies not only dealt with methodological and substantive research, but also reflected the widely differing intellectual backgrounds of the scholars themselves.

The varied issues that came under the demographers' scrutiny included estimates of the number of Jews; anthropological ("racial") similarity or dissimilarity among Jews; health and behavioral patterns (involving the merits of mutable environment versus inherited character); and the role of Jews in the national economy. There were often clear and persistent differences between Jewish and non-Jewish fertility and mortality levels, geographical and socioeconomic mobility, and social structure and occupational skills, all of which led to very different patterns of Jewish population growth or decline, concentration or dispersion. But an explanation of these phenomena was often elusive. Demographic theories drew both from the (now dated) major scientific paradigms of the time and from the emancipatory ethos of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* school. Jewish social research was no mere exercise of human cu-

riosity or analytical skill, but often was a means of advancing specific theses regarding the nature of the Jews vis-à-vis world society, their unique character, their just claim to respect, equality, and individual and corporate rights, and their quest for either cultural resilience or assimilation into surrounding societies.

Researchers included Zionists of the Herzlian (political) and Ahad Ha'amian (cultural) varieties, alongside diasporists (both Bundists and those of a more traditionally religious orientation). While Hart makes it clear how these ideological biases need to be considered in reading the pertinent literature, he also shows how, taken as a whole, the study of Jewish population resulted in a remarkably successful effort to create stable institutional bases for research and a systematic output of studies. His main example is the Bureau für Jüdische Statistik (established in Berlin in 1904) and its publication, *Zeitschrift für Demografie und Statistik der Juden*. Hart shows how Jewish social science developed innovative ways to confront the whole range of issues related to the basic definitional paradigms, subject matter, and global comparative scope. Remarkably, one might note, Arthur Ruppin's ideas on the subject of assimilation, first broached at the turn of the 20th century, anticipated similar approaches developed by Robert Park and the Chicago school of sociology some 20 years later. Indeed, Jewish social scientists produced a critical mass of research that was better articulated than that dealing with other religious, ethnic, or cultural groups. Nonetheless, the main scope of the debate remained within a Jewish context, and the struggle to find a secure place in the mainstream of general scholarship was never convincingly won.

Over time, the Jewish concern with race and physical anthropology gave way to more qualitative insights on the mutual relationships between demographic patterns and Jewish identification. Social scientific inquiry on the effects of assimilation was ultimately an inquiry concerning collective Jewish identity and survival. Eventually, the central issue of survival of the Jewish diaspora in the post-emancipation era was joined by the issue of assessing the demographic, social, and cultural role of the growing community in Palestine/Israel.

This is a highly valuable book, but it is also intriguingly incomplete. One wonders about the old question whether the history of a topic or discipline is better portrayed by a historian with an interest in that discipline or by a practitioner of the same discipline with an interest in historiography. While Hart ably presents some of the debates that were rooted in truly disciplinary rather than value-laden differences, sometimes a genuinely technical discussion would have helped to elucidate the issues. This reader finds lacking a discussion of works by the non-Zionist statistician Liebmann Hersch on such crucial issues as Jewish migration to the United States, Jewish social deviance, and the "failure" of the Jewish project in Palestine. The work of the famed economist Simon Kuznets is not mentioned at all. Another problem is the linguistic barrier. Hart is in command of the literature in English, German, and Yiddish, but he does not really cover material in Russian or French, and he totally ignores the research written in Italian. This last omission is not trivial; since the 1910s, leading statisticians such as Corrado Gini and Livio Livi published important works on world Jewish demography and anthropology that would fit Hart's framework—without, however, being "tainted" by Jewish prejudice, since neither of them was Jewish. In the late

1920s, a young student of Gini's, Roberto Bachi, began publishing his own works on Jewish demography. Bachi emigrated to Palestine at the end of the 1930s and later became both the major figure in Israeli statistics and a charismatic leader of the Zionist approach (in Hart's perspective) to Jewish demographic research.

The relationship between the main argument of Hart's book and the contemporary debates on Jewish demography is spurious. Many things have changed since Ruppin's death in 1943, the real terminal point of Hart's investigation. Any serious assessment of the continuing debates about Jewish sociodemographic resilience and decline, especially over the last 30 years, would require another volume and a hefty dose of updated statistical data, methodological arguments, and contemporary social theory. In the meantime, however, Hart's work provides both a critical contribution to understanding the Jewish social scientific debate as it was framed during its formative decades, and an essential context for the present debates.

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Hillel J. Kieval, *Languages of Community: The Jewish Experience in the Czech Lands*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. xi + 311 pp.

In this pioneering collection of essays about Jewish communities in the Czech lands, Hillel J. Kieval examines central questions of language and cultural orientation. The spiritual, political, and social history of these communities cannot be separated from their many languages of ritual and learning, everyday familial communication (for centuries, in Yiddish), and the means of expression that were chosen for use in the outside world. After an excellent chapter on the medieval years, Kieval first concentrates on the Habsburg regimes of Rudolf, the Ferdinands, and, above all, on the far-reaching consequences of Joseph II's cultural revolution imposed on his Bohemian subjects. Here the vital issue turns out to be the Jewish use of Czech and German, or vice versa, in a country of growing national conflicts.

Kieval tells the story of the cultural options open to Jewish communities in an original and nonsimplistic fashion. The laws of Joseph II, demanding the education of Jewish children in German *Normalschulen*, more or less coincided with the import of the Haskalah from Moses Mendelssohn's Berlin. While Kieval readily defines the Prague Haskalah as a mixture of "European enlightenment, respect for Jewish sensitivities, and loyalty to Jewish tradition" (p. 51), he adamantly refuses to accept the notion (promoted, among others, by Ruth Gladstein-Kestenberg) that the Jews of Prague wanted to see themselves as a "nation among nations," at least in a modern sense. I find his richly documented chapter about the (historically) first Jewish rapprochement with the Czechs of true analytical importance, because he clearly delineates the illusions and disappointments of the early 1840s both in their immediate historical context and from the distance of later events. He scrutinizes the ideological

messages advanced by the periodical *Ost und West*; astutely discusses the aims of a group of young Bohemian intellectuals studying in Vienna (V.B. Nebeský, David Kuh, Siegfried Kapper) who argued (in Czech and in German) that it was in the political interest of the Slavs to enlist the intellectual support of the Jews; quotes from Kapper's Czech poems in praise of Zion and the Czech forests; and inevitably considers their rejection by Karel Havlíček, the most powerful Czech critic and public intellectual of the time. No less important, he chronicles the events of 1844, when Prague workingmen turned against their Jewish employers and, combining an instinctive Luddite revolt with antisemitism, destroyed machines and factories to the full and public approval of the educated Czech middle classes.

Kieval unravels much of the ambivalent situation of the first Jewish partisans of a Jewish-Slav symbiosis. I would argue, however, that he somewhat underrates the negative energy of Havlíček's famous review of Kapper's Czech poetry. In fact, Havlíček's national liberalism, more narrow than it appears in later hagiography, foreshadows attitudes of the Young Czechs a generation later, and even those of some of Thomas Masaryk's allies in the Realist party, if not Masaryk himself. It is, however, true (as Kieval rightly points out) that the first clarion calls for a Czech-Jewish alliance were sounded by Havlíček in his own periodical, *Květy* (a fact conveniently forgotten by Czech scholarship), and that by 1850, when a turn of Austrian politics accorded more extensive civil rights to Jews, he defended these new legal guarantees by arguing that if the Czechs wanted more liberty, they could not, in all fairness, deny the same liberty to Jewish citizens.

The first Jewish students and intellectuals came to a late recognition that they were caught between Czechs and Germans. In their instinctive loyalty to the Czech lands as a shared territory of experience, they could almost be seen as followers of Bernard Bolzano's "Landespatriotismus" (1815–1816), though they never spoke about Bolzano (possibly because he was a Catholic theologian, or else because he was living at the time in internal exile in southern Bohemia, a philosopher in disgrace). Emerging from Kieval's narrative—more clearly than from any work with which I am familiar—is a sense of recurring great expectations followed by melancholy failures in the many attempts to draw Czechs and Jews closer during the 19th century. The efforts of the early 1840s were annihilated by Havlíček's review and the street riots of 1844, and those of the following generation of the 1870s and 1880s were nearly vitiated by the nationalism of the Young Czechs (triumphant in the elections of 1888 and 1890) and the increasing antisemitism fired by the two ritual murder trials of Leopold Hilsner, in 1899 and 1900. Subsequently, Karel Baxa, a radical Young Czech, was appointed lord mayor of Prague in 1919. Fundamental change came only with the re-orientation of the Jewish-Czech movement after its failure to find support among the Young Czechs, and with the willingness of Jewish intellectuals, above all Victor Vohrzek writing in his periodical, *Rosvoj*, to look for more reliable political allies among Masaryk's Realists and the growing Social Democratic party.

After 1848, and especially after 1867, when increasing industrialization and a new and liberal constitution prompted Czech-speaking Jews to move from the countryside to Prague (where members of the Jewish community still tended to adhere to German), the status of Czech vis-à-vis German began gradually to change. Herman Kafka, for example, who had moved to Prague from southern Bohemia, listed Czech

as the *Umgangssprache* (the language of daily use) of the family household; the kitchen help was Czech, but Herman's son, Franz, went to German schools, took a German law degree, and was somewhat less "conversant" with Czech than Kieval assumes—after 1918, when Kafka's office switched to Czech and he had to issue Czech documents, he had to employ, as he suggested ironically, his Czech "translation agency," that is, Josef Cermak, his Czech brother-in-law. Moreover, when a university whose language of instruction was Czech was established in 1883, only 50 Jewish students registered for it.

Kieval sees the Jewish-Czech movement and Zionism as two options meant to solve the Jews' social and political problems during the fin-de-siècle. Here he devotes more space to the institutionalized Jewish-Czech movement than to the Zionists (who are extensively discussed in an earlier book),¹ noting that "the Zionists may have won the ideological and even political battle only to lose the long-term war on the social scene" (p. 199). Perhaps Kieval is right when he argues that Prague Zionism was at first a literary affair of German-writing authors and intellectuals who "peppered" their discourse with German Romantic ideas carried to Prague by Martin Buber in his well-attended lectures; I would add that these ideas, including the concept of the *Volk*, were the staple of the German *Jugendbewegung*, or German youth movement, which not only represented a revolt against stiff-collared fathers but also easily combined with a Zionism of culture rather than territorial aspirations. In any event, Masaryk (who, against his will, carried his residual Moravian peasant antisemitism into his adult life) was more attracted by the Zionists, both at home and abroad, because he still believed (as had Havlíček) that Jews constituted a nation in itself and that Zionism was inspired by a thirst for "moral regeneration," which he demanded of the Czechs. In the constitution promulgated by the First Czechoslovak Republic in 1920, Jews were legally defined as a separate (minority) nationality, with the choice to field their own candidates in elections. Yet only 14.6 percent of the 80,000 Jews living in Bohemia chose to declare Jewish nationality a year after the constitution had been signed, and even in the coming years the situation did not change significantly.

In his epilogue, Kieval tells the moving story of a meeting in 1968 that took place in a living room in Prague. Three aging men, all representative of Prague Jewish history, came together by chance: the Czech writer František Langer, Max Brod (who had returned from Israel to speak about Czech music), and Eduard Goldstücker, the scholar and Reform Communist. Kieval's account, however, tends to glide over what happened to the Czech Jewish communities after the liberation of 1945 and the Communist takeover, at which point religious traditions, the perseverance of German among the older people, and Zionism all became equally suspect. Although Ulrike Offenbergl has written an excellent book on the situation of the Jewish communities in the former Soviet zone of occupation and the German Democratic Republic,² the post-Holocaust fate of Czech Jewish communities has yet to be described. There are now 10 Jewish communities in the Czech lands, alongside a relatively small community in Prague that has been wondrously rejuvenated by younger Czechs eager to convert to Judaism. Kieval would be my ideal candidate to write their history.

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Notes

1. See Hillel J. Kieval, *The Making of Czech Jewry: The Jewish Experience in the Czech Lands* (New York: 1988).
2. See Ulrike Offenberg, "*Seid vorsichtig gegen die Machthaber*": die jüdischen Gemeinden in der SBZ und der DDR 1945–1990 (Berlin: 1998).

David Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War*. London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001. xiii + 218 pp.

As time passes, the lost world of early 20th-century Vienna grows both closer and more distant from us: closer, insofar as the recent collapse of familiar imperial paradigms and global orders seems to awaken shades of the chaos and uncertainty surrounding the fall of the Habsburg and other empires at the end of the First World War; more distant, because the heady and bewildering atmosphere of cultural cosmopolitanism, cross-cultural fertilization, ethnic chauvinism, artistic innovation, stodgy monarchic conservatism, social ferment, and rising political tension characteristic of pre-1918 Austria-Hungary marked such a necessarily fragile and ephemeral moment in history, a moment when Central Europe stood perched on the brink of its 20th-century disaster, yet when some of its finest sons and daughters could still dream of transforming its unwieldy political order into a progressive model of human harmony and social justice. A book such as the one under review, which focuses on the Jewish experience during the war years, highlights what are, to an early 21st-century observer, the most bitterly ironic aspects of the last days of the Habsburg empire.

This study neatly complements Marsha Rozenblit's broader discussion of Austrian Jewry during the First World War.¹ Rechter's central topic is the political history of Viennese Jewry at that time, specifically, official communal organizations, political parties, and youth movements. The broader social and cultural history of Vienna's Jews—including the many assimilated and semi-assimilated Jews who were not affiliated with communal organizations and whose key impact on the cultural life of fin-de-siècle Vienna has been so convincingly documented by Steven Beller²—is not part of this particular story.

Rechter's meticulously researched analysis demonstrates the marked rise of openly nationalist politics among the Jews of Vienna during the war. The presence of thousands of Galician and other Jewish refugees in the imperial capital stimulated a sharp escalation of antisemitism in a metropolis that already had the distinction of being the only major European city to be ruled by an officially antisemitic political party (the Christian Socials). This strengthened the position of Zionist activists while weakening the credibility of old-fashioned liberal Jewish politicians of the sort that had long dominated the city's official Jewish communal organization. Moreover, many of the refugees themselves constituted a natural constituency for the advocates of Jewish self-determination. The period following the ascent of Emperor-King Karl to the Dual Monarchy's throne (following Franz Josef's death in November 1916) witnessed an intensification of Jewish political activism, as Karl's restoration of certain political

liberties and eleventh-hour consideration of a federal solution to the nationalities problem seemed to open the doors to fundamental political change. Unfortunately, traditional Jewish communal authorities and Zionist activists alike seemed to spend most of their time and energy on internal ideological and personal disputes as they jockeyed for positions of leadership in the new political order that was about to dawn over Central Europe. In 1918, a broad array of Jewish youth movements did succeed in convening a *Jugendtag* (Youth Day) in Vienna—actually a three-day congress that brought together participants from a broad array of Zionist organizations throughout the empire. But Marxist Zionists and Orthodox associations refused to participate, and plans to set up a permanent federation of Jewish youth movements disintegrated along with the empire in the latter part of the year.

The traditional, and officially recognized, bastion of the Jewish establishment in Vienna, the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde (Jewish Religious Community), found itself hard-pressed to reform its outlook and procedures, given the sudden intensification of nationalist sentiment among Jews eager to carve out an autonomous political-cultural sphere for themselves, be it in an ethnically federated, imperial Austria or, after October–November 1918, in a Wilsonian order based on national self-determination. With the brief rise in October 1918 of a short-lived, Zionist-dominated Jewish Council claiming to represent the Jewish nation in Austria and the formation of an affiliated Jewish militia in Vienna that actually enjoyed government funding for a few months, the Kultusgemeinde was obliged to democratize its electoral procedures and to admit Zionist parties to a greater share of power.

But in the end, Rechter concludes, continuity rather than change marked Jewish politics in Vienna. The Jewish National Council movement throughout Central and Eastern Europe collapsed as the Allied and Associated Powers refused to support political autonomy for minorities and as the new nation-states of the region imposed their central authority within their territorial domains. The departure of refugees drained Vienna of the Jewish nationalists' most important constituency, and the collapse of the multiethnic empire destroyed the frame of reference for their autonomist aspirations. Curiously, in the radically transformed political framework of the post-1918, truncated Austrian republic, the old, liberal-Jewish synthesis of "a German-Austrian cultural identity with an ethnically tinged religious Jewish identity" (p. 186) remained the predominant ideology by default. Only the events of the 1930s eliminated this last surviving vestige of the so-called Habsburg ideal.

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Notes

1. See Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria during World War I* (New York: 2001).

2. See Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867–1938: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: 1989).

Rafael F. Scharf, *Poland, What Have I To Do with Thee . . . Essays without Prejudice*. London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1998. 182 pp.

In the summer of 1991, I had the privilege of taking part in the Jagiellonian University of Cracow's first "Tracing Poland's Jewish Heritage" program. An internationally renowned faculty composed of scholars and intellectuals from Poland and abroad taught three weeks of seminars, followed by a tour of Galicia's historic *shetlakh*. Students of that program will forever remember Rafael Scharf's extraordinary tour of Kazimierz, Cracow's Jewish district. Scharf, who had graduated from Cracow's Hebrew High School as well as from Jagiellonian University's law school before immigrating to England in 1938, lucidly recalled the richness and diversity of prewar Jewish life. Often straining to hold back his emotions, Scharf freely shifted between English and Polish during this street-by-street, building-by-building tour.

Since the 1970s, Scharf has been an important voice in the movement for Polish-Jewish dialogue. He was a co-founder of *The Jewish Quarterly* and was among the founders of the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies at Oxford University in 1984. At the important international conferences on Polish Jewry in Oxford (1984) and Jerusalem (1988), Scharf delivered impassioned and learned presentations that continue to be cited.

Poland: What Have I To Do with Thee is a rich collection of Scharf's writings and speeches dating from 1977 to 1995. The 19 selections include conference papers, articles from *Polin*, *The Jewish Quarterly* and *Judaism Today*, introductions to books on Polish Jewry, and several talks delivered at such events as the 1993 inauguration of the Center for Jewish Culture in Cracow.

Scharf sets the book's tone with a lengthy and moving introduction. Here, he refers to the "dual track" of his life, to his "entanglements of roots" between Polish and Jewish cultures. He would feel "bereft, impoverished, incomplete" if he were to sever links to the Polish language and to his memory of the country's landscapes (p. 4). In a discussion of his upbringing, Scharf marvels at how little casual social contact existed between Poles and Jews during the 1920s and 1930s. Prior to his emigration at the age of 24, Scharf cannot recall ever setting foot inside a Polish home, nor can he remember himself or his parents ever greeting a non-Jewish visitor in their home (p. 22). This was, he states, a "natural, contented isolation" of the two communities. But on the question of anti-Jewish sentiment in Poland of the 1930s, Scharf is clear: "Antisemitism permeated the space around," and the prospects for a new Jewish lawyer were "gloomy" (p. 30).

Scharf's principal preoccupation is the tragic period of Nazi occupation. "The period of the German occupation in Poland," he writes, "dominates my internal landscape and casts a shadow over everything that happened to me before or after" (p. 33). While Scharf emphasizes the strength of anti-Jewish sentiment in prewar Poland, he cautions readers against making causal links between Polish attitudes and the Poles' responses to Nazi genocidal policies, a phenomenon that "was outside the mental horizon and imagination of even the most rabid Polish antisemite" (p. 45).

At the heart of this collection are the two papers that Scharf gave at the interna-

tional conferences of 1984 and 1988. The talk from 1984, which appeared in the first volume of *Polin* (1986) under the title “In Anger and in Sorrow: Towards a Polish-Jewish Dialogue” (here, Scharf restores the original title, “Cum Ira et Studio”), inspired Jan Błonski to write his path-breaking essay, “The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto,” which provoked the first national debate on the Holocaust in Poland since the Second World War.¹ In this essay, Scharf expresses his “unrequited love” for Poland and Polish culture. Yet at the same time, he calls on Polish readers to cease apologetics and acknowledge the widespread presence of anti-Jewish sentiment in prewar, wartime, and postwar Poland. In an oft-cited passage on interwar Poland, Scharf writes the following:

If the question were asked whether Poland was a country where antisemitism grew and was rampant, the answer for every Polish Jew, every eyewitness, would be so obvious and unequivocal that he would be angered and resentful of anybody doubting it. . . . The fact that the Poles were and are not aware of this—at least this is what many claim—is for us hard to believe and understand. They have either forgotten how it was or have been seeing life from an altogether different perspective (p. 73).

Indeed, in 1984, the handful of Polish books on Jewish subjects included works on Judaism and Jewish culture, yet serious scholarly studies on Polish-Jewish relations were nowhere to be found. “The young have been told nothing,” Scharf concludes, “and have nowhere where they can find out” (p. 73).

Even Polish scholars at that time tended to agree with the government’s official interpretation, which maintained that the Poles largely sympathized with Jews during the war and provided widespread aid, whereas blackmailers and informers were an isolated group whom Polish society despised and ostracized. Scharf acknowledges that the imposition of ideological conformity inside Communist Poland prevented free and open debate (p. 74). Still, the gap between Polish and Jewish understandings of the war years was almost unbridgeable:

Unfortunately—and this is the heart of the whole matter—the opinion of Jews, in other words those who know best, those who lived through it or who were given firsthand evidence, is overwhelmingly that this thesis is contrary to their experience; that the Poles, with a few exceptions . . . did not show any sympathy, did not help or save, that a Jew in hiding or in disguise lived in fear not so much of the Germans but of his neighbors or passers-by, with their acute sensitivity for Jewish features, manner of speaking or fear in their eyes. If the Jews could have depended not on active help, which called for heroism, but neutrality, causing the Pole to look the other way—the chances of survival would have increased a hundredfold (p. 74).

In recent years, Jewish historians have softened their views of Polish behavior during the Second World War (although Jan Gross’ revelatory book, *Neighbors* [2001] has tempered these new voices in Jewish historiography). In particular, Israel Gutman maintains that, given the conditions of the occupation, the Poles could not have fundamentally changed the fate of the Jews. Scharf’s essay voices disagreement with such a notion. He writes that

when the trains were rolling night and day to Chelmno, Sobibor, Belzec, Treblinka, Majdanek and Auschwitz, and for months smoke bellowed from the chimneys, if it had

been known that it was not the Jews who were being incinerated but Polish fathers, husbands, mothers, wives and children, the explosion of wrath and revenge would have been uncontrollable, even if it came to . . . “tearing up the rails with bare teeth” (p. 76).

While Scharf does not refrain from castigating wartime Polish behavior, he also warns against judging the entire Polish nation, or any people, for its behavior during such profoundly abnormal times. Thus, in the same 1984 essay, Scharf wonders aloud if any nation whose citizens were faced with the death penalty for aiding Jews could have acted morally. “It is the tragedy of the Poles,” Scharf writes, “that in the midst of the cruel visitations of fate, they were exposed to an unprecedented moral trial. They did not come through it victorious. It can be argued that nobody would have come through it any better, but that is little comfort for the Jews” (pp. 76–77).

The underlying bitterness in Scharf’s early writings gives way to optimism and delight at the changes in Polish society beginning in the late 1980s and into the 1990s. In a 1995 speech delivered at the Center for Jewish Culture in Cracow, “The Lessons of Auschwitz,” Scharf expresses empathy and understanding concerning the question of Auschwitz’s meaning for the Poles. “To Jews,” Scharf said before a mixed audience of Poles and Jews, “Auschwitz is the symbol of the Holocaust. They are surprised and outraged at any attempt to invest it with a different meaning. But for the Poles it is a symbol of the German rape of their country and the persecution of their nation—and they have their very good reasons for perceiving it thus” (p. 105). Yet while acknowledging the need for Jews to recognize the depths of Polish wartime suffering and the fact that an estimated 70,000 Polish lives were lost in Auschwitz, Scharf insists upon the unique meaning of the Holocaust for Jews:

In my journeys in all parts of the world I have not come across a single family that did not have near or more distant relatives perish in the Shoah. The Jewish national psyche has been shaped by this experience. Every Jewish reflex, individual, communal or national, is conditioned by the memory of Auschwitz. Am I wrong to hold that for Jews Auschwitz means something more and something different than for non-Jews? (p. 106).

Two years earlier, at the 1993 ceremony marking the opening of the center, Scharf expressed the hope that this institution would

mark a turning point on our way to reconciliation and alliance in the common cause: the point at which Poland emerges at last from the sickness of antisemitism which had addled her brain and done so much harm; the point at which we begin to see in each other the best and not the worst; the point at which old wounds start to heal and a new generation grows up free from bigotry and prejudice (p. 92).

Written with insight, wit, and wisdom, *Poland, What Have I To Do with Thee* is a very welcome addition to the growing body of literature on contemporary Polish-Jewish relations. Scharf’s firsthand observations on Jewish life in prewar Poland serve as a valuable primary source, and his commitment to both historical accuracy and sustained Polish-Jewish dialogue makes this an important and inspiring volume of essays.

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Note

1. See Jan Błóński, "The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto," *Polin* 2 (1987), 321–335.

Laurence J. Silberstein (ed.), *Mapping Jewish Identities*. New York: New York University Press, 2000. 368 pp.

Like its predecessors, the fifth volume of the Berman Center's New Perspectives on Jewish Studies series is a provocative work that is designed to secure a place in the field of Jewish studies for the discourses of postmodernism, postculturalism, feminism, and cultural studies. *Mapping Jewish Identities* offers a collection of mostly theoretical and partly self-reflective essays produced by some of the best-known Jewish writers of the postmodern era and some other younger, though no less vigorous scholars.

The essays themselves touch upon a wide variety of issues. Two are dedicated to a critical appraisal of modern Jewish American literature and Jewish American representation in photography (Tresa Grauer and Laura Levitt, respectively); two others evaluate literary works on the Holocaust and their contribution to the construction of Jewish identities (Michelle Freidman and Marilyn Reizbaum). Another pair of articles examine unexpected developments in the relationship of the authors and their offspring: whereas the return to Yiddish by Anita (and Sara) Norich points to the possibility of a metamorphosis from mourning to a happy ending through language, for Regina Morantz-Sanchez and her daughter, generational language has worked in trickier ways to force the two apart. Ammiel Alcalay's essay, also personal and somewhat mystifying, reflects on his nomadic past while suggesting hybridity as the new language for Jewish identity. Contributions by Adi Ophir, Hannan Hever, and Deborah Starr cover the Israeli scene well, if predictably. Ophir offers an ideological critique of Zionism and post-Zionism (heralding the imminent end of the former), while Hever and Starr offer insightful critiques of Israeli literary works dealing with the relevant conflictual categories: Palestinians; Canaanites; Ashkenazim versus *mizrahim*. Daniel Boyarin's essay analyzes the complex relationship between rabbinic Judaism and Christianity during the second to fifth centuries, pointing to the porous nature of the boundaries that seemingly separated them. The volume closes with two philosophical pieces. In the first, Susan Shapiro eulogizes Emmanuel Levinas' ethics of alterity but, in a surprising twist, criticizes him for keeping women erotically marked and thus failing to overcome the pernicious ideology of gender he wished to subvert. Finally, Gordon Beam follows in the footsteps of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari and tries to carry the reader altogether beyond questions of identity and authenticity.

It may be the case that a book about mapping identities is a self-defeating enterprise. Although each of these essays stands well on its own, the work as a whole does not deliver what Silberstein promises in his introductory essay: new possibilities in contemporary Jewish discourse that open the way to a rethinking of what it means to identify oneself as Jewish. To begin with, the chapter titles deny the new, emancipatory imperative as they reveal the expected combination of a discourse that unmistakably proclaims (yet again) Jewish-modern-liberal-whiteness. The ingredients are

clear—identity, Holocaust, Zionism, Yiddish, Jewish—although, to be sure, these concepts are associated with others such as narrative, mapping, and reterritorializing. Although such composites indicate that traditional perspectives will be contested in this work, the actual rhetoric of most of the essays shows how far their authors are from overcoming the old reified perceptions of identity.

This is no light criticism. Cultural studies perspectives recognize the centrality of language in the demarcation of consciousness, yet most of these authors fail (or fail in part) to take this factor into account. The very categories of identity through which Jews are expected to explore their current situation actually hinder them in their task. “Identity” today is specific, narrow, and static; in itself, it does not allow for a radical reconfiguration of meaning, no matter how sophisticated the analytical tools one puts to work. A much broader range of semantics is necessary, along with the uncovering of contextualized and localized historical trajectories (for example, the development of the nation-state and capitalism) and the strategies and practices through which these have shaped present meanings. Finally, there is still a need to question the most basic paradigmatic beliefs of western philosophy, primarily those encapsulated in Platonic perspectives on human transcendence. This is no easy task, although in the excellent chapters by Boyarin and Ophir, it is attained, at least to some extent.

All in all, the questions we should consider are those relating to the ways in which the world is organized so that groups—not just Jews, but other minorities in western settings—are essentially imprisoned in semantic categories that, to be overturned, must first be scrutinized. Perhaps it is time to turn away from these categories altogether.

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Language, Literature, and the Arts

Matthew Baigell and Milly Heyd (eds.), *Complex Identities: Jewish Consciousness and Modern Art*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001. xvii + 301 pp.

Volumes of collected essays demand an organizing principle. Those concerned with art history might collect the separately published articles of a single scholar or else compile essays on the art of a single period or on a particular aspect of that art. *Complex Identities* promises to be an example of the latter type, as indicated by its subtitle, *Jewish Consciousness and Modern Art*.

Before considering whether the essays fulfill the promise of the title, it is instructive to examine how the editors and contributors define the art under discussion. The introduction posits a broad view: "By Jewish art, the coeditors mean an art created by Jewish artists in which one can find some aspect of the Jewish experience, whether religious, cultural, social, or personal" (p. xiv). Later, Matthew Baigell, one of the editors, becomes more restrictive in his definition:

What is Jewish about Jewish art? . . . there are no credible answers Nevertheless . . . in a certain attitude of mind held by some Jewish artists during the 1930's, and by those exploring Holocaust and post-Holocaust themes today, a Jewish point of view is apparent . . . these artists, past and present, have wanted to use their art to help bring about a better world . . . there is a messianic element in their work (p. 182).

Jewish art, then, consists of works created from the 1930s on by Jewish artists seeking *tikun 'olam*. Baigell dismisses "some additional material that reached back through the centuries to biblical times" (p. 182). However, that "additional material" is considered, in part, by one of the contributors to this volume, Elisheva Revel-Neher, whose peculiar essay marries a discussion of iconoclastic attitudes in ancient and medieval Judaism with a rapid survey of contemporaneous Jewish art. Revel-Neher cites only two types of works made prior to modernity—the mosaic and fresco decorations of ancient synagogues, and medieval Hebrew manuscripts. Inexplicably, she describes all premodern Jewish art as presenting "a unified style" (p. 22). Two brief discussions on paintings by Moritz Daniel Oppenheim and Maurycy Gottlieb are also presented, presumably in order to qualify the essay for inclusion in *Complex Identities*.

The theme of *tikun 'olam* underlies the two historical essays included with the art historical analyses that dominate this volume, Andrew Weinstein's "From International Socialism to Jewish Nationalism: The John Reed Club Gift to Birobidzhan" and Diana Linden's "Ben Shahn, the Four Freedoms, and the S.S. *St. Louis*," both of

which examine issues of patronage. Weinstein describes how the works of artist members of the Communist John Reed Club of New York that were donated to the Jewish autonomous region of Birobidzhan were originally touted as an expression of “gratitude to the Soviet system” for its liberation of an oppressed minority (which happened to be Jewish). But by the time the donated works were exhibited in New York at the end of an international tour, the accompanying catalogue emphasized the American character of the collection, despite the Jewish identity of most of the artist-donors. Eventually, the John Reed Clubs ceased to exist and many Jewish members became active on behalf of Israel. In a similar essay, Linden examines Ben Shahn’s proposal of 1939 to the Federal Works Progress Administration to design a mural for the St. Louis post office. After a lengthy overview of the political climate surrounding issues of immigration in the late 1930s, in particular the case of the S.S. *St. Louis*, whose refugee passengers were sent back to Nazi Germany, Linden focuses on one sketch from Shahn’s proposal, “Immigration.” She insists that “we acknowledge [in it] the passengers on the St. Louis” (p. 172), without offering any rationale.

The majority of essays in *Complex Identities* are insightful interpretations of the oeuvres of modern and contemporary artists who were not only born Jewish, but whose works reflect the Jewish experience. Margaret Olin masterfully analyzes Chantal Ackerman’s video installation *D’est* in terms of its relationship to the Second Commandment and the moral imperative to avoid direct representation of the Holocaust. Her essay then discusses these themes in relation to the modernist aesthetic embraced by Jewish artists and by contemporary critics. One of those cited by Olin is Theodor Adorno, whose concept of a “shudder” or a “premonition of subjectivity, a sense of being touched by the other” is at the heart of Donald Kuspit’s consideration of the Jewishness of Chaim Soutine’s paintings. In this piece, Adorno’s theoretical concepts and Kuspit’s analysis of Soutine’s art are melded into a dense and reciprocally enlightening whole. A second discussion of Soutine, by Avigdor Poseq, takes the opposite view that the artist’s works “show little of . . . the hallmarks of Jewish art” (p. 100). To remedy this lack, Poseq engages in a “psycho-iconographical” study of Soutine’s paintings, an approach considered passé by contemporary art historians.

In a very interesting essay, Ziva Amishai-Maisels explores 19th-century representations of Jesus as a Jew, the earliest of which are little known, and places this iconographical innovation within the context of the intellectual life of the period. Three essays—Haya Friedberg’s “Secular Culture and Traditional Judaism in the Art of Michael Na’aman,” Milly Heyd’s “Man Ray/Emmanuel Radnitsky: Who is behind the Enigma of Isidore Ducasse?” and Harriet F. Senie’s “Perpetual Tension: Considering Richard Serra’s Jewish Identity”—are readings of the autobiographical (Jewish) elements in each artist’s work. Both Friedberg and Heyd make convincing cases, despite the fact that Heyd must confront Man Ray’s obscuration of his Jewishness through changes in his name and manner. But the inherent physical and psychological tension apparent, according to Senie, in Serra’s abstract sculptures may well be due to factors other than the accident of Serra’s birth. Does the denial of Judaism by this artist constitute a sense of Jewish identity or Jewish consciousness, or do we have here a need on the part of the author to “claim” the work of a renowned sculptor? No such question attends the essay by Sander L. Gilman, “R.B. Kitaj’s ‘Good Bad’ Di-

asporism and the Body in American Jewish Postmodern Art,” although the pertinent issue is the Jew as outsider, rather than the specific events of Kitaj’s life. The same is true of Mira Goldfarb Berkowitz’s perceptive discussion of Morris Louis’ *Charred Journal Series* of 1951. According to Berkowitz, the use of abstraction and the black coloration of the ground, along with the choice of Nazi book burnings as Louis’ specific subject matter, “create a sense of aesthetic distance from the horrors of the Holocaust” (p. 193). By the mid 1950s, however, Louis turned away from expressing ethnic themes and became the champion of abstract color field painting.

The two remaining essays are thematic. Ginnat Ankori writes from a feminist perspective on the ideal of Venus in mythology and premodern art and in the late 20th-century works of Yocheved Weinfeld, Hannah Wilke, and Sylvia Gruner. Occasionally the facts of the artists’ biographies are unclear, which undermines the force of the author’s conclusions. Norman Kleeblatt’s contribution, “Master Narratives/Minority Artists,” appears at the beginning of the volume and is grouped with those of Revel-Neher and Olin, since all three touch on theoretical issues (while the remaining essays are organized chronologically). Kleeblatt groups four minority artists, all of whose themes are appropriated from the literature of the majority population. It should be noted, however, that the paintings by Maurycy Gottlieb and Alfred Wolmark are based on atypical (although popular) literature, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s “Nathan the Wise,” and Robert Browning’s “The Last Days of Rabbi Ben Ezra.”

A major drawback to this volume is the poor quality of the reproductions. They are often black or muddy, making it impossible to see details mentioned by the essayists. Do the essays themselves fulfill the promise of the volume’s title? The answer is that most of them do, providing interesting and sometimes profound insights into the various expressions of Jewish identity in modern and contemporary art. I would have preferred a different organizing principle that would have allowed the themes of similar contributions to resonate with one another. Moreover, a shorter volume, all of whose chapters were consonant with the theme of Jewish consciousness in modern art and whose quality was more consistent, would have been preferable.

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Lawrence J. Epstein, *The Haunted Smile: The Story of Jewish Comedians in America*. New York: Public Affairs, 2001. xxii + 356 pp.

Because so many top comedians grew up in Jewish neighborhoods before ripening on the stages of vaudeville and nightclubs and in radio and television studios, scholars were bound to engage in postmortems, appraising the impact of the Jewishness of stand-up comedians whose historic role was akin to the jazz musicians who emerged from black America. Such entertainers could be appreciated as truth-tellers. These pioneers without pedigree smashed through social barriers and earned recognition on

behalf of communities that had somehow prevailed over misery and persecution. From Smith and Dale (Joe Sulzer and Charlie Marks) to Eddie Cantor and Jack Benny, from the Marx Brothers to *Your Show of Shows*, from Milton Berle to Lenny Bruce and Joan Rivers and finally down to *Seinfeld*, Lawrence J. Epstein shows how popular and therefore how integral these Jews were to the evolution of mass entertainment; and much of the value of his book stems from his knack for demonstrating how shifts in national moods and needs were addressed by the members of a minority desperate for acceptance and inclusion—yet sometimes also wary of losing its distinctiveness.

The Haunted Smile is therefore a parable of acculturation and often of assimilation. Readers may find themselves astonished at how quickly the impoverished alumni of immigrant neighborhoods managed to Americanize themselves and to attract a mass audience. Never looking back, such comedians made it possible for their successors in Hollywood and Las Vegas to treat the foibles of the Jewish experience as part of a more general American experience, without much fear of a bigoted backlash. For example, the dust jacket of this book portrays Woody Allen garbed as a hasid in an improbable scene from *Take the Money and Run* (1969). In that scene, Allen plays the role of an inept criminal who is briefly switched into another role, a rabbi—and here we encounter Epstein's central concern: what is left of Jewish religion and memory when America intervenes? In *The Haunted Smile*, the "pride" that comedians took in their ancestry is often recorded. But what exactly that connection to their people might have meant—and what the consequences of affirmation were, either in worship or in ethics—Epstein very rarely probes. Though his research has been impressive (obscured by the unfortunate absence of endnotes), he may well have been handicapped by the reluctance of these comedians to be tempted by introspection. Their scarred psyches, their unassuaged hurts, their untamed aggressiveness and hostility, the author speculates, may well be the genesis of the talent that landed these figures at the Palace and at MGM and NBC. But the complex of emotions associated with Jewish identity might be too touchy for such entertainers to explore in any depth; and Epstein himself skips close analysis for the sake of broad synthesis, which he handles superbly.

His overview obtains its best effects by situating the performers in the flow of American life and the American Jewish past, and then by offering readers tantalizing samples of jokes and repartees. The biographical information appears to be remarkably free of error or misinterpretation; and the illustrations are generally fresh and amusing—though to get the explosive force of the comedy, you often had to have been there. Because this sort of humor is mostly visual and oral, it is difficult to translate onto the printed page. But such obstacles are mostly surmounted, thanks to Epstein's fluent prose and his ingenuity in catching the Jewish nuances and inflections in routines and monologues that aspired to universal interest. The result of his efforts is the best book on its subject. Indeed, *The Haunted Smile* should be placed among the most engaging works ever published on Jewish humor in the United States.

However, a focus on stand-up comedians (most of whom took up acting roles on television shows and in movies) is hardly coextensive with comedy itself, and therefore the Jewish influence is underestimated. Epstein rightly highlights the films of the Marx Brothers. But a classic farce like *Some Like It Hot* (1959) is ignored, since di-

rector Billy Wilder used studio actors to get the laughs. An animated television show called *Dr. Katz, Professional Comedian* is discussed, but not Stanley Kubrick's masterpiece, *Dr. Strangelove* (1964). There are only three brief references to Neil Simon, though he is probably the most widely produced American playwright who ever lived. The index yields even fewer references to Philip Roth, and none to Joseph Heller. Yet *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969) and *Catch-22* (1961) are likely to endure when the likes of Fat Jack Leonard and Pinky Lee (*né* Pincus Leff) are only dimly recalled in dwindling numbers of south Florida's senior centers. A comprehensive history of Jewish comedy in America would have to do justice to the freakish parodistic power of S.J. Perelman, to the psychological subtlety and political acuity of Jules Feiffer, and to the unique niche occupied by a monthly like *Mad*—suspended between callow adolescence and anarchic social criticism. They are likely to have the last laugh. *The Haunted Smile* is a considerable achievement in contextualizing its subject and lending it a dignity that it was so long denied. But in addressing the oddities, the aggravations, and the irrationalities of the human estate, one American minority has proved itself even more resourceful than what this charming tribute to the comic vision can suggest.

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Norman Finkelstein, *Not One of Them in Place: Modern Poetry and Jewish American Identity*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001. xii + 194 pp.

Maurice Wohlgelemler, *Jewish Writers/Irish Writers: Selected Essays on the Love of Words*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2000. xv + 196 pp.

It used to be commonplace for American Jewish writers to resist the suggestion that they were, in fact, *Jewish* writers. Such prominent figures as Saul Bellow and Philip Roth argued that, to be a writer, one had to be wholly autonomous, subject only to the demands of one's art. The demands of normative Judaism—of history, religion, or community—impinged upon a writer's freedom. To write to please Jews demeaned and diminished what any writer wrote, turning literature into, at best, public relations. To be a *Jewish* writer, they believed, was to be something less than a writer.

I was reminded of this oft-stated complaint while reading Maurice Wohlgelemler's collection of reviews, mostly of Jewish novels and memoirs. (Of the 17 pieces in the collection, only three are about Irish writers.) Written over a period of four decades for mainstream Jewish periodicals—*Tradition*, *Modern Judaism*, *Midstream*, *Hadasah*, and *Congress Bi-weekly*—the reviews are very much of a piece, rigorously subjecting their subjects (Roth and Bellow among them) to precisely the sort of criticism that would likely rankle them the most. They are faulted for their religious and nationalist lapses, for painting less than pleasing pictures of traditional Jewish life, for their ignorance of this remark in Tosafoth's talmudic commentary or that section in Maimonides' legal code. Wohlgelemler allows writers no special privileges, no ex-

emption from ethical rebuke; for him, writing is clearly a matter of secondary importance, no more than a means to an end, of no redeeming social value in and of itself. What he demands first is that Jewish writers be good Jews, and in this demand he is uncompromising, unambiguous, unapologetic, and unrelenting.

It would be all too easy for literary critics to dismiss this book. Very little of the titular “love of words” is on display in the volume, while its moralism and preacherly tone are stubbornly maintained throughout. (Wohlgelernter suggests in his delightful and instructive autobiographical introduction that close reading of literary texts is “not entirely unlike” talmudic exegesis [p. 5], and that what he learned from William York Tindall at Columbia reiterated what he learned from Joseph B. Soloveitchik at Yeshiva University—a sensitivity to “the difficulties, tension, ambiguity, expressive form, reference, paradox, irony, of any given text” [p. 3]. But we are offered no Soloveitchik-style readings in these reviews.) Still, as the author notes in his review of Calvin Trillin’s memoirs, “stubbornness . . . may be at times a virtue” (p. 153). If race, class, and gender have become critical categories, then why not halakhah? If literature is seen to embody an identifiable sets of political values and is systematically made to answer for them, then why not call Jewish authors on the carpet for their less than complete allegiance to the Jewish people, to Israel, and to Torah? In such times and so construed, Wohlgelernter’s unorthodox literary voice certainly deserves to be heard.

Wohlgelernter restricts himself in this volume to realistic prose narrative, a form apposite to his sermonic criticism. It would be interesting to know what he would make of the (predominantly male) Jewish American poets featured in Norman Finkelstein’s study: Charles Reznikoff, Louis Zukofsky, Yankev Glatshteyn (in translation), Allen Ginsberg, John Hollander, Allen Grossman, Jerome Rothenberg, Armand Shwerner, Harvey Shapiro, Michael Heller, and Hugh Seidman, among others. Ostensibly, Wohlgelernter would have much to dislike: it is difficult to imagine him making it through, say, Ginsberg’s *Kaddish* without wincing. (At the very least, he would have nodded approval at John Hollander’s excoriation of *Kaddish*: “Whether or not one admires this poem, one must recognize that it ignores the meaning—the nature, structure, liturgical function—of the prayer after which it takes its title” [p. 58]). Yet whatever their Jewish failings, most of these poets are clearly intent upon acknowledging and engaging Jewish textual and spiritual traditions, upon combining a fascination with Judaism and a love of words.

Finkelstein, himself both poet and critic, elaborates with informed sensitivity on the dialectical encounter between modern poetry and Jewish tradition over the course of the 20th century, moving from the Objectivists and the Yiddish modernist *In Zikh-*ists to his contemporaries. He is admittedly engaged with his subject, but, to his credit, he refuses to see the Jewish-poetic encounter in facile, celebratory terms. On the contrary, he understands the history of Jewish American poetry to be fraught with difficulties: “Between Jew and American, between individual and group identity,” he writes, “Reznikoff and his colleagues try to make their way, confronted by contradictions which, as the century goes on, prove increasingly insurmountable—but out of which will come great poetry” (p. 52). As he sees it, the problem lies in the nature of Judaism itself: “the absolute condition of holiness that God imposes on Jewish life is [so] at odds with poetic representation” that, in effect, “a fully Jewish poetry can-

not exist" (p. 176). Put another way, it is hard to be a good Jew and, at the same time, a good poet. Yet it is precisely "the unstable ground that these writers endlessly traverse" (p. 35) that forms, Finkelstein argues, the fertile soil of their poetry.

Finkelstein thus paves what appears to be a middle way between Roth and Bellow, on the one hand, and Wohlgelelnter, on the other. No doubt, critics of modern Jewish literature will find this approach appealing—and Finkelstein's readings richly suggestive. But it bears remarking that all three approaches share the observation that Jewish literature has been fundamentally transgressive and that Judaism is what Jewish writers have transgressed (or, at the very least, have struggled with) in order to produce Jewish art. Finkelstein feels that this is necessarily so. Only Wohlgelelnter considers the possibility that Judaism itself might form the matrix of poetry and prose, but he brings no clear examples of what such a literature might look like. Is "Jewish writer" a contradiction in terms after all?

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Andrew Furman, *Contemporary Jewish Writers and the Multicultural Dilemma: Return of the Exiled*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000. 214 pp.

In many ways, Andrew Furman's *Contemporary Jewish Writers and the Multicultural Dilemma* is a rescue operation whose aim, as Furman puts it in his subtitle, is the "return of the exiled" Jewish American writer to the American canon. Two forces—one of them internal to American Jewish writing, the other more external, even political—are, in Furman's view, responsible for this current exclusion of the Jewish American text. Furman addresses both of these in his book.

The first, more internal aspect of the problem is a certain lack of confidence in the Jewish American subject on the part of Jewish critics and writers themselves. "Insofar as this body of writing draws heavily from the immigrant experience," wrote Irving Howe in 1977, "it must suffer a depletion of resources, a thinning-out of materials and memories." Howe's prophecy becomes Leslie Fiedler's even more unequivocal pronouncement in 1992: "The Jewish American novel is over and done with" (p. 16).

The second, more external, pressure on American Jewish writing is the configuration of multicultural ethnic studies in the United States. Multiculturalism, as many critics have noted, has less to do with a genuine cultural pluralism than with redressing the disadvantaged position of victimized minority groups in America: it is a kind of "identity politics" that intends to repair socioeconomic, political, and cultural disempowerment. Since Jews have by and large "made it" in America, or so the argument goes, they do not write ethnic literature as such. The internal and external aspects of the forces that have "exiled" the Jewish American text dovetail in the sense that it is assumed that American Jews have nothing to say once they are no longer disadvantaged immigrants struggling their way into the American mainstream.

In order to make the case for a significant body of American Jewish texts, Furman

produces in-depth analyses of the works of eight contemporary Jewish American writers, only the first of whom is a well-known or canonical author: Philip Roth. The other less familiar writers are Melvin Jules Bukiet, Thane Rosenbaum, Rebecca Goldstein, Robert Cohen, Allegra Goodman, Steve Stern, and Gerald Shapiro. In a concluding chapter, Furman also discusses several other emerging figures on the scene of American Jewish writing. He proves his case concerning the plenitude and richness of contemporary Jewish fiction, the subjects of which range from Jewish experience and identity in the United States to the Holocaust, Israel, religious ritual, and gender difference and sexual preference. At the same time, by returning periodically to Philip Roth as still the central figure on the Jewish American scene and a link between the earlier and later generation of writers, Furman neatly conveys the continuity of Jewish American writing. In general, his explications of texts are intelligent, insightful, and graceful. These are significant readings of significant literary works.

Where the book is less strong is in its discussion of multiculturalism, which tends to recede into the background of Furman's argument—becoming more like an occasion for the writing of the book than a subject in its own right. Furman correctly objects to the exclusion of Jewish American texts from the scene of contemporary American writing. But one cannot merely object to multiculturalism's self-definition, which identifies it as a political rather than a literary term. Multiculturalism and identity politics came into being because of certain problems of exclusion that the old pluralism (that same pluralism that enabled Jewish American writers to join the American mainstream) failed to address. Therefore, what is required is a theoretical rethinking of the pluralism vs. multiculturalism debate and an interpretation of contemporary Jewish texts within that debate. Such a discussion would have to identify how these texts subvert or challenge multicultural thinking. It would also have to take into account how they themselves already reflect the new multiculturalist argument that they assimilate, resist, and revise. Putting Jewish American fiction back into the cultural mix might well reflect a *new* multiculturalism that does not simply reprocess or win back the old pluralism so hospitable to Jews but rather carries over some of its principles into a new, more sensitive, and more political multiculturalist moment.

Furman's optimism concerning the future of Jewish American writing (p. 179) has much to recommend it. It would be nice to think that this optimism includes a brighter future for the American canon itself.

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Norman L. Kleeblatt (ed.), *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art*. New York: The Jewish Museum and Rutgers University Press, 2001. 164 pp.

Reviewing the catalogue of the exhibition *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* is no easy task. Viewing the exhibition itself must have been even more difficult. The

main question for the reader/viewer is what motivated 13 young artists from Israel, Germany, Austria, Poland, the United States, France, Scotland, and England to use Nazi imagery in their art. Are we looking at a new type of provocative art—one that has no real value beyond being a gimmick? Or are we confronting moral debates presented by artists who refuse to ignore the most traumatic event of the 20th century?

The exhibition *Mirroring Evil* was presented at the Jewish Museum in New York between March 17 and June 30, 2002. The catalogue accompanying the exhibition consists of three sections: the largest comprises articles by scholars such as Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi, Ellen H. Spitz, Lisa Saltzman, Ernst van Alphen, and Reesa Greenberg; in another, the curator, Norman L. Kleeblatt, reflects on the works of art that are exhibited; and the shortest section is devoted to the works themselves. I wonder if this decision might reflect the uneasiness felt by the curator in the face of these works.

In his contribution, "The Nazi Occupation of the White Cube," Kleeblatt rightly claims that about 30 years after the Second World War, ambiguous Nazi imagery began to emerge with greater frequency, especially in fiction and in films. This phenomenon intensified, especially in Germany, as artists connected with the Neo-Expressionist movement, such as Anselm Kiefer, Jörg Immendorff, and Georg Baselitz used ironic or satiric strategies to produce works with hermetic, often intentionally deceptive meanings.¹ If Kiefer in Germany and Moshe Gershuni in Israel chose German symbols such as the swastika or the *Sieg heil* salute in the 1980s,² then what makes Maciej Toporowicz's work in this exhibition unique? Is it simply the fact that he places the logo *eternity*, copied from a Calvin Klein perfume ad, on top of Albert Speer's monumental design for the Reich chancellery? Or is his intention to criticize the consumer society and the media for being so shallow and bland that the public is completely unable to deal with moral issues affecting contemporary life?

Some critics of the exhibition offered a clear-cut answer to the question of artist intention. In the *New York Observer* of January 4, 2002, for instance, Hilton Kramer argued that *Mirroring Evil* was no more than a trivialization of history and a mockery of the memory of the Holocaust. (The title of the article summed up his point of view: "Jewish Museum Show, Full of Vile Crap, Not to be Forgiven.") Kramer's position may not be surprising, given the fact that the issue of representing the Holocaust tends in general to stir emotions. But in the case of this particular exhibition, the rage may have more to do with the appropriation of Nazi images in a way that might be seen as a form of collaboration, in which viewers are led to focus on the human side of the Nazis.³

Among other artists in the exhibition, both Christine Borland and Roece Rosen have pushed this point to the edge. In her *L'Homme Double*, Borland, a French artist, asked six sculptors to sculpt a man on the basis of two photographs. Captions on the photographs described this man as "so handsome"—without indicating that he was the Auschwitz doctor, Josef Mengele. Rosen's work, "Live and Die as Eva Braun," is also located, as Kleeblatt notes, in the "twilight zone of right and wrong" (p. 101). This installation, originally shown at the Israel Museum in 1997, comprises 60 black-and-white works (whose style is somewhat reminiscent of woodcuts illustrating a German fairy-tale) clustered around ten texts written by the artist. The subject is Eva Braun

and her lover, Adolf Hitler—but, as the artist informs his viewers from the very first tableau, the viewer is also part of the work: “You are blond, your face is still young, your complexion pinkish-pure . . . you are Eva Braun.”

According to Lisa Saltzman, such “flirtation with the fascination of fascism” (p. 62) has precedents. Indeed, one can argue that most of the themes in this exhibition have been explored before. What makes Rosen’s work unique, however, is the way he manipulates and forces the viewer to get as close as possible to Hitler and, through dealing with his personal life, to face some of the most horrifying questions concerning Nazism.

Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi and Ellen H. Spitz have argued that the “violation of childhood” is evident in *Mirroring Evil* in the use made of toys out of context to reveal “our own latent sadism” (p. 47). Another theme, also well known, is what Kleeblatt terms the “intersection between desire and terror” (p. 9), in which the boundaries between sexuality and voyeurism, and sexuality and brutality, are deliberately blurred.

Mirroring Evil, however, goes beyond other exhibitions in its almost intolerable level of sensationalism. This is evident, above all, in the works of two particular artists: Zbigniew Libera’s *LEGO Concentration Camp Set* (1966) and Boaz Arad’s videos *Safam*, *Marcel Marcel*, and *Hebrew Lesson* (2000). In the former, Libera, a Polish artist, used the Lego logo and Lego blocks in his set of seven boxes that describe life in the concentration camps. These self-constructed models include the main compound with crematoria and small white figures that look like skeletons—obviously meant to indicate people who have been tortured and starved. Are we to assume that Libera regards killing as child’s play? Or should we understand this work as a critique of our modern consumer society, which will do anything in order to sell? Or perhaps Libera, who lived near a concentration camp as a child, is under the influence of Michel Foucault’s interpretation of architecture, according to which buildings should be viewed as ideologically freighted spaces that are invariably manipulated to wield authority?⁴

While we are not facing a new type of aesthetics here, such works defiantly suggest a new context. The artists are aware of the media’s simplification of moral debates and they are, as one might hope, very critical of media manipulation. But at the same time, they are using new techniques made available by the media. This tension is evident in Boaz Arad’s videos. In his *Hebrew Lesson*, Arad manipulates Hitler so that he speaks in Hebrew and says: “Greetings, Jerusalem, I am deeply sorry.” How ironic it is that Hitler’s first word in Hebrew, as manipulated by the artist, was “Disneyland.”⁵

Mirroring Evil presents in extreme form the dilemma that political artists always face: are they to be straightforward and provocative, allowing the viewer no room for interpretation—or should they be less explicit, more vague and, as a result, open to receiving different and even contrary interpretations of their work? These questions become much sharper when the issue is the Holocaust. Do we have here provocation or in-depth discussion; political posters or enduring works of art; gimmicks or genuine, searching explorations of human nature? More time is needed to determine whether these works will be perceived as belonging to what Murray Edelman calls the “repertoire of images,”⁶ part of the canon that is trying to make sense of the great-

est crime of the 20th century, or as clichéd representations manifesting nothing but bad taste.

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Notes

1. As early as 1965, the artist Gerhard Richter used vague Nazi imagery in his *Onkel Rudi* series—blurred black and white paintings of a man in Nazi uniform. The Neo-Expressionist movement coalesced in the late 1970s and became known around 1980. See Donald E. Gordon, *Expressionism: Art and Idea* (New Haven: 1987), 207–215.
2. See Lisa Salzman, *Anselm Kiefer and Art after Auschwitz* (Cambridge: 2000). In 1988, Moshe Gershuni glazed a series of porcelain plates, using the German swastika. For a detailed description of Gershuni's attitude toward the Holocaust, see Roe Rosen, "The Visibility and Invisibility of Trauma Traces of the Holocaust in the Work of Moshe Gershuni and in Israeli Art," *The Jerusalem Review* (1997), 98–118. See also "Gershuni's File," a special issue of *Studio—Israeli Art Magazine* 76 (Oct.-Nov. 1996). Pinchas Cohen Gan has also recently used Nazi images in his art. He claims that it was impossible to present these works in museums in Israel, as they provoked great offense (interview with Dana Arieli-Horowitz, 16 Oct. 2002).
3. See Sidra Dekoven Ezrahi, "Acts of Impersonation: Barbaric Spaces as Theater," in *Mirroring Evil*, 19.
4. See Norman Kleeblatt, "Toying with Terror," in *ibid.*, 129.
5. Boaz Arad, interview with Dana Arieli-Horowitz, 28 Nov. 2002.
6. Murray Edelman, *From Art to Politics: How Artistic Creations Shape Political Conceptions* (Chicago: 1995), 1.

Steven Luckert, *The Art and Politics of Arthur Szyk*. Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Museum, 2002. 136 pp.

Arthur Szyk, the Polish Jewish artist, made his mark in the 1930s and, in particular, during the Second World War, as an illustrator, illuminator, and cartoonist. Born in Lodz in 1894, he settled in the United States during the war and died there in 1951. His work was untouched by the various currents of artistic modernism; rather, he painted and drew in a style derived from medieval manuscript illumination and from old Persian miniatures. His remarkable skill as a draftsman helped to win him fame, but his "reactionary" artistic language, the fiercely partisan, political nature of his work, and his failure to produce paintings of the kind that museums purchase led to the swift decline of his reputation after his death.

It was as an anti-Nazi caricaturist and a fervent propagandist of Jewish causes that Szyk won his renown, and it is therefore fitting that the Holocaust Museum should have sponsored, in 2002, a comprehensive exhibition of his work. The beautifully produced book under review is the catalogue of this exhibition. It includes, along with many splendid reproductions in color, a lucid and illuminating essay by Steven

Luckert, who succeeds in placing Szyk in his political and artistic contexts. The name given to the exhibition reveals an essential aspect of Szyk's work outlook—his belief that the artist must be a political animal and place his skills at the service of his nation. Luckert might have pointed out that this doctrine has deep roots in Polish art history. Led by Jan Matejko, numerous talented 19th-century Polish artists depicted stirring scenes of Polish history, thus playing their part in preserving Polish national consciousness at a time when Poland had been erased from the map of Europe. Polish Jewish artists imbibed this worldview from their Polish teachers and colleagues, and Szyk's work can be seen as maintaining a tradition inaugurated by such luminaries as Maurycy Gottlieb, Samuel Hirszenberg, and Ephraim Moses Lilien. Luckert, who does emphasize the connections between nationalism and culture in Eastern Europe, quotes Szyk as writing in 1944 that "the Jewish artist belongs to the Jewish people, and it is his mission to enhance the prestige of the Jews in the world" (p. 7). Not all artists of Jewish origin subscribed to this view, of course, but not all Jewish artists were such fervent Zionists as Arthur Szyk.

Szyk's first major work was his *Book of Esther* (1925), which demonstrated both his skill as an illustrator and his preoccupation with the twinned themes of anti-semitism and Jewish resistance to oppression. His next project, *The Statute of Kalisz* (this refers to the 13th-century privilege issued to the Jews of Poland) revealed another aspect of his cultural politics—his fervent Polish patriotism. Szyk presents here a highly selective illustrated history of relations between Poles and Jews, focusing on Polish toleration and the joint struggle of Poles and Jews against intolerance and oppression. Again, he was working within a well-established tradition of Polish and Polish Jewish art. The subject of Poland's granting sanctuary to persecuted European Jewry is to be found in the work of such Polish artists as Jan Matejko and Wojciech Gerson, as well as in paintings by Polish Jewish artists.¹ Luckert remarks on the apparent contradiction in Szyk's politics, which combined revisionist Zionism with profound attachment to his Polish homeland. But he also notes, correctly, that many Polish Jews (including Zionists) were great admirers of Poland, seeing in its heroic history of taking up arms against oppression a model worthy of emulation.

Szyk was unusual, however, in his willingness to serve as a propagandist for Poland throughout the 1930s and into the war years, given the obviously antisemitic character of both the state and Polish society. (Poland's leaders were delighted with his *Statute of Kalisz*, since it rejected the familiar image of Poland as a center of virulent nationalism and antisemitism and presented this much-maligned country in a highly favorable light.) The artist maintained his pro-Polish position up until 1943, and was in close contact with the Polish government-in-exile. In his cartoons, he depicted Poland as a helpless victim of Nazism and as an ally of Jewry in the joint struggle against the common enemy, Germany. Unfortunately, we are not told much about what Jewish leaders in Europe and the United States made of Szyk's controversial attitude toward a land usually branded by Jews as a major center of antisemitism.

It was as a fierce enemy of Nazism, whose most prominent figure he so brilliantly lampooned in his caricatures, that Szyk came into his own. He worked tirelessly first to urge America to enter the war against Germany, and then to demonize the Nazis (and the Japanese). His images of the Nazis as bloodthirsty brutes and savages ap-

peared in leading magazines and newspapers in America and made a tremendous impression, reaching (so Luckert tells us) millions of readers. Szyk regarded Germany as the source of all evil, and he is quoted here as saying that "Hitler was Germany without the mask" (p. 77). Thus his remarkable caricature of Richard Wagner, made in 1942, in which the composer is depicted as conjuring up, through the medium of his music, a host of Nazi monsters. National Socialism, so far as Szyk was concerned, was not the product of post-First World War trauma and the failure of Weimar, but rather an extreme manifestation of traditional German evil, with its roots deep in the German past.

In 1943, Szyk made a political volte-face, abandoning his role as propagandist for the Polish government-in-exile and transforming himself into a Soviet fellow traveler: he had come to the conclusion that the U.S.S.R. had now become Hitler's most powerful enemy, and therefore Jewry's staunchest ally. Indeed, Szyk's real commitment was to the Jewish cause as he understood it, and here there was no wavering or change of course. During the war years, he worked heroically to bring the horrendous tragedy of European Jewry to the attention of the world. In his Jewish politics, he was a passionate adherent of the revisionist faction within Zionism. He had been Zeev Jabotinsky's friend in Paris, and after the death of this figure declared that the founder of Revisionism was "the greatest leader who ever was given to the Jewish people" (p. 94). During the war, Szyk was closely linked with the controversial activities of Peter Bergson (Hillel Kook), who denounced the apathy of the American Jewish leadership and called for a Jewish policy of militant activism. As early as 1936, Szyk had portrayed Yosef Trumpeldor, the hero of Tel Hai, as the embodiment of the "new Jew." As Luckert shows, for Szyk the ideal Jew was a fighter, not a talmudic scholar. He supported Menachem Begin's Irgun (Etzel) movement in Palestine, and one of his last projects was to illuminate Israel's declaration of independence.

It is remarkable how many themes in Szyk's oeuvre reflect major preoccupations of 19th- and 20th-century Jewish art. I have noted that his emphasis on the political role of the artist as the champion of his people had its roots in the 19th-century origins of East European Jewish art, as did his hopes for Polish-Jewish cooperation against a common foe. In his depictions of Uriel Da Costa, Shylock, and the Wandering Jew, he was also following in the footsteps of a number of Polish Jewish artists.² Like so many Jewish artists, he evinced great interest in the figure of Jesus, whom he portrayed (as did Marc Chagall) as a symbol of Jewish suffering. For Szyk, Nazism was both anti-Jewish and anti-Christian, and one of the most striking images included in this book is his rendition of Hitler as the anti-Christ. Like so many Jewish artists before him, Szyk was also something of an "orientalist." Finally, he sympathized with the plight of American blacks, whom he portrayed in a positive manner in several illustrations. Here, too, he was acting very much in accord with the traditions of Jewish art.

I confess to not liking Szyk's work very much. It often verges on kitsch, and his portrayal of muscular Jewish heroes reminds me of the worst excesses of Soviet socialist realism. As Luckert notes, his depictions of the Japanese are thoroughly racist. Still, excess and shrillness of tone are the stock-in-trade of the cartoonist, and who can blame Szyk for using all means available to arouse public opinion during mod-

ern Jewry's most terrible hour? This volume stands as a fitting memorial to the work of a powerful and influential Jewish voice.

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Notes

1. See in general the excellent book edited by Marek Rostworowski, *Żydzi w Polsce: obraz i słowo* (Warsaw: 1993).
2. Szyk is not included in the noteworthy catalogue on the wandering Jew in art, an exhibition mounted at the Museum of Jewish Art and History in Paris in 2002. See *Le Juif errant: un témoin du temps* (Paris: 2002). This is another indication of the decline in his reputation.

Religion, Thought, and Education

David Berger, *The Rebbe, the Messiah and the Scandal of Orthodox Indifference*.
London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001. viii + 195 pp.

This book is both a detailed account of the reaction of certain elements within the Chabad (Lubavitch) movement to the death of “the Rebbe,” Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson—perceived by many to be the Messiah—in 1994 and a history of the author’s efforts to rouse the Orthodox establishment to what he perceives to be the doctrinal dangers of Chabad messianism. Berger deals with the first subject out of his personal knowledge of and appreciation for Chabad’s global outreach programs. He describes the steps that led from urgent calls for “Moshiach-now” to insinuations that the Rebbe himself might be the Messiah, to the crisis brought about by the Rebbe’s stroke, and on to the shock of his actual death. By all principles of common sense and Jewish theology, Schneerson’s death should have brought all messianic speculations to a definitive close, as it did for such disparate figures as Jesus, bar-Kokhba, and Shabbetai Zevi. After all, centuries of disastrous experiences with messianic pretenders had resulted in a consensus that a necessary condition for messianic candidacy is realization of his mission on the empirical level. Thus, although the Rebbe had initiated many successful educational programs of an unprecedented scope, his death should have delegated him, at most, to the status of an unfulfilled (and therefore failed) Messiah—notwithstanding any casuistic twisting of obscure talmudic texts.

This did not happen. According to Berger, the view of a growing number of Chabad rabbis and laymen that Menachem Mendel Schneerson is indeed Moshiach, and that in spite of his certified death and burial he will one day be resurrected to complete all of the traditional expectations (“second-coming messianism”), constitutes a blatant perversion of a pivotal Jewish doctrine. The aggressive nature of these second-coming messianists can be seen in a 1997 “ruling” by six Chabad rabbis “of considerable distinction” (p. 56) that Jewish law *requires*, on the part of all Jews, belief in the Rebbe’s messiahship. Berger’s account of these doctrinal developments is objective and thoroughly documented.

The second subject, which Berger calls “the scandal of Orthodox indifference,” is the main reason for the publication of this book. Berger argues that second-coming messianism and its apparent legitimation constitutes a threat to Judaism as a whole, since it undermines the traditional Jewish rebuttal of the Christian claim that Jesus is the Messiah. Berger documents his persistent efforts (which he considers unsuccessful) to draw the attention of the Orthodox rabbinical establishment to the dangers of

this doctrinal aberration (p. 149). In fact, in response to Berger's efforts, the Rabbinical Council of America, the Israeli chief rabbinate, the yeshiva world, and most members of the Council of Torah Sages of Agudat Israel privately have declared the concept of a "dead-rebbe-as-Moshiach" to be doctrinally unacceptable. Berger, however, insists that the dangers involved warrant much stronger measures, namely, the communal and social ostracism of all those who believe in this heterodoxy, including the dismissal of messianist rabbis, *sho'hetim*, and cantors.

Berger presents a number of possible explanations (or excuses) as to why Orthodoxy has so far reacted with what he regards as indifference to the Chabad messianist phenomenon and why measures advocated by him have not been taken, but rejects them all as inadequate. However, this reviewer finds himself sympathetic to those Orthodox leaders who hesitate to further fracture the Jewish community by ostracizing elements of Lubavitch. The ideology of this movement has made it impervious not just to outside persecution but also to criticism from within. Moreover, the task of identifying which individuals hold heretical views would ultimately require inquisitorial investigations reminiscent of the Joseph McCarthy era, with negative consequences for Orthodoxy similar to those following the controversy between R. Ya'akov Emden and R. Yonatan Eybeshutz regarding the status of Shabbetai Zevi.

Berger exaggerates the importance of Chabad in general for Orthodoxy. From the very arrival of the previous Rebbe in America, the yeshiva world and several hasidic courts harbored suspicions about Chabad, and over the years, they were openly critical of many of its pronouncements and methods. While admired for many projects that benefited Judaism as a whole, Lubavitch has never been a team player on the communal scene. For Modern Orthodoxy, Chabad—as other hasidic groups—has been a model for introducing emotional fervor, singing, and dancing into synagogue worship. However, Chabad's faith in the Rebbe has always seemed to be overdone.

It should be noted that it is not *messianism* that is to blame here, but rather *exaggerated faith*, be it in rebbes, gurus, or *rashei yeshivot*. If we have a "scandal" here, it is the scandal of belief gone amok, which, as Berger demonstrates, borders on idolatry. It is sad to see precious resources of religious faith so foolishly wasted. We can only hope that, for the sake of their own movement, more rational elements in Chabad will assert themselves. Otherwise, whereas I am sure that Jews worldwide will continue to enjoy and to be grateful for the hospitality of Chabad, they may henceforth not take its theology very seriously.

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Kristi Groberg and Avraham Greenbaum (eds.), *A Missionary for History: Essays in Honor of Simon Dubnov* (Minnesota Mediterranean and East European Monographs no. 7). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1998. 157 pp.

Born in 1860 in the Belorussian shtetl of Mstislavl in the era of the great reforms of Alexander II and murdered in 1940 during the evacuation of the Riga ghetto, Simon Dubnov lived through an eight-decade period of hope and tragedy more extreme than any other in modern Jewish history. During this time he was in contact with many of the principal East European Jewish scholars, writers, and ideologists of St. Petersburg in the 1880s, Odessa in the 1890s, Vilna at the beginning of the 20th century, St. Petersburg-Petrograd-Leningrad from 1905 until 1923, Berlin until just before Hitler came to power, and, finally, Riga. By the interwar years, the influence of his ideas was felt far beyond his direct audience. Dubnov's philosophy of Jewish history, strongly shaped by the Darwinism of his youth, was attractive to a broad range of Jewish secularists; his general history of Judaism in its various editions served for many as the basic textbook in the field; his ideology of diaspora nationalism resonated well beyond the Folkspartei; and his pioneering research in the East European Jewish past, such as his early history of Hasidism and his *kehillah pinkasim*, contributed considerably to the emergence of new approaches in Jewish historiography and to the formation of YIVO in Vilna.

The essays in this collection convey some of the ways in which Dubnov reshaped his views in the first two decades of the 20th century. Avraham Greenbaum describes the evolution of Dubnov's history of the Jews from a Russian-language reworking of a German Jewish schoolbook to the full-fledged *World History of the Jewish People*. Greenbaum unravels the process by which the chapters on the Jews of Eastern Europe gave rise to the well-known work edited by Israel Friedlander and issued by the Jewish Publication Society of America in three volumes during the First World War. Dan Haruv shows how Dubnov was gradually able to incorporate theories of critical biblical scholarship and the findings of recent archeology when pre-publication censorship was abolished in 1905. (How easily forgotten it is that 19th-century Russian church censors prohibited Jewish historians from applying advanced western scholarship in their accounts of biblical Israel!)

Dubnov's pioneering efforts in the study of the East European Jewish past were a resolution of a youthful spiritual crisis at the end of the 1880s, which resulted in his turning away from espousing Enlightenment universalism to a defense of Jewish ethnic particularism (without, however, abandoning the former). In the two decades that saw secular Jewish nationalism transformed from an idiosyncratic to a widely held position, Dubnov concluded that a viable future for Russian Jewry required a new set of collective institutions. Israel Bartal argues that Dubnov projected his aspiration for Jewish minority rights in Russia of his day onto the Jewish autonomous institutions of the old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Renée Poznanski suggests that Dubnov's historiography contained a far more paradoxical and even pessimistic conception of Jewish exile than his optimistic ideology of diaspora nationalism allowed for. She notes that, despite Dubnov's affirmation of the diaspora, he emphasized the

catastrophes that devastated every hegemonic diaspora community, even though these led to the creation of new centers.

Dubnov's preoccupation with traumatic outbursts of Judeophobia comes to the fore in his treatment of the pogroms of 1881–1882 and 1905–1907. The first set of pogroms undermined the hopes of many Jewish liberals that Russian Jewry would soon be emancipated (Dubnov himself drew this conclusion 10 years afterwards). The Revolution of 1905—which brought into being the first Russian parliament—spurred Dubnov to turn his theoretical espousal of Jewish nationalism into a program for Jewish political action. Three of the articles in this volume focus on Dubnov's treatment of the pogroms. Without minimizing the antisemitism that pervaded Russian ruling circles, John Klier and Michael Hamm are among those scholars who have discarded the view that the pogroms resulted from a deliberate strategy of antisemitic government officials to use the Jews as scapegoat for the political turbulence. Shlomo Lambroza offers a nuanced synthesis of the older conspiratorial explanation and the newer, revisionist view that emphasizes those social stresses that triggered the pogroms.

The present volume also contains a description by Valeri Gessen (son of the eminent historian Iulii Gessen) of Dubnov letters in the newly available archives, and an account by Marek Webb of the Dubnov papers in the YIVO archives. There is a map by Mikhail Beizer of sites in St. Petersburg of 1914 that are associated with Dubnov and an essay by Viktor Kel'ner on the archivist and activist Aleksandr Braudo, who was in contact with Dubnov from time to time. A bibliography of writings about Dubnov is appended.

One only regrets that more attention was not paid to the theme alluded to in the book's title: "Missionary for History." Dubnov's historical synthesis emerged from his personal struggles to define himself in relation to family, a growing network of colleagues, and the cataclysmic changes roiling East European Jewry. Thanks to the three volumes of Dubnov's autobiography (*Kniga Zhizni* [Book of life]), we can follow much of his inner, personal evolution from traditional beliefs to his acquisition of a sociological view of Jewish history and minority-rights nationalism—via the influence of the later Haskalah, Positivism, Darwinism, Russian populism, and cultural Zionism—as he absorbed critically the ideas of such figures as Herbert Spencer, Victor Hugo, Ernest Renan, Heinrich Graetz, and Ahad Ha'am. More than any other Jewish thinker, Dubnov saw Jewish history as conveying the meaning of Jewish survival for secular Jews of his generation. The intensive study of the Jewish past had a deep moral, almost mystical (albeit anti-religious) significance for him. How he managed to correlate the personal and the political lessons of Jewish history, selectively applying its symbols to the dilemmas of his day, is what remains most interesting about Dubnov six decades after his death.

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Michael A. Meyer, *Judaism within Modernity: Essays on Jewish History and Religion*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001. 411 pp.

This collection of essays by Michael Meyer relates primarily to Jewish acculturation, especially in Germany, and specifically to developments within the Reform movement, as well as to issues in modern Jewish historiography. Most of these essays appeared after the publication of Meyer's synthetic history of the Reform movement, *Response to Modernity* (1988). Several provide accounts of heretofore little-known developments—for example, the emergence of a *havurah*-type movement within German Reform during the 1920s, which encouraged lay members to lead the services and to deliver sermons, and which emphasized congregational singing in place of the passive aesthetic prevailing in most Reform synagogues. Two of the better known essays are Meyer's account of Hebrew Union College's efforts to absorb refugee scholars from Central Europe during the 1930s and his penetrating analysis of the divergent conceptions of the modern Jew maintained by Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz and Prussian historian Heinrich Treitschke.

Although Meyer is a master at synthesis, a few of the more broadly conceived pieces in this collection are too nuanced, as the author continually raises possible perspectives without necessarily arriving at a clear solution. His piece on the beginnings of modern Jewish history, for example, poses a real challenge to accepted lines of thinking with a variety of answers depending on geographical location, but the problem still requires an overarching framework. It is surprising that Salo Baron receives only minimal attention in this interesting essay, despite his overwhelming importance for the topic of periodization. In fact, Baron was the first to posit that the modern period commences with the social and political transformations of the 17th century, although Meyer attributes the idea to Shmuel Ettinger, who actually came much later than Baron. Moreover, in summarizing Baron's position, Meyer omits any reference to absolutism as one of the primary factors behind the turn to modernity. Meyer's conclusion that Baron's ingredients for change "had little modernizing influence on any considerable segment of the Jews in Europe in the seventeenth century" (p. 26) hardly applies to the emergence of absolutism, with its considerable impact on Jewish settlement and economic activity. Baron frequently emphasized the importance of absolutism in explaining the turn to modernity.

Most of the other synthetic essays presented here are as masterly as one would expect from Meyer. The volume presents them in logical sequence, giving the impression of a progressive unfolding of Meyer's thoughts on modernization and its opportunities and problems for Jewish life. "Jews as Jews versus Jews as Germans," for instance, is a profound and original analysis of the shortcomings of the historical approach that treats German Jews either as Jews or as Germans, but rarely as both. Collecting these essays from their scattered origins is a real service for scholars and others interested in the historical problems of Jewish modernization.

At the same time, reprinting—apparently without change—essays initially written over the course of 25 years poses certain problems. Meyer's research is steeped in primary sources; indeed, few if any scholars know the primary sources of German Jewish history as he does. But Meyer has a tendency to skim past opinions that dif-

fer from his own, a tendency that stands out even more in this collection of essays written over a lengthy span of time. Restating old opinions on issues that have since become the subject of ongoing academic dialogue, without pointing out other views, hardly represents a full contribution to scholarly exchange. It also misleads the uninformed reader who may not be aware of differing perspectives, especially as Meyer is sparing with citations to secondary literature.

In most academic disciplines, it is unacceptable to publish papers without updating the argumentation, let alone the bibliographic references. Consider the significant literature produced in recent years on personalities such as Gershom Scholem or Arthur Ruppin, or on such subjects as Jewish responses to antisemitism. In his essay on Jewish leadership in Germany during the Nazi period, published here for the first time, Meyer skirts around the disagreements that have arisen over the years with regard to Jewish leadership in general and that of Leo Baeck specifically. Meyer's sympathetic portrayal of Baeck provides an oblique defense of the man but cannot adequately answer the many questions that have arisen about him, simply because Meyer does not explicitly deal with the issues of what Baeck knew and did.

Such questions, to be sure, might well be asked of many volumes of collected essays. They certainly do not detract from the enjoyment and profit offered to the reader in this concentrated exposure to Meyer's vast erudition, his lucid style, and the intriguing questions he poses.

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Zionism, Israel, and the Middle East

Menahem Friedman, *Hevrah bemashber legitimaḏiyah: hayishuv hayashan haashkenazi 1900–1917* (Society in a crisis of legitimization: the Old Ashkenazic Yishuv 1900–1917). Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 2001. ix + 179 pp.

During the 1970s, a number of doctoral theses submitted to the Hebrew University dealt with the history of the Yishuv in the modern period. One of these theses, written under the aegis of Jacob Katz, was Menahem Friedman's "Society and Religion: Non-Zionist Orthodoxy in the Land of Israel, 1918–1936," which was later published in book form.¹ A quarter of a century later, Friedman's pioneering work has been joined by this companion volume, which focuses on the historic roots of the Old Ashkenazic Yishuv.

Although Friedman's avowed purpose is the analysis of the socioeconomic and political structure of the Old Yishuv, his central theme, as indicated by the title, is the crisis of legitimization this society underwent at the turn of the 20th century. Friedman begins with a vivid description of the shock waves caused by the failure of the Hamburger bank in 1900. What Friedman leaves out is the broader backdrop to the crisis: the tremendous growth of the Yishuv from the 1870s onward. During this time, the population increased threefold, and its benefactors abroad were not able to keep up with the growth. As money donated from abroad (known as the *ḥalukah*) was a major source of income for the Ashkenazic population, the proportional drop in support triggered economic stagnation, which led to large numbers of Jews emigrating from Eretz Israel by the end of the 1890s.

Any history of the Old Yishuv must take into consideration the *ḥalukah* system of economic support. According to Friedman, the Old Yishuv's difficulties stemmed from the fact that it did not fulfill its part of an implied bargain with the benefactors from abroad to become "the spiritual-religious center of the [Jewish] world" (p. 4). Specifically, the *yeshivot* of the Old Yishuv did not bring forth great Torah scholars, and thus the Old Yishuv essentially lost its legitimacy in the eyes of diaspora Jewry.

This central assertion, however, can be countered or even refuted in a number of ways. For one thing, the Yishuv of the late 1890s totaled about 50,000 people, whereas the Jewish population in Russia and Poland was more than a hundred times larger. Why should it be assumed that the Yishuv would be able to exceed the Polish or Russian Jewish communities in strength or influence? For that matter, even the Russian and Polish communities were not spiritual centers for Jews at this time. Young Jews did not stream to the East European *yeshivot* any more than they were drawn to the houses of study in Eretz Israel. It was only later, mainly in the interwar period, that

the centers of Torah study exerted a strong attraction. Nonetheless, about 800 young men studied in the Ashkenazic *yeshivot* of Jerusalem during the 1880s and 1890s. This is an impressive number, given the fact that only about 16,000 Ashkenazim lived in Jerusalem in the 1890s; it is certainly proportionally higher than comparable figures for Eastern Europe.

In downplaying the Torah-related achievements of the Old Yishuv, Friedman may have been unduly influenced by inaccurate and distorted diatribes issued at the time, mostly by Zionists abroad and in the New Yishuv in Eretz Israel. In fact, Torah study in the Old Yishuv, like that of the Lithuanian *yeshivot*, was characterized by a strong emphasis on scholarly achievement, and the Yishuv produced a respectable amount of Torah-related scholarship and research, including *Sedeh hemed* (a comprehensive halakhic encyclopedia authored by Hayim Hezekiah Medini); works by Yehiel Michel Tukachinski; and the philosophical and halakhic writings of Avraham Yitzhak Hakohen Kook. These works had a great impact on halakhic rulings in Eretz Israel, and they also left their mark on diaspora Jewry. Apart from the authors mentioned above, other eminent rabbinic figures included Zvi Pesach Frank (who became the chief rabbi of Jerusalem in the interwar period), Moshe Blau (chairman of Agudat Israel), and Yaakov Moshe Harlap, the head of the Kook yeshiva. Some of the scholars and rabbinic leaders of the Old Yishuv, it is true, originally came from Eastern Europe. Yet during the period in question, the Yishuv also “exported” rabbis to Jewish communities abroad, among them Yeshaya Rafaelovich (to Brazil), Yeshaya Zilberstein (to Hungary), Hayim Hirschensohn (to New Jersey), Yisrael Porath (to Cleveland), and Dov Baer Abramovich (to St. Louis)—the last three becoming founders of the Mizrachi movement in America. The Old Yishuv also produced journals and contributed to the revival of the Hebrew language.

The real basis for the Old Yishuv’s decline was the growing influence of the Haskalah movement, Zionism, Jewish socialism, and the general trend of secularization abroad, which caused the loss of legitimization of the Old Yishuv in the eyes of their European brethren.² Friedman comes to a similar assessment, although in his view, the Old Yishuv was “successful in protecting its interests and largely prevented erosion of its rank-and-file until the First World War” (p. 73). To some extent, this was the result of interaction and interdependence between various groups in the Old Yishuv, especially the maskilim and more traditionalist elements. (Friedman is particularly successful in portraying the diversity of the Jerusalem haskalah movement, in part through his depiction of two leading maskilim of the time, the nationalist David Yellin and Ephraim Cohen of the Esra organization.) Members of the Old Yishuv also contended—and coexisted—with new groups and institutions from abroad, among them the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Esra, Hovevei Zion, and the various brands of political Zionism.

The greater threat was that posed by Zionism. As Friedman shows, the growth of labor Zionism, in particular, led to shifting alliances within the Yishuv. Several “bourgeois” Zionists, such as the writer Mordechai Ben-Hillel and the banker Zalman Dovid Levontin, opposed the left-wing Zionist parties and strengthened their ties with the Old Yishuv leadership. Leaders of the religious Zionist Mizrachi movement, in contrast, aligned themselves with forces of the New (Zionist) Yishuv. Against the backdrop of printers’ strikes instigated by labor Zionists in 1902 and 1908, Old Yishuv

leaders feared that the Zionists were attempting to force not only secularization but also an aggressive form of socialism on the traditional Jewish community.

In the end, however, it was mainly external forces that brought about the end of the Old Yishuv. With the outbreak of the First World War, the economic pipeline from abroad was blocked and the *halukah* system collapsed. At war's end, control of Eretz Israel passed from the Turks to the British. In the struggle between Old Yishuv leaders and the emerging Zionist movement, the British took the side of the latter. Interestingly, Friedman dates the beginning of the end of the Old Yishuv back to the "language wars" of 1913–1914, when the Old Yishuv leadership aligned itself with the Esra organization in opposing the spread of Hebrew. In taking an external agent as its ally, Friedman argues, the leadership misjudged the growing force of nationalism among the local population.

Friedman's work goes far beyond a recounting of the gradual eclipse of the Old Ashkenazic Yishuv. A number of chapters—among the finest in the book—deal with the Yishuv's economic development in the late 19th century: the increase in number of tourists; the laying of a railway line to Jerusalem; the construction of the first Jewish neighborhoods outside of the Old City; the establishment of various private enterprises and philanthropic societies in the fields of health and education. In addition, Friedman offers a colorful depiction of two of the leading rabbinic figures of the time, Yehoshua Leib Diskin and Shmuel Salant. His description of the various *halakic* courts (*batei din zedek*) of the Ashkenazic community further highlights the complexity of this society, which lacked a central authoritative body of leadership.

Overall, *Society in a Crisis of Legitimization* is an example of historiography at its best. Writing with great empathy and knowledge, Friedman brings to vibrant life the final phase of the Old Ashkenazic Yishuv, thus setting the stage for his earlier work on the post-First World War era.

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Notes

1. Menahem Friedman, *Hevrah vedat: haortodoksiyah halo zıyonit beerez yisrael 1918–1936* (Jerusalem: 1978).

2. See also Yosef Salmon, "Tahalikhei kituv bayishuv hayehudi baarez bamaḥazit harishonah shel shenot ha90," *Cathedra* 12 (1979), 4–30.

Yossi Goldstein, *Ussishkin—biografiyah*, vol. 2, *Erez yisrael, 1919–1941*. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2001. 240 pp.

Like many Zionist leaders, Menahem Ussishkin has been almost forgotten. As the saying goes, were it not for the streets and institutions bearing his name, no one would

know that Ussishkin had dedicated his life to the Zionist cause. This is why biographies such as the one under review are important.

Ussishkin's stormy political career, as Yossi Goldstein rightly argues, can be divided into two distinct periods. The first and more significant period (covered in the previous volume, published in 1999), began with Ussishkin's involvement in Zionist politics at the end of the 1880s as one of the promoters, organizers, and leaders of Russian Zionism. Until his immigration to Palestine in 1919, Ussishkin was a major figure in the movement's various controversies and confrontations. Once in Palestine, however, his career was marked by ups and downs and gradual decline until his death in 1941. Paradoxically, this leading "practical" Zionist, who had fought against the cultural and diplomatic (or political) Zionism promoted by, respectively, Ahad Ha'am and Chaim Weizmann, confronted systemic political constraints in the Yishuv that dramatically limited the scope of his activities. Thus, although Ussishkin maintained a position of great visibility as the hyperactive and centralist president of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and as an untiring spokesman and fund-raiser for world Zionism, he was essentially relegated to a secondary position both in the movement and among the Yishuv's political elite.

The move to Palestine also brought about a transformation in Ussishkin's previously unambiguous ideological views, which now oscillated in accordance with the changing economic and political circumstances of the Yishuv. Once an advocate of political compromise, Ussishkin in the 1930s became increasingly militant with regard to both the Palestinian Arabs and the British ruling authorities. At times, in fact, his views came close to those of the revisionist Zionist leader, Ze'ev Jabotinsky. Unlike a majority of mainstream Zionists, Ussishkin opposed the Peel Commission partition plan of 1937. Moreover, he was one of the most vociferous proponents of the transfer of Palestinian Arabs, mainly to Trans-Jordan. For a short while, as Goldstein correctly notes, this extremist position found a considerable number of advocates within the Yishuv, including some among the Labor Zionist camp. But Ussishkin continued to argue for transfer even after support for the idea waned.

On one issue, Ussishkin was unwavering: he never abandoned his belief in the ultimate importance of land purchase and Jewish settlement. Sharing this view were members of the Mapai party, which during the 1930s began to emerge as the dominant party within the Zionist movement in general, and especially within the Yishuv. Although Ussishkin remained a staunch General Zionist, he found common cause with Mapai and its activist leaders, notably David Ben-Gurion. Thus, although Ussishkin was careful to allocate land purchased by the JNF proportionately to the supporters of the various parties, he closely cooperated with Mapai and its allies.

In the course of time, Ussishkin also moderated his decades-long feud with his arch-rival in the world Zionist movement, Chaim Weizmann. The conflict between them had begun long before Ussishkin's immigration to Palestine and had continued, albeit on a more subdued level, after Weizmann had agreed to Ussishkin's participation in the Zionist Commission of 1919 and later, to Ussishkin's being selected as the chairperson of the Palestine Zionist Executive. Clashes between the two leaders continued throughout the rest of Ussishkin's life. But as Goldstein rightly observes, Ussishkin came to acknowledge that Weizmann's views on how to establish a Jewish national home had gained the upper hand in the movement.

Ussishkin is portrayed in this volume as a stubborn and belligerent politician. According to Goldstein, honor and prestige played a major role in his personal relations as well as in his social and political interactions. Many of Ussishkin's attitudes and actions are attributed by Goldstein to these basic personality traits. But such an explanation hardly does justice to Ussishkin. It accounts for neither his renowned liveliness as a speaker nor his untiring activism. Nor are Ussishkin's attitudes concerning Judaism and the role of religion in the Jewish nation fully explored or explained. Whereas Goldstein, in this chronological account, faithfully recounts Ussishkin's turbulent political career, he does not provide the reader with an in-depth analysis of Ussishkin's values, ideological convictions, or motivations.

Nonetheless, writing this book was a worthwhile effort. With the passage of time, and in view of the vast transformation of Israel society and its politics, it is natural that Ussishkin and his achievements have almost vanished from the more recent articles and books dealing with the history of Zionism, the Yishuv, and Israel. In the final analysis, the major contribution made by this biography may be to save Ussishkin from oblivion.

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Baruch Kimmerling, *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society, and the Military*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. 237 pp.

I write this review in March 2002, as an increasingly successful worldwide campaign to delegitimize the Jewish state is in full swing. Under the circumstances, someone reviewing a book on Israeli history and society will read it on two levels. One is the professional level of a reader, obliged to distance himself/herself both from the events of the day and from personal proclivities, in order to assess the book on its scholarly merits. The other is that of a partisan who asks whether the book and its author are "for us or against us, or perhaps neither." That is the spirit in which this review is written.

The Invention and Decline of Israeliness is an effort to analyze contemporary Israeli society from a historical as well as a sociological perspective. Whatever faults the study may have, the argument is basically clear and thankfully free of sociological jargon. Major portions of the book, including the historical sections, are written in an evenhanded manner. Indeed, I felt that Baruch Kimmerling, given his known prejudices (he is very much a man of the Left), was making a real effort in some places to present a balanced picture of Zionism and the Jewish settlement enterprise—although, as I will show, this is not always the case.

Kimmerling's main thesis is quite clear. The image of a single, unified Israeli society has evaporated and "hegemonic secular Hebrew culture" has diminished. Kimmerling traces the first step in this direction to the emergence of the Gush Emunim movement following the Yom Kippur War. I believe that he is correct, although oth-

ers have found its roots much earlier. The dominant “hegemonic” culture, Kimmerling continues (he is enamored with the term *hegemonic*) has been replaced by seven subcultures, namely, those of upper-middle-class Ashkenazim; the national religious; the Orthodox religious (by which he means *haredim*); traditionalist *mizrahim* (Orientals); the Arabs; the new Russian immigrants; and the Ethiopians. But Israel is not a multicultural state, according to Kimmerling:

The state and the veteran and dominant elites still hold onto a monocultural vision of society, and the mechanism of the melting pot is still implicitly at work. Thus the Israeli state is still far from granting legitimacy, recognition, and legal and institutional frameworks to this pluralistic situation (p. 234).

Considering the dramatic changes in Israel during the last few decades, and comparing Israel with any other western society with which I am familiar, I wonder where Kimmerling lives. Does he mean that the subcultures do not receive funding, or that they are not recognized as legitimate and therefore entitled to government funding? Or perhaps all he means is that they are funded in proportion to their political clout, which is true almost everywhere except where it is the threat of violence that serves as the inducement to “multiculturalism.” In any event, in his anxiety to direct his barbs against the absence of multiculturalism, Kimmerling either overlooks or is indifferent to the fact that without some cultural-ideological consensus, no society, even a society that is not surrounded by enemies, is likely to maintain social order. Does any political elite anywhere think otherwise?

Along with the problems of subcultures, Kimmerling finds a “soft common core” comprised of Jewishness and a “militaristic ethos” (p. 14) uniting all of the subcultures with the exception of the Arabs. The author devotes his two penultimate chapters to Jewishness and to the militaristic nature of Israeli society. A potentially key chapter on the “cultural code of Jewishness” is not very helpful, as it is nothing more than a confused presentation of historical material on the Jewish nature of the state and a diatribe about the absence of democracy. (In general, Kimmerling is analytically weakest in his discussion of religion and its interrelationship with ethnicity and nationality.) This leaves the “code of security,” the most important aspect of Israel’s consensual culture, according to Kimmerling, since “all that remains of the original Israeliness of Israel, apart from the entire [sic] population’s vested interest in the continued existence of the state, are its militaristic values” (p. 209). However, upon reading the chapter, it becomes apparent that, despite the author’s assertion that Israel remains a “settler society living by the sword” (p. 185), it is not militarism that cements the society—at least, not militarism in the popular usage of the term—but rather a pervasive concern with security and the need to maintain vigilance in defense of the physical welfare of the society. In other words, the chapter hardly supports the charges that Kimmerling makes.

The topic of security and Israeli culture certainly deserves extended treatment. I would like to have seen greater emphasis placed on the manner in which the Holocaust is remembered, and I would have appreciated some reference to the size of Israel, the proximity of its enemies, the experience of war, the hatred expressed toward Israel in the Arab press, and the impact of seeing security guards at the entrance to every public place. I also would have welcomed a discussion of the question

whether the security ethos is primarily a manifestation of popular feeling to which the political and cultural elite respond, an ethos originating with the society's elite, or, as is more than likely, the interrelationship between the two. Nonetheless, Kimmerling is quite correct in asserting the importance of the topic.

While I found some of Kimmerling's treatment meritorious, a number of allegations, for example, that Eliezer Schweid and Emil Fackenheim "legitimize Israeli's deployment of unrestrained violence against the gentiles" (p. 213) seem unfair. Given the severity of such a charge, the reader should have been directed to specific citations. More serious, at the analytical level, is Kimmerling's implication that Israel's security problem is either a figment of its imagination or else is self-induced. Whereas paranoid behavior can generate a hostile counterreaction, as Israeli humiliation of Palestinians demonstrates, paranoids often do have enemies. In this regard, it seems to me that Yitzhak Rabin may have been the first prime minister to understand both sides of the Palestinian-Israeli equation, and I find this a more likely explanation for his embracing of the Oslo accords than Kimmerling's assertion that he viewed "indirect control of the Palestinians [as] a better and cheaper strategy than direct control" (p. 50).

With a few major exceptions, I did not find anything new or startling in Kimmerling's description, as opposed to evaluation, of Israeli society. It is the particular spin given to the "facts" that I found silly in some parts and disturbing in others. I will cite a few examples.

First, the author has a tendency to attribute every outcome to generally malevolent intentions of the political elite. In fact, perhaps the most striking impression of those who live in the "real" Israel is the impotence of the state. There is so little planning, and so little that is planned is actually brought to fruition; the Israeli political elite is so bereft of talent and the bureaucracy so small-minded, that even if Kimmerling is correct about the intentions of the rulers, it is hard to believe that anything actually comes about because of such intentions. What one does encounter is what Kimmerling calls the "*state's logic*," that is, "the basic codes, traditions, rules of the game, and practices that are unaffected by changes of government, administration, or even entire regimes" (p. 60)—all of which dictated the emergence of a dominant ideology and culture that had little patience for deviant ideologies. (I found the author's discussion of the oversimplification involved in the strong state/weak state typology both convincing and an important contribution to the topic.) Would that the author had followed the logic of his own analysis: it is certainly applicable to Israel's security consciousness.

Second, Kimmerling has a tendency to treat Israel as either unique or else comparable to the worst of other societies. For example: "In Israel, even more than in any other society, the past, present, and future are intermingled; collective memory is considered objective history, and this is a powerful weapon, used both in domestic struggles and external conflicts" (p. 16). (I was in London on the day I read that page. As it happened, the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* printed a story that day headlined "Would William Tell Have Voted to Join the United Nations?"; its subhead was "As Swiss Referendum Nears, Both Sides Invoke Forefathers.") When Israeli society does get compared to other societies, it is not to democracies of the West—to which Israelis would like to be compared, Kimmerling notes—but rather, as when he

cites Oren Yiftachel, to such countries as Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Estonia, Latvia, Serbia, and Slovakia (p. 181), all of which are ethnocratic rather than democratic states.

Kimmerling tries at various points to demonstrate that Israel is not a democracy. I found his argument somewhat elusive, and I was especially perturbed by his attempt to define democracy in such a way that the Israeli model simply would not fit. For example, a necessary condition for democracy, according to Kimmerling, is that not only is the sovereign of the people exercised through a legislative system but also that “no independent or parallel legislative and judicial system can be created by the state” (p. 181). In other words, because Israel has a system of religious courts with authority in matters of personal status, it is not a democracy. Mostly, I suspect, Israel is not a democracy in Kimmerling’s mind because the different national groups, Jews and Arabs, do not have equal communal rights. (In some places, the treatment of the Arabs in the occupied territories is adduced as an additional reason, in some places the discussion concerning the absence of democracy is confined to the Arabs in Israel.) Yet in general, his key thesis is neither developed systematically nor argued convincingly, and sometimes his statements are so silly that they hardly merit rebuttal (for example, the claim that “legislation that depends on ‘non-Jewish votes’ is widely considered ‘illegitimate’ [which] constitutes a gross violation of the basic principle of ‘one person, one vote’” [p. 185]). A far more balanced discussion of Israel as a democracy can be found in a recent article by Raphael Cohen Almagor.¹

Kimmerling’s most pernicious charge is embedded in the term “ethnic cleansing.” Surely the author knows the associations carried by this term. Yet on p. 5 he refers to the “establishment of the state [which] required that a considerable portion of British Palestine be ethnically cleansed of its Arab inhabitants”—a charge moderated, to be sure, to a “de facto ethnic cleansing” on p. 40 and a “cleansing of most Arabs from Israeli territory” on p. 128.

Even though, as noted, much of Israel’s history is recounted in an evenhanded fashion by Kimmerling, a number of asides reflect the author’s strong bias. For example, Kimmerling does not merely remind us that the Palestinians rejected Ehud Barak’s proposed concessions at Camp David. They were, he adds, “quite rightly not content” with them (p. 55).

On the whole, some sections of this book are enlightening, others are unexceptionable, and some of the material is simply wrong. Finally, Kimmerling’s tone, as well as the charges he levels, suggest extreme partisanship rather than objective scholarship.

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Note

1. See Raphael Cohen Almagor, “The Delicate Framework of Israeli Democracy during the 1980’s: Retrospect and Appraisal,” *Israeli Affairs* 8 (Autumn/Winter 2002), 118–138.

Arieh J. Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics: Britain, the United States, and Jewish Refugees, 1945–1948*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001. 284 pp.

Two Zionist movements organized the transfer of Jewish refugees from Europe to Palestine after the Second World War. The first, known as *berihah* (flight), arranged their removal from Eastern Europe to Allied DP camps in Austria and Germany; whereupon the *ha'apalah*, or illegal immigration movement, took charge of their sailing from various European ports to Palestine. This transmigration of refugees became a major instrument in the Zionists' postwar struggle for a sovereign Jewish state in Palestine.

The political motives and machinations of those countries involved with this migration are the subject of Arieh J. Kochavi's aptly titled book. *Post-Holocaust Politics* complements previous research on the Jewish DPs, notably that of Leonard Dinnerstein, which focused on the United States.¹ This book is based upon extensive research both in archives and among a large number of primary and secondary sources. It is more ambitious than other books on the subject in that it attempts to encompass all of the countries involved in this traffic. However, in relying upon American, British, and Israeli archives, Kochavi leaves room for future "firsthand" accounts of the policies of the Soviet Union and its satellites on the eastern side of the Iron Curtain.

At the center of the story are the British, who, in order to protect their interests in the Middle East, tried to prevent Jewish DPs from flooding Palestine, which they had been ruling by virtue of a League of Nations Mandate since 1922. The British tried in vain to divorce the Jewish DP problem from Zionism, basing their policy on the unviable theory that the Jews were a religious group rather than a nation and thus, like all other European refugees, should be rehabilitated in post-Nazi Europe rather than in Palestine. Here Kochavi makes good use of previous research on the Mandate.²

In order to check the stream of Jewish DPs, the British needed the cooperation of the American, Soviet, and East European governments; as Kochavi notes, Jewish migration could never have reached the proportions it did without "the active or even passive assistance . . . received from American and European officials" (p. 276). Therefore, as Kochavi rightly states: "Whitehall's negotiations with governments on either side of the Iron Curtain over the Jewish refugees serves as a case study for an analysis of the international arena after the war, especially the way Britain's relations with different countries grew more difficult as its status declined in the post-war world" (p. xii).

During a period in which Britain was dependent economically, politically, and militarily upon the United States, the latter's refusal to curb the movement of the Jews from the DP camps proved to be the main stumbling block to British efforts. After President Harry Truman demanded in August 1945 that 100,000 Jewish DPs be allowed into Palestine, U.S. military authorities began to concentrate Jewish refugees into separate camps, giving shelter to Jews fleeing from countries under Soviet influence and granting them the privileged status of DPs. They rejected all British pleas to ban tax-exempt donations by American Jews to groups that were involved in the

financing of illegal transports (and also, in many cases, of Jewish terrorist organizations in Palestine). The DP problem, however, was actually a secondary issue for the British, for which they could not afford to risk impairing their relations with the Americans. Their inability to reach any consensus on Palestine with the United States was also the fundamental reason behind their decision to abandon Palestine in 1947.

Kochavi analyzes superbly the political motives that were at the top of the agenda of all the countries involved with the Jewish DP problem, and concludes that “[a]lthough genuine sympathy towards the survivors of the Holocaust prevailed among officials in the different countries, in the end it was political not humane considerations that played a decisive role when the Great Powers enabled the Zionists to establish a Jewish State in Palestine” (p. 284). Truman and the Democrats “needed the financial contributions and votes of the Jewish community” (p. 278). And with Congress refusing to admit a substantial number of Jewish refugees into the United States, Palestine appeared to be the natural haven for many of them. That this solution would also give satisfaction to American Jewry was a factor that no American president could afford to ignore. (Here again, Kochavi makes intelligent use of published research, in this case, on the Truman administration.³)

The Soviets, too, initially encouraged the Jewish DPs’ flight, hoping thereby to exacerbate the friction between the United States and Britain. Another Soviet calculation was that the Jews’ arrival in Palestine would add to Britain’s troubles in the Middle East—for this reason, the Soviets also supported the UN partition plan that led to the establishment of the Jewish state. Meanwhile, many East European regimes, observing the support of the Truman administration and the influence of the Zionist lobby in Washington, D.C.—and with their Soviet master’s approval—encouraged or turned a blind eye to the flight of the Jewish DPs from their territories, believing that this would curry favor for them with the U.S. administration. Some European governments feared harm to their own interests in the United States if they hindered the movement of the Jewish refugees. Others were glad to get rid of their unwanted Jews, and some benefited as well from the foreign currency payments they received from the Zionists.

Post-Holocaust Politics tells in comprehensive detail the story of how and why British diplomatic efforts to block Jewish migration to Palestine failed. In this admirable, ground-breaking work, Kochavi concludes that, even if the British did not succeed in checking the flood of refugees at its source, they did succeed in apprehending more than 70 percent of those Jews who sailed for Palestine on ramshackle ships. They thus prevented the total breakdown of their 1939 policy of restricting Jewish immigration into the country and, in so doing, averted the Arab uprising that they had feared—at least until their own departure in May 1948.

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Notes

1. See Leonard Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust* (New York: 1982).
2. See Yehuda Bauer, *Flight and Rescue: Brichah* (New York: 1970); Nicholas Bethell, *The Palestine Triangle: The Struggle between the British, the Jews and the Arabs, 1945–1948* (London: 1979); Michael J. Cohen, *Palestine: Retreat from the Mandate, the Making of British Policy, 1936–1945* (London: 1978); idem, *Palestine and the Great Powers, 1945–1948* (Princeton: 1982); and Wm. Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945–1951* (Oxford: 1984).
3. See Michael J. Cohen, *Truman and Israel* (Berkeley: 1990).

Yehuda Riemer, *Banayikh—Bonayikh: Habonim bizfon amerika 1932–1952* (Your children—your builders: the Habonim movement in North America, 1932–1952). Ramat Efal: Yad Tabenkin, 2001. 378 pp.

The story Yehuda Riemer has to tell is of considerable significance for the history of Zionism and of youth movements. Written in fine Hebrew, his book opens with valuable observations on the nature of youth movements. Riemer's subject, Habonim, was unique among youth movements in making a successful passage from Europe to America. Moreover, the Zionist youth movements attained their main goal—the establishment of a Jewish state, to which many of their people emigrated as halutzim. To be sure, many others either stayed in America or settled in Palestine/Israel but later returned. In contrast, other American youth movements seldom attained their social or political goals, either shriveling into impotence when the political atmosphere changed or else fading away as their followers entered adult life.

The origins of Habonim lie in the Young Poale Zion Alliance (YPZA), founded around 1911 as the youth branch of Poale Zion. Like the adult organization, the language of the youth movement was Yiddish and its goals were those of Zionist socialism. Aliyah was not among these goals. Slowly, however, the YPZA shifted from Yiddish to English, paralleling the transition young members were making in their individual lives. This shift in language distressed members of the elder generation, who were saddened over the abandonment of the cherished tongue of East European Jewry and its culture. Young Poale Zion's filial tie to the adult organization weakened when Yiddish was replaced by English and to a limited extent also by Hebrew, in those days the language of modern *talmud torah* education. During the central years of transition between 1933–1935, the Eretz Israel labor movement, which had developed to the point of overshadowing the diaspora Poale Zion movement, inspired the YPZA to a new emphasis on pioneering (*haluziyut*). It was in this new pioneering spirit that Habonim was founded in 1935.

While warmly endorsing aliyah and *haluziyut*, Habonim regarded these goals as preferred rather than compulsory options for young Zionists; in this, it differed from its Hashomer Hazair rival, which demanded that its members make aliyah when they reached a certain age. Prospective halutzim in Habonim were expected to join the Hechalutz organization, which by no means drew in all aliyah candidates, and led what appears to have been a rather unsteady existence. Habonim maintained its own

training farms in New Jersey, California, and Canada; looking back, this expensive undertaking seems to have been a sacred cow of doubtful value.

The internal history of Habonim revolves around its educational activities in local branches, summer camps modeled on kibbutzim (or what kibbutzim were believed to be like), and the halutz training farms. Activities included plays and pageants, rallies, and street collections for Zionist causes. Unfortunately, Yehuda Riemer's account of these educational programs is sketchy. How much Bible and how much Berl Katznelson and Ber Borochov did young members actually read? How true was the gibe that the movement consisted of no more than to "sing, dance, and go to Palestine"? The daily routine of Habonim's local branches (*maḥanot*) is scarcely mentioned, whereas deliberations of the national executive (Merkaz) are covered in great detail. This is history from the top down.

Its undogmatic ideological platform and flexible educational policies kept Habonim free of wrathful secessions and a fixed party line. Yet the movement did have some emphatic positions, notwithstanding its leftist outlook. The Merkaz refused to associate with Communists or with Communist fronts, and it also found unrewarding an attempted connection with the Young People's Socialist League. Its relationship with the Hebraist halutzim of the Gordonia youth movement was a more complicated matter. A small number of Gordonia organizers had come to America during the 1920s, where they remained under the distant but inflexible direction of the parent body in Eretz Israel. Although the American leadership of Gordonia included able individuals, they quarreled bitterly with each other and were unable to assert any local autonomy. Partly in consequence, Gordonia never attracted more than several hundred members, and after a time, it began to negotiate a merger with Habonim. Riemer devotes too many pages to these almost comically elaborate negotiations, which dragged on for about four years before being brought to a merger agreement in 1939. With the agreement already signed, a directive came from Gordonia in Eretz Israel to halt the negotiations.

Another charged issue within Habonim at this time concerned the selection of *sheliḥim*, or emissaries, from Eretz Israel. Emissaries were affiliated with a specific kibbutz federation, and it was widely believed that they steered candidates for aliyah toward their own kibbutzim. This agenda, if it existed, became especially important after the catastrophe in Europe ended the once abundant supply from that source. A few years earlier, the brilliant Enzo Sereni spent barely a year as a *shaliaḥ* to extraordinary effect, sizing up American Jewry and the possibilities of Zionist youth with remarkable astuteness. Later *shiliḥim* did not possess Sereni's talent, and a few were mere party functionaries, mainly of Mapai, whose political direction Habonim generally followed.

Riemer's account of Habonim during the war years (1941–1945) is the strongest section of his book. Hundreds of Habonim members served in the U.S. armed forces—24 of them lost their lives—and many of the leadership roles during those years necessarily passed to members under the draft age of 18. The experiences of Habonim soldiers and sailors, and especially their encounters with Holocaust survivors as related in their letters, are a precious supplement to the Jewish war record. No less striking is Riemer's description of the impact of the Holocaust as it became known in 1942

and 1943, when members, activists by conviction and training, were compelled to realize there was practically nothing they could do about it. Many Habonim people in the armed forces overseas, isolated from world news, knew nothing of the horror until they came home. After the war ended, the movement undertook a grandiose program to send its members en masse to Eretz Israel, but the numbers who actually went fell below expectations.

The postwar Habonim was a much changed movement. Following the war, many Habonim veterans took advantage of the G.I. Bill to pursue higher education; once again, as with the wartime draft, members of a critically important age group were drawn away from movement activities. The demography of U.S. Jewry also underwent a transformation as Jews increasingly moved away from dense urban neighborhoods to more scattered suburban communities. As a result of this dispersion, Habonim was forced to adapt to a new format, termed "Israelization" by Riemer, in which ideological direction was increasingly provided by the Israeli center of the movement. Although his book ends in 1952, Riemer provides an illuminating sketch of these major post-1950 developments.

Banayikh—Bonayikh (the title refers to a well-known talmudic play on words) is a fine specimen of scholarly history, packed with well-organized data and documentation. The author draws extensively but discriminately on oral history, especially the recollections of Habonim members now living in Israel. (An interesting comparison may be drawn with the lively *Against the Stream: Seven Decades of Hashomer Hatzair in North America* [1994], which Ariel Horowitz edited almost exclusively on the basis of oral accounts.) Although the accounts of men and women now in their 70s or 80s, recollecting their adolescence and young adulthood 50 or 60 years earlier, may often contain inaccuracies and memory lapses, the actual memories of that earlier period may well be more vivid and precise than those of more routine later years. Wisely, however, Riemer does not rely upon oral history alone but has also made good use of Habonim's wide-ranging archive in Israel. In so doing, he has produced a book that sets a new standard for scholarship on American Zionist youth movements.

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Gideon Shimoni and Robert S. Wistrich (eds.), *Theodor Herzl: Visionary of the Jewish State*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press; New York: Herzl Press, 1999. 351 pp.

This book is a collection of essays written for a conference held in March 1996 to commemorate the centennial of Theodor Herzl's publication of *Der Judenstaat*. The fact that the conference was held in Israel in Jerusalem and Haifa a mere century after Herzl first proposed a state for the Jews constitutes the main cause for celebration. Yet the great value of this collection is that it tries to go beyond the usual unreflecting acceptance of Herzl's achievement in energizing the Zionist movement; instead,

drawing on some of the more recent scholarly approaches to Herzl, it rightly attempts to look at the origins, character, and consequences of Herzl's Zionist "vision" in a much more critical and objective manner.

Herzl is an awkward figure in modern Jewish and Zionist history. A contributor to *Visionary of the Jewish State* once remarked to me, when I was setting out to write my own short book on Herzl as a Jewish thinker, that it would be easy to write a short book on that subject because Herzl was neither really Jewish nor a thinker. At the time, I could see the grounds for the quip; Herzl certainly lacked detailed knowledge of Judaism, and his thinking was always more akin to the informal thought of journalists than to the ratiocination of intellectuals or academics. On further thought, however, I realized that the joke betrayed a deep discomfort, if not animus, against both Herzl and the world of German-speaking Central European Jewry from which he came.

In grossly oversimplified terms, modern Jewish historiography has traditionally seen European Jewry as either "West European" (bent on assimilation and largely "lost" to traditional Jewish life and thought) or else as "East European" (much more rooted in Jewish tradition and with a still vibrant sense of Jewish communal identity). In this schema, the *yekkes* of German Jewry are "western"; so, it is assumed, were the German-speaking Jews of the Habsburg monarchy. What such categorizing overlooks is the particular background of the modernization of Central European Jewry, which made this group different from Jewish communities both to the west and to the east.¹

This was one of the most creative and influential Jewish communities of the modern era, having a decisive impact not only on modern Jewish life but also on modern life and culture generally. It is no accident that Herzl was a product of the Central European Jewish bourgeois milieu. This collection, however, suffers from the lingering notion of an East-West split and the idea that Herzl was not all that "Jewish" when he came to his great, Zionist idea.

Nevertheless, there is a great deal of value here. The essays by Hanni Mittelman on Herzl's neglected feuilletons and Edward Timms' piece on Herzl's exploitation of his status as a journalist for his Zionist politics are especially intriguing. There is also an effort made to set Herzl in his Central European context: what is still missing is a proper emphasis on how much Herzl was a child of his *Jewish* community, reproducing not only "western" or "Austro-German" values, but specifically the values of the Central European Haskalah and the ideology of emancipation.

There is much discussion of Herzl's play *Das neue Ghetto*, which is seen by both Jacques Kornberg and Ritchie Robertson as a sort of refracted version of German nationalist ideology, caught up as it is with questions of dueling, honor, and manliness. Yet Herzl's rather embarrassing German nationalist discourse distracts both of these scholars from his core purpose, which was promoting the ideal, not of "manliness," but rather of enlightened humanity (*Menschheit*). Herzl's basic message was not that Jews must become like Germans, but rather that all sides have to change in order to gain "inner freedom." As Herzl's hero baldly states: "Only then is one human!"

The discussion by Hedva Ben-Israel and Shmuel Almog about whether Herzl was really a nationalist is apropos; Herzl, in fact, was never primarily a nationalist. Ultimately, he was a humanist whose universalist values derived, ironically perhaps, from the emancipationist and assimilationist ideology that was the heart of the modern

Central European Jewish tradition. For Herzl, Zionism's ultimate worth was the creation of a regenerated Jewish people that would exemplify the best qualities of humanity. The Jewish polity would both release the world from antisemitism and represent a new "light unto the nations." It is this humanist vision that makes Herzl an enduringly attractive figure of Central European Jewish history; but it also makes him deeply problematic in present-day Israel.

In this regard, I found the most outstanding essay in this collection to be Rachel Elboim-Dror's. Analyzing the ways in which Herzl's thought compares to the views of post-Zionist critics, Elboim-Dror coolly but devastatingly shows just how far from Herzl's ideals the modern state of Israel has strayed—one could say, has had to stray in order to exist and survive. The question remains, though, as to how much of Herzl's vision of a tolerant, pluralistic, socially and technologically advanced polity, living in peace with its neighbors and the world, can yet be realized. Herzl was keenly aware of how the Jewish state could go wrong. In *Altneuland*, he has the xenophobic fundamentalists, led by Geyer, pressing the progressive pluralists led by Littwak. Were he to see Israel today, he might be all too convinced that the fundamentalists had won hands down.

His vision did not, after all, lead to the sort of quasi-messianic solution to the "Jewish question" that he had promised in *Der Judenstaat*. Robert Wistrich points out that although Herzl never claimed to be the Messiah, he did think often in messianic terms, and it remains a tantalizing detail of *Altneuland* that the opera being performed at the Jewish national opera is about Shabbetai Zevi. Wistrich's concluding discussion of the historical debate about whether Herzl was a potential messiah or a false one reveals more about the continuing relevance of Herzl and his *actual* ideals than it does about the mythical founder of Zionism. In furthering this necessary debate about the values and goals underpinning Zionism and the state of Israel, this volume performs a greater service now than perhaps its originators imagined, even in 1996.

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Note

1. Cf. David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry 1780–1840* (Oxford: 1987).

Shlomo Slonim, *Jerusalem in America's Foreign Policy 1947–1997*. Boston: Kluwer Law International, 1998. xiv + 421 pp.

The study of Jerusalem can be the work of a lifetime. Holy to three faiths, its very ground is thought by many to be the place where heaven meets earth. An understanding of Jerusalem is complicated by the fact that the various overlapping religious narratives merge with competing political narratives. In the 19th century, of course,

it became the excuse for “great power” meddling in the affairs of the ailing Ottoman empire, and in the 20th it became a central issue in the Great Power debates over the creation and structure of the nascent Jewish state.

Shlomo Slonim's *Jerusalem in America's Foreign Policy 1947–1997* is a magisterial effort to review the American position on various issues related to Jerusalem. Slonim works his way surefootedly through the published U.N. documents as well as the statements of American officials as recorded in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) and other official publications. He has also delved deeply into the Israel State Archives and the Public Record Office in London (he has apparently made less significant use of the National Archives in Washington). As classic diplomatic history, his focus is on formal position papers and public statements, not on the daily diplomatic “cable” traffic.

Slonim's purpose is to show that, notwithstanding contrary statements on the part of U.S. diplomats, “American policy on Jerusalem has been discontinuous, vacillating and confused” (p. 374). Thus, he divides America's Jerusalem policy into three phases. In the first phase (1947–1950), the United States called for territorial internationalization, later plumping for some species of “functional internationalization” (as called for in the 1950 Swedish plan). Territorial internationalization is, of course, the conception of Jerusalem as a *corpus separatum*—a separate international city. Functional internationalization seeks a special international regime of some kind to protect the holy places, regardless of whomever controls Jerusalem's physical circumference.

In the second phase (1950–1967), Jerusalem was divided between Israel and Jordan, and while the United States and the U.N. never disavowed their commitment to internationalization, the matter was never vigorously pursued. In the third and current phase, Israel, after 1967, has held control of the entire city.

Slonim traces in detail the variations in U.S. policy toward Israeli-held Jerusalem since the Six-Day War. According to Slonim, President Lyndon Johnson and the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Arthur Goldberg, undertook a “hands-off” policy toward Jerusalem, never labeling it “occupied territory.” In stark contrast, President Richard Nixon's U.N. ambassador, Charles A. Yost, took the view that “[t]he United States considers that the part of Jerusalem that came under the control of Israel [in the 1967 war] . . . is occupied territory” (p. 200; see also p. 221).

For Slonim, the Carter administration was marked by “a considerable degree of ambiguity and confusion” in its Jerusalem policy (p. 246). It was at Camp David, he notes, that Carter first hammered out consensus language on Jerusalem and the holy places that encompassed notions of “functional internationalization” (p. 227). However, Egyptian president Anwar Sadat balked at this language, agreeing to go forward only if there was an exchange of letters restating the historic U.S. position that Jerusalem was part of the West Bank. So Carter reversed course, failing to “keep faith” with Israel (p. 229). Then, after Israeli prime minister Menahem Begin refused to accept this approach, Carter drafted a vacillating side-letter to Sadat, trying to finesse the issue by noting that U.S. policy on Jerusalem “remains as stated by Ambassador[s] . . . Goldberg and Yost” (p. 225). Adding to the confusion, the Carter administration in 1980 seemingly “broke” with Israel on Jerusalem when it voted for Security Council resolution 465, which called on Israel to cease “the establishment,

construction and planning of settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem.” Some days later, however, the White House stated that its support for the resolution was the result of a “breakdown in communication” (p. 238).

President Ronald Reagan’s position was more nuanced. His view was that “Jerusalem must remain undivided, but that its final status should be decided through negotiations” (p. 249). Secretary of State George Schultz later amplified: “[E]xactly how the status of that would work is an appropriate subject for negotiations” (p. 264). In contrast, Reagan’s successor, George Bush, put forward the view that there should be no “new settlements in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem,” implying that East Jerusalem, at least, was occupied territory (pp. 277–278).

Slonim’s treatment of the Clinton administration is surprisingly gentle, given that Bill Clinton was the American cheerleader for the Oslo accords that placed Jerusalem on the table for “final status” negotiations. (Slonim does, however, quote sources who describe the accords as representing a “radical change in policy” that was “difficult to understand” [pp. 305–307].) Regarding East Jerusalem, Slonim acknowledges that the Clinton administration “apparently abandoned the Bush administration’s characterization of the area as territory occupied from the Palestinians,” but claims that “the State Department . . . [still] regarded east Jerusalem as occupied territory” (p. 337). He notes the failure of U.S. Ambassador Martin Indyk to attend the opening gala celebrating the 3,000th anniversary of Jerusalem that was held in the western part of the city, and he raises questions regarding the meaning of Clinton’s cancellation of a planned tour of East Jerusalem when Mayor Ehud Olmert insisted on serving as host. He also dwells at length on the successful White House efforts to derail Congressional desires to see the U.S. embassy moved to Jerusalem.

The major conclusion to be gained from Slonim’s comprehensive review is that the view that Jerusalem was part of the occupied territories may have been held by the Nixon and Bush administrations, but not by the Johnson or Reagan administrations. As to Carter, his contradictory positions leave us uncertain.

Because of this zig-zagging, according to Slonim, “U.S. policy on Jerusalem appears most in need of reexamination” (p. 371). It is unclear whether Slonim is here criticizing actual U.S. policy, the lack of consistency in its application—or perhaps both. What is readily apparent is Slonim’s shift from diplomatic historian to normative critic, although it is not clear whether his normative critique is being made from a U.S., Israeli, or Jewish perspective.

I have no quarrel with Slonim’s reading of the available documents. However, I know from my own experience that whatever the formal position (as represented in speeches and demarches), the actual “policy on the ground” has been marked by significant, if unfortunate, continuity. When I served in the Reagan White House, I was specifically barred from meeting with Israeli officials in East Jerusalem, and when arranging a visit by Attorney General Ed Meese to Jerusalem, I had to peruse hoary maps of the 1948 cease-fire line in order to ascertain whether Beit Maersdorf (the faculty club of the Hebrew University on Mt. Scopus) was located in no man’s land or in Israeli territory. When I visited Israel as a senior member of the elder Bush administration, similar constraints applied. Much as Jewish lovers of Jerusalem may rue it, it is clear that the U.S. executive branch position has consistently differed from the Israeli view on these matters.

Slonim faults the United States for failing “to come to terms with the reality of exclusive Israeli control of the Old City” (p. 373). Fault or not, it is clear that while Congress may have “come to terms,” as he puts it, the White House and State Department certainly have not (and, of course, during the Clinton administration, could point to Oslo as their rationale). Further, I would suggest, the U.S. approach of maintaining some level of ambiguity and indeed inconsistency in the application of its Jerusalem policy may well reflect a conscious, and perhaps plausible, choice in an effort to satisfy (at least in part) different domestic constituencies and competing foreign policy goals.

Slonim complains that the executive branch has ignored or evaded legislative pronouncements requiring the administration to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, notwithstanding “increasingly forceful expressions of domestic consensus” (p. 374). As Slonim relates, legislative attempts were authored by Senator Daniel Moynihan during the Reagan administration and by Senator Robert Dole, among others, in the Clinton administration. For the legal aspects of this dispute, Slonim relies on Malvina Halberstam¹ and a legal brief of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), both of which approach the dispute (wrongly, in my view) as one concerning whether “the foreign affairs power was by constitutional law and procedure, exclusively presidential” (p. 323). But the real constitutional question is not whether Congress has a role to play in foreign affairs (which no constitutional scholar would deny), but whether the president’s textually exclusive constitutional authority “to receive Ambassadors and other public ministers” includes, as the judicial case law has determined, the power to recognize foreign states and governments. On this point, I know of no constitutional scholar who would deny the president this “recognition power.”

In any event, this entire issue has been blown out of all proportion by those who take interest-group pandering to reflect significant shifts in American foreign policy. It is worth noting that not only did Clinton effectively ignore the Jerusalem Act’s provisions (which Slonim ruefully predicted), but when similar legislation was passed in 2002, George W. Bush signed it but announced that its language was precatory only and could not constitutionally bind the president.

At times, Slonim’s interpretation of the political background and cultural context reflects his political preferences. For instance, in referring to a 1984 congressional effort to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, Slonim writes of “various members of the Christian clergy . . . who enthusiastically supported the bill” (p. 252). After giving a long list of individuals and institutions, Slonim then turns to those who were against the initiative, noting that they included Arab American groups and “some church groups.” However, those church groups included many of the major Christian organizations, such as the National Council of Churches (NCC), the United States Catholic Conference (USCC), and the Friends Committee on National Legislation.

Slonim spends considerable time tracking the various U.N. positions on Jerusalem. He concludes, from an international law perspective, that as of “May 15, 1948 Jerusalem became *terra nullus*” (p. 362; see also p. 218, n. 70). In this, Slonim follows the analysis of Elihu Lauterpach and Yehuda Blum, fleshing both of them out in considerable detail.² For example, he notes the contemporaneous view of Phillip Jessup, then U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, that “only on the basis of a specific

agreement . . . could the United Nations succeed to the responsibilities of the League of Nations with regard to mandates, and no such agreement has ever been concluded” (p. 362). Thus, in Slonim’s view, “the United Nations had forfeited its authority to exercise any control over Jerusalem, and the World Body enjoyed no residual right to continue adopting resolutions which would have a dispositive effect in the City” (p. 362; see also p. 372). Jessup’s view that one cannot rely on the mandate to make recommendations on Jerusalem is an exceedingly strong position. One can be less certain as to Slonim’s gloss, which can be read to deny *any* organ of the U.N. the authority to speak normatively on any issue related to Jerusalem.

These caveats aside, this book offers an extraordinarily valuable trove of data that is well organized and compellingly presented. Notwithstanding Slonim’s instinctive desire for clarity and consistency in diplomatic affairs (which the players themselves, for their own reasons, may not want), his judgments are generally mature and well considered. No student of Jerusalem can fail to place this volume on his or her bookshelf.

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Notes

1. See Malvina Halberstam, “The Jerusalem Embassy Act,” *Fordham International Law Journal* 19 (1996), 379–392.
2. See Elihu Lauterpach, *Jerusalem and the Holy Places* (London: 1968), 16–22; and Yehuda Blum, *The Juridical Status of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem Papers on Peace Problems, no. 2) (Jerusalem: 1974), 9–14.

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