
Review Essay
Portrait of an Unsung Genius

Edgar E. Siskin

Darnell, Regna. *Edward Sapir: Linguist, Anthropologist, Humanist*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990. 480 pp.

Edward Sapir is a unique figure among the anthropologists and linguists of the twentieth century. He is recognized as a brilliant pioneer in linguistic and anthropological theory, acclaimed for his mastery of scores of languages, as well as for his imaginative exploration of the psychology of culture. Far from the dusty pedant, he also wrote an impressive *oeuvre* of poetry, studied composition with Edward MacDowell, and played the piano. The English critic Geoffrey Lienhardt described him as "a character of Henry Jamesian sensibility,"¹ and Harry Stack Sullivan, the eminent psychiatrist, called him "one of the fine minds of the Western world."² His teacher, Franz Boas of Columbia University, "father" of American anthropology, spoke of him as "'one of the most brilliant scholars' in linguistic anthropology."³ His colleagues, Kroeber, Lowie, Radin, Spier, Benedict, Mead, all students of Boas, who established anthropology as an American university discipline, stood in awe of his brilliance in all he undertook. These gifts of intellect and spirit, together with remarkable powers of articulation, made him an immensely stimulating and inspiring teacher. Upon leaving one of Sapir's seminars, Mandelbaum observed, "one came forth exhilarated, larger than oneself."⁴

This first biography of Sapir, *Edward Sapir: Linguist, Anthropologist, Humanist*, is an industrious overview of his life and career. With commendable diligence, Regna Darnell has surveyed Sapir's writing, explored the written sources which might yield relevant information, consulted former students, and interviewed his five children. The result is a full account of his activities as student, field worker, museum

curator, professor, and participant in the unremitting circuit of conference and foundation meetings. His relations with friends and with family, as son, husband, father, are also recounted. At the end, the reader has been introduced to a mass of information about Sapir and the academic world in which he moved.

Edward Sapir was born in Pomerania (Prussia) in 1884, the son of Jacob Sapir, a cantor and minor religious functionary, who, true to the tradition of his calling, wandered fitfully from one community to another.⁵ When Edward was five, the family came to America, living briefly in Richmond, Virginia, then settling in New York. Here he spent all of his student years, first as a public school prodigy,⁶ eventually as an undergraduate and graduate student at Columbia. Under the guidance of Franz Boas, he became interested in primitive languages, and after taking his master's degree, went out to Oregon and Washington to work with the Takelma and Wishram Indians, in time writing grammars of both languages.

A year after receiving his doctorate, Sapir was invited to Ottawa to become chief of the Division of Anthropology in the Canadian National Museum, a position he held for fifteen years. It was during these years that he laid the foundations for the studies in linguistics and anthropology for which he later became celebrated, while at the same time writing poetry and literary criticism, and composing music.

In 1925 Sapir went to the University of Chicago, and within two years he had become a full professor. Here he flourished as one of the luminaries of the university and an ornament of the intellectual community. His lectures in and beyond the university drew many listeners. A group of outstanding students became his disciples. He had grown increasingly interested in the interplay of culture and personality, and his papers on the psychology of culture became landmarks in the interdisciplinary terrain of the behavioral sciences.

The year 1929 saw the publication of *Language*, the only book Sapir wrote, which articulated for the educated layman his theoretical formulations in the field of language study. Since its appearance, it has been regarded as a classic.⁷ With the publication of *Language*, Kroeber hailed Sapir as "the most brilliant student of primitive language in America."⁸

Sapir accepted a call from Yale University in 1931 to found a department of anthropology and linguistics, and was appointed a Ster-

ling Professor, most prestigious of Yale professorships. But the years that followed were a mounting tide of tension and frustration. His research objectives were thwarted by hostile colleagues and administrators motivated in no small part by the anti-Semitism endemic in the Yale establishment.⁹ The ugly climax of Sapir's tenure at Yale was his rejection for membership in the Graduates Club, an eating club into which all senior faculty were voted as a matter of course. It was generally agreed that Sapir was blackballed because he was a Jew.

Such experiences, together with the rise of Hitlerism in Europe and its ominous stirrings in America, found Sapir strongly asserting his Jewish identity. He became active in the programs of several Jewish organizations, turned to Semitic studies, and read Talmud. He lived out his last years in broken health and died at the age of fifty-five.

Sapir's contributions to linguistics and anthropology were singular in their pioneering insights and seminal in their influence. According to Boas, Sapir was largely responsible for the adoption of the phonetic method and phonemic principles in the study of language. His reduction of Powell's fifty-five American Indian language stocks to six was hailed as "almost mystical" by his contemporaries, and today, seventy years later, has still not been substantially revised. His formulation of a genetic tie between the languages of native America and those of the Asiatic mainland, reached through his knowledge of Na-déné and Indo-Chinese, remains one of his crowning achievements. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which holds that language powerfully influences culture, opened vistas to a new understanding of cultural relativity. His writings on the interplay of culture and personality, with their comprehensive grasp of psychology and psychiatry, led to groundbreaking interdisciplinary programs of research. His insistence on the primacy of the individual in culture was a bold departure from the prevalent conception of culture as "superorganic," and defined his perception of "men and women as the ultimate units of value."

Darnell devotes a subchapter toward the end of the book to "Sapir's Relation to Judaism." Unfortunately her treatment is flawed by lapses in interpretation and accuracy. Since the quest for precise definition in Jewish matters is akin to walking through a minefield, only the sure-footed should attempt it, and we take this into account when the author's meaning is not always clear.

In defining the Jewish component in Sapir's life, Darnell writes:

"Judaism [was] a cultural tradition and a social category applied to him by others." Elsewhere she speculates that when he went to Chicago, Sapir expected that an "unobtrusive Jewish identity would do him no harm."

It is true that Sapir felt himself a Jew by cultural heritage rather than by religious affinity. But that he was a Jew only as an identity "applied to him by others" is not true. He always avowed himself a Jew; "My father was a precentor in the synagogue," he would tell us in class, "precentor" being the Anglican equivalent of "cantor."¹⁰ In Chicago he would lecture to synagogue audiences on Jewish issues.¹¹ He publicly debated Jewish questions with the rabbi of a large North Side congregation, Solomon Goldman, one of the most learned, eloquent, and admired Jewish leaders of the day. He reviewed books on Jewish themes for the *Menorah Journal*, the choice intellectual Jewish periodical of the time. Jewish identity did not have to be "applied to him by others." The notion of being an "unobtrusive" Jew would have been dismissed by Sapir as craven.

Darnell refers to my association with Sapir during the last years of his life. Regrettably the account is garbled. I did meet with Sapir, usually in his office in the Hall of Graduate Studies. There were few individuals in the Yale community with whom he might have cared to talk about Jewish life or the status of the Jew, but with me, a student in his department who was a rabbi, there were no inhibitions. Those were the somber days of Hitler's rise to power and of its sinister anti-Semitic repercussions in America. Sapir's illuminating intuitions and reflections on those portents have never left me.

I am quoted as saying that Sapir was "not interested in 'organized Jewishness' but in the 'perpetually insoluble' culture of his childhood."¹² Since I do not know what either "organized Jewishness" or a "perpetually insoluble culture" is, I could not have said it. I had written that Sapir felt that the Jew faced "a conflict between cultures which was perpetually insoluble."¹³ He called this conflict "a fatal conundrum of history," a verbal cameo which encapsulates the poignancy of the Jew living in a gentile world.

Darnell has me, along with Mandelbaum and Newman,¹⁴ reading Talmud with Sapir. It would have been an unforgettable experience to have done so, but neither Mandelbaum nor I did. I cannot speak for Newman, but knowing the range of his Hebrew, I doubt whether he

did. Sapir did read Talmud with Philip Grossman, a non-practicing Orthodox rabbi, who had taken a Ph.D. in Semitics at Yale and who lived in New Haven. Grossman was perpetually dyspeptic, especially about Yale, dismissing all Yale professors but one as charlatans. The exception was Sapir.¹⁵

Sapir knew Hebrew and Yiddish well. We used to marvel at his citations in class from the scores of languages he knew, drawn, it seemed, from all known language stocks, including Hebrew and Yiddish. He would write Hebrew and Yiddish words and phrases on the blackboard in phonetic symbols. Darnell quotes a letter Sapir wrote to Newman, which speaks of his feeling for Hebrew: "Hebrew never ceases to fascinate me . . . perhaps because, as a little boy of 7 or 8, I used to translate the O.T. with my father. Its grammar is a continual delight. . . . It's a language full of queer irregularities (as contrasted with Arabic) but not really difficult."¹⁶

But it was Yiddish that seems to have evoked Sapir's deepest Jewish feelings. It was his mother tongue, the household language of his childhood. One of his early papers was a phonetic study of Kovno Yiddish, Kovno (Lithuania) having been his mother's birthplace.¹⁷ As early as 1930 his interest in Yiddish led him to approach the Rockefeller Foundation for funds in behalf of the Yiddish Scientific Institute of Vilna (YIVO), the world center for Yiddish studies. (An "unobtrusive" Jew would scarcely have sought funds from the Rockefeller Foundation for the propagation of Yiddish.) He also met with Julius Rosenwald, the Chicago philanthropist, on the same mission. When the international board of trustees for YIVO was formed, he became one of its honorary chairmen, along with Simon Dubnow, Albert Einstein, and Sigmund Freud.

In 1932 Dr. Max Weinreich, the co-founder of YIVO, came to Yale from Vilna as one of the Rockefeller Fellows invited from all parts of the world to take Sapir's famous course on the psychological relevance of culture for personality. He was a linguist from the Russian Pale trained at the University of Marburg. Sharing a good deal in common, Weinreich and Sapir became friends.¹⁸

Sapir enlisted many colleagues in support of YIVO and spoke publicly in its behalf. His final illness prevented him from speaking at the YIVO World Convention in 1938, but his written message, a lyrical apostrophe to Yiddish, was read:

I have to be content with sending . . . my heartfelt greetings and blessings. . . . When I was a child, Yiddish was looked upon rather contemptuously as a jargon. . . . Nothing . . . can prevent Yiddish from being just as precise [and] dignified . . . as Hebrew or Latin, Greek or French, if only those who speak Yiddish . . . and love it, wish that it be just so. All honor and admiration for those who wish it shall be like this! . . . I cannot imagine a more exalted . . . way for bringing the Jewish masses . . . into strong contact with . . . world culture than forging a language held in scorn into an instrument of a magnificent, clear, creative expression. "The stone which the builders . . . found contemptible has become the cornerstone!"

This was not the pronouncement of a reluctant Jew.

In the last years of his life, Sapir became involved in an agenda of Jewish activities. He joined Morris Raphael Cohen, the great teacher of philosophy at City College, New York,¹⁹ and Salo W. Baron, eminent Jewish historian at Columbia, in founding the Conference on Jewish Relations, serving as vice-president, and becoming a member of the editorial board of its journal, *Jewish Social Studies*. Margaret Mead reported that Sapir "turned his back [upon former interests] to plunge into a passionate study of Semitics."²⁰ He received a set of Talmud on his birthday from his wife and found in it "a reflection of all his interests and life principles." Mandelbaum has portrayed Sapir as "[coming] down from the press box where he had sat as an interested observer of the Jewish scene, to take his place on the playing field of Jewish life."²¹

The year before his death, Sapir was elected president of the American Anthropological Association. At the annual convention held in New Haven, he introduced a resolution against Nazi racism. Only a minority supported it, and it failed of passage. A large majority opposed it on the grounds that "Germany was a friendly power." In 1939 he died.

With the announcement of his death, tributes came from every quarter. The nation's leading anthropologists and linguists, writing obituaries in all the journals of their academic disciplines, had frequent recourse to the term "genius." Franklin Edgerton, the eminent Sanskritist, wrote, "He seemed able to meet every one of us on our own grounds, to see the minutiae of many provinces as with a magnifying glass, and at the same time effortlessly to survey the whole terrain. . . . Many of us do not think it going too far to call him a genius."²² Sullivan spoke of him as "a personality unendingly charm-

ing," "an intellect that evoked reverence," "a genius largely wasted on a world not yet awake to the value of the very great."²³ Those who had been his students felt, as Benjamin Whorf put it, "like disciples whose master had left them."²⁴

In 1984, the centenary of Sapir's birth was observed by the institutions and professional associations which had known him. The Canadian National Museum held a three-day conference at which his contributions were discussed by linguists and anthropologists from all parts of North America, and at the annual convention of the American Anthropological Association in Denver, two segments of the program were devoted to his life and influence, a distinction previously accorded only to Franz Boas. One institution which had known him well did not mark his centenary. At Yale the occasion passed without notice.

Darnell describes the American anthropological world which was the backdrop of Sapir's career, delineating its prejudices, rivalries, and intrigues. Sapir once commented, "No politics could equal in viciousness and vituperation the politics of academic life."²⁵ A sensitive genius was bound to be bruised and mauled when caught in its coils. Its convolutions are recounted in grim detail as we are taken on a long journey through the back alleys of academic knuckle-dusting. The biography represents an industrious mining of sources and assembling of facts.

It is in the depiction of Sapir himself that the book falls short. The portrait is never clearly focused. There are contradictory appraisals of Sapir's achievements and person. A cloud of witnesses affirm his protean brilliance, yet Darnell calls him a "dabbler" in Iroquoian languages and in poetry.²⁶ In 1912 he was working with eight Iroquoian languages,²⁷ and the poetry entries in his bibliography, which equal in number all other items, are hardly marks of a dabbler. Poetry was the central subject of his correspondence with Ruth Benedict over a span of fifteen years, and Mead speaks of the "seriousness with which Sapir took [poetry]."²⁸

Those who knew Sapir have testified, often in extravagant terms, to his decency, generosity, and kindness as a person. Pike has acknowledged that from the day he met Sapir, "he was a role model for me in character,"²⁹ and Mandelbaum recalled him as the "most sympathetic of mentors, the kindest of men."³⁰ Darnell notes the praise of col-

leagues and students, yet at different times calls Sapir "self-righteous," "self-promoting," "smug," and vain.³¹ A photo taken when he was twenty-nine bears the author's legend, "A self-satisfied Sapir in the early Ottawa years."

Darnell cites Theodora Kroeber as recording that her husband, A. L. Kroeber, held Sapir, who was a close friend, "partly responsible for the death of Ishi, the Yahi Indian."³² Ishi had wandered in from the wild to find sanctuary in Berkeley, California, where he became Kroeber's informant. At Kroeber's urging, Sapir had come out to work with Ishi on his language, Yana. Gravely ill with tuberculosis, Ishi died. What Mrs. Kroeber actually reports is that T. T. Waterman, a Berkeley anthropologist, blamed himself for causing Ishi's death. He had written to Kroeber, "I killed him by letting Sapir ride him too hard." Mrs. Kroeber goes on to speak of Sapir's relationship with Ishi: "It was Sapir who, exhausted, brought a day's work to a close before Ishi tired of repeating the beloved words and sounds of Yahi."³³ Darnell's unfortunate imputation in this context cannot fail to raise questions about her credibility in others.

The book would have benefited from a more rigorous editorial hand. The writing is less than felicitous, marred by a fondness for words like "unsurprisingly," "feedback," "database," and "superstars," the last a cognomen for academic luminaries like Sapir who are avidly sought as university ornaments. Lapses in coherence and clarity sometimes obscure meaning. More serious are the departures from accuracy, such as the assessment of the Jewish dimension in Sapir's life and the account of Ishi's death, which greater care might have remedied. But withal, this is a work which will be consulted by those interested in the life and times of Edward Sapir. A more discriminating and balanced appreciation of the man himself remains to be written.

Edgar E. Siskin is rabbi emeritus of North Shore Congregation Israel, Glencoe, Illinois. Dr. Siskin has taught at Northwestern University and at Yale, where he studied with Edward Sapir. He is the founder and director of the Jerusalem Center for Anthropological Studies and lives in Jerusalem.

Notes

1. Godfrey Lienhardt, "Observers Observed," a review of *History of Anthropology*, vol. 1, ed. George W. Stocking, *Times Literary Supplement*, June 7, 1985, p. 647.
2. Harry Stack Sullivan, "Edward Sapir, Ph.D., Sc.D.," *Psychiatry* 2 (1939): 159.
3. Regna Darnell, *Edward Sapir: Linguist, Anthropologist, Humanist* (Berkeley, 1990), p. 418.
4. David G. Mandelbaum, "Edward Sapir," *Jewish Social Studies* 3 (1941): 132.
5. Jacob Sapir seems to have possessed musical skills. He transcribed a good deal of American Indian music from the field notes of his son, Boas, and Speck. He also composed music, which he was always urging his son to play.
6. After winning a citywide competition, he was hailed by a newspaper as "the brightest boy in New York."
7. Conveying the author's indifference to scholarship's customary baggage, *Language* is devoid of scholarly references, diacritical marks, and bibliography, and every page exhibits the author's exceptional felicity of style. Sixty years after publication, it still sells 2,000 copies a year.
8. Darnell, *Edward Sapir*, pp. 102, 112.
9. No Jews taught in the undergraduate college, nor had they since Yale's founding in 1702. A few taught in the graduate and professional schools.
10. To dub the lowly cantor "precentor" may have struck him as an amusing irony.
11. Members of the congregation I served as rabbi on Chicago's North Shore remembered Sapir's lectures. He met members of the congregation socially through Elizabeth Herzog, the wife of one of his disciples, the ethnomusicologist George Herzog. She was the co-author of the minor classic, *Life Is with People*, and came from a socially prominent family. Darnell's description of Sapir as "basking in the company of the powerful" North Shore Jews is fanciful. Anyone who knew Sapir would find it difficult to imagine him "basking" in an ambience of wealth or "power."
12. Darnell, *Edward Sapir*, p. 403.
13. Edward Sapir, "Lewisohn's View," *Menorah Journal* 12 (1926): 214.
14. David G. Mandelbaum became professor of anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley. Stanley Newman became professor of linguistics at the University of New Mexico.
15. Grossman's dark moods may have been caused by his failure to secure a university faculty appointment. During my years in New Haven, no Yale Ph.D. in Semitics who was a Jew got a teaching position in a university. Even with a high recommendation from the head of the department, no Jew was placed. All gentile Ph.D.'s were. At that time Semitics departments in American universities were virtually *Judenrein*.
16. Darnell, *Edward Sapir*, p. 403.
17. Edward Sapir, "Notes on Judaeo-German Phonology," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 6 (1915): 231-266.
18. I came to know Weinreich. He once asked me to accompany him to a poetry reading at which he was to read poems in Yiddish. He asked me to be his translator. This was one of a series of poetry readings by the foreign Rockefeller Fellows studying with Sapir. They were sponsored by an elite university women's group and were held in some of the aristocratic homes in New Haven. The Yiddish session took place in the home of Mrs. George Parmelee Day, wife of the treasurer of Yale. Weinreich rather relished the notion of a Yiddish poetry afternoon in that starched WASP setting.
19. Cohen is referred to as a "Yale Jew" (Darnell, p. 405), but his connection with Yale was tenuous, limited to teaching three one-semester courses. He was considered for a faculty appointment but rejected. As William Lyon ("Billy") Phelps, popular Yale professor, put it in his summa-

ry evaluation, "Jewish and no gentleman. We don't need him." Dan A. Oren, *Joining the Club: A History of Jews and Yale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 123.

20. Margaret Mead, *An Anthropologist at Work* (Boston, 1959), p. 96.

21. Mandelbaum, "Edward Sapir," pp. 134, 139.

22. Franklin Edgerton, "Edward Sapir," *American Philosophical Society Yearbook*, 1939 (Philadelphia, 1940), p. 463.

23. Sullivan, "Edward Sapir," p. 159.

24. Benjamin L. Whorf was an insurance man living in Wallingford, Connecticut, who would come down to New Haven to work with Sapir. Together they propounded the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

25. Darnell, *Edward Sapir*, p. 217.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 132.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

28. Mead, *Anthropologist at Work*. Sapir kept a record of the fate of every poem, whether accepted or rejected.

29. Kenneth Pike, "Reminiscences about Edward Sapir," in *New Perspectives in Language, Culture and Personality*, ed. William Cowan, Michael K. Foster, and Konrad Koerner (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1986) p. 387.

30. Mandelbaum, "Edward Sapir," p. 133.

31. Darnell, *Edward Sapir*, pp. 46, 419, 75, 49.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

33. Theodore Kroeber, *Ishi: The Last of the Yahi* (Berkeley, 1961), pp. 234-235.

Review Essay
The Last Great Rabbi?

Evyatar Friesel

Raphael, Marc Lee. *Abba Hillel Silver: A Profile in American Judaism*. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1989. xxxiii, 282 pp.

As Professor Raphael points out in the preface of his very interesting book, there have been few scholarly studies of twentieth-century American rabbis. He might have added that too many of the few have been written in too apologetic a mood. All of which did not make his task easier, especially since Abba Hillel Silver, in Raphael's words, was hardly representative of the American rabbinate: "... few pulpit rabbis had, as he did, the manner and bearing of an Old Testament prophet, few have represented world Jewry at the United Nations, headed national Jewish organizations, or had both streets and a city in Israel named for them."

Except for the first chapter, which deals with Silver's younger years, the other parts of Raphael's book are divided between the Cleveland period and the 1940s, when Silver was active on the national Jewish and Zionist scene. More space is given to the second, the political period. The very thoughtful introduction by Rabbi Alexander Schindler, in which he describes the Jewish public atmosphere in the 1930s and 1940s, deserves careful reading.

Born in Lithuania and raised in New York, Abba Hillel Silver belonged to a typically poor Jewish immigrant family of the Lower East Side. He grew up knowing Yiddish and Hebrew as well as he came to know English. In later years Silver was equally impressive in all three languages. His strict traditional religious upbringing left indelible marks on his character. Indeed, it must have been quite a surprise for his family, which had been producing Orthodox rabbis for generations, when he decided, in 1911, to embark on his rabbinical career at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. To make matters even more complicated, Silver had been an active Zionist since childhood and did not stop being one after registering at the (then) anti-Zionist HUC.



Abba Hillel Silver
(1893-1963)

Raphael describes the beginnings of Silver's rabbinical career, first in Wheeling, West Virginia, and from 1917 at The Temple in Cleveland. At age twenty-four, Silver became the spiritual leader of one of the largest and most prestigious Reform congregations in the United States. Certainly his skills as speaker and preacher had much to do with it. Silver's oratorical ability made him one of the greatest speakers of his time. The intellectual capacity that went with it and his imposing personality soon guaranteed him a strong hold on his congregation, one that would continue practically unchallenged for the next forty years.

Silver's interests soon reached beyond the affairs of The Temple. He began to participate in city- and state-connected issues. He was especially interested in questions relating to industrial relations and was sensitive to workers' rights. In the 1930s, with the Depression setting in, he worked hard to persuade the Ohio legislature to enact an unemployment insurance bill. In the 1920s and 1930s, Silver also gave generously of his time for every Zionist initiative and campaign in which he was asked to participate. He crisscrossed the state and the country on behalf of the Palestine Foundation Fund (*Keren Hayesod*). It did not take long for Silver to become a figure to be reckoned with in national Zionist affairs. As Raphael points out, before reaching his thirtieth birthday Silver was already a well-known public figure.

Raphael describes how Silver gradually gained national prominence as a Zionist. He was shaped essentially through the Zionist campaign apparatus. In the late thirties and early forties he was several times elected national chairman of the United Palestine Appeal. In 1939 he was one of the founders of the United Jewish Appeal.

At that point, the book turns in a new direction, and one of the methodological problems of Raphael's undertaking becomes evident. Any biographer of Abba Hillel Silver is faced with a double theme. One is the story of Silver the Cleveland rabbi, the religious head of a large and interesting Reform congregation. It is a story that spans several decades, one that has its own logic and points of reference. It deserves to be told in detail, because it is highly interesting *per se*, and can teach much about the Reform movement, the work and life of its rabbis, and the social and religious evolution of a middle-sized Jewish community in the Midwest.

The other story is that of Silver the chairman of the American Zionist Emergency Council. AZEC existed from 1943 to 1949, and

took a most visible—although controversial—part in the public actions of the United States and in the deliberations at the United Nations that led to the Palestine partition resolution on November 29, 1947. This story is a tale short and tempestuous, completely different from the first one in tone, content, intensity, and participating personalities.

By a feat of sheer intellectual prowess, Professor Raphael has managed to grasp both themes. Working through an enormous amount of utterly different sources, he has familiarized himself with the history of Tifereth Israel congregation (The Temple), with Cleveland's Jewish community and its diverse organizational bodies, with the history of American Zionism in the 1930s and 1940s, with the development of AZEC, with the politics and diplomatic maneuvering of the American government and the United Nations in the late 1940s, and with Israeli politics—and with Silver's role in the middle (or at the head) of all of these developments. But by trying to deliver it all in one fairly short book, the author has in the end done an injustice to both themes. Raphael's style is lucid, his information exact, his approach careful and balanced, his knowledge immense, his work professional—all of which only proves that whoever tackles this theme again should take care not to be caught in the same dilemma. The Silver of Cleveland deserves one work; the Silver of the American Zionist Emergency Council another.

Having learned from Raphael's experience, I will briefly comment, in the present essay, on some questions related to one of Raphael's major themes, Silver's activity as the head of the American Zionist Emergency Council.

In 1939, Silver attended the Twenty-first Zionist Congress, held at Geneva. The focus of the Congress was on the approaching war in Europe, the situation of European Jewry, and the worsening political relationship between the Zionist movement and Great Britain after the publication of the White Paper on Palestine in May 1939. Initial preparations were made to face the threatening problems ahead. Among other resolutions, it was decided to create a Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs in the United States, chaired by Stephen S. Wise. Even after the beginning of the war, and the ever-more alarming news about the situation of the Jews in Europe, the Emergency Committee remained inactive. While in the United States in 1942, Chaim Weizmann engineered Silver's participation in the center of Zionist

activity. Silver's impressive performance at the Biltmore Conference in May 1942 probably convinced Weizmann that Silver would be a better choice for the American Zionist leadership position than the ailing Wise. An agreement was signed in August 1943, and Silver was elected co-chairman of a newly created body, the American Zionist Emergency Council.

It turned out to be a momentous decision. Imperious, aggressive, extreme in his Zionist positions and totally unbending, and well served by his great oratorical gifts, Silver soon became the despair of his growing number of enemies: he acted exactly as they feared he would, only more so. Only weeks after his election, he became involved in a struggle over the presidency of the Zionist Organization of America (which he wanted for himself), over the leadership style of his co-chairman, Stephen S. Wise (whom he wanted ousted), and over the political position to be adopted at the American Jewish Conference.

The Conference was a meeting of most major American Jewish organizations, including non-Zionist ones such as the American Jewish Committee, to decide whether American Jewry should support the struggling Jewish community in Palestine. It had been brought together after many negotiations and much effort to reach a fragile common denominator that would enable the diverse factions in American Jewry to act together.

Fearing Silver's extremist position, the heads of the American Zionist establishment managed to block his appearance as speaker for the Zionist Organization of America. To no avail. Through clever maneuvering, Silver appeared on the podium on the evening of August 30, under the auspices of another organization. In one of the great speeches of his career, he issued a vibrant call for a Jewish state in Palestine, a call which changed the whole direction of the deliberations. In an uproar, the assembled delegates approved his proposals almost unanimously. The American Jewish Committee resigned from the Conference. Silver had become the leader of a growing American Zionist drive for Jewish statehood in Palestine.

An evaluation of Silver's activities as the head of AZEC is unavoidably related to two major questions. One asks what the American policy regarding Palestine really was in 1947 and 1948; the other, in what manner AZEC responded to that policy, and how effective was its line of action.

The copious literature on American policy and Palestine is based on

the assumption that there was such a policy. Indeed there were several policies—of the State Department, the White House, Congress—interacting at best, clashing at worst, pressured by any number of interest groups, such as the Zionists, American Jewry, the oil companies, and so on.

The prospect that all this together may add up to a non-policy runs against the very grain of historical research, which is geared to explain things that were, and not things that were *not*. Historians recoil instinctively from such a situation: nothing is worse than to research in a void.

It seems that a honorable case can be made for the negative possibility. The United States was coming out of period of isolationism. Unlike Great Britain and France, it had no political experience or tradition regarding the Middle East. In 1947–1948 American foreign policy was facing a wide array of international problems, most connected with Soviet expansion. Quite contrary to the information and impression one gets from the existing literature, Palestine was simply not very important to American policy-makers.

One small but significant example may be instructive. On May 12, 1948, three days before the proclamation of the State of Israel, a top-level consultation on Palestine took place in the White House. The participants were President Truman, Secretary of State George Marshall, Under-Secretary of State Robert A. Lovett, and several assistants. When the discussion touched on a message that Marshall had reportedly sent Ben-Gurion some days before, Marshall replied that he had sent no such message. “In fact,” he said, “I did not even know that such a person existed.”¹ So much for the American secretary of state’s level of knowledge about Palestine only a couple of days before Israel declared its independence.

There were, for certain, several policies about Palestine. Whether they added up to a policy is an another matter. Eugene V. Rostow seems to have summed it up correctly in 1976: “During the Palestine crisis and the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948–1949, the United States was never able to make up its mind about its national interest in the controversy.”²

That being the situation, much is to be said for the tactics adopted by Silver and AZEC. It might have been even better if Silver had access to the higher levels of policy-making. He did not. As Raphael aptly

describes it, neither the president nor the secretary of state wanted to do business with Silver, both considering him a nuisance and a trouble-maker. Which may also indicate how effective AZEC was, what with its mass mobilization of activists, large public meetings, mail campaigns, grass-roots and congressional lobbying.

But was it effective? Again, historians dealing with the theme seem biased toward a positive answer. However, Samuel Halperin, in his study on this very issue, is more reserved: "To what extent the evolving American Zionist power and influence potential chronicled in this study contributed to the creation of the State of Israel is not at all certain."³ It simply seems impossible to evaluate, with any measure of accuracy, the influence of the American Zionist Emergency Council on the shaping of the events that led to the United Nations partition declaration in November 1949.

What then was Silver's role in these developments? Skillfully, without saying it in so many words, Raphael's story leads the reader to a growing awareness of the tragic dimension in Silver's finest hour. The man was obviously a giant: as orator, as rabbi, as intellectual, as public leader. In Cleveland, at The Temple, he had awed the board of trustees and intimidated the congregants (almost nobody dared to come for pastoral counseling). In Washington and New York, as we go along with Raphael's description of struggle after struggle—against the policy-makers in the State Department, against his ZOA associates, against the tactics of his fellow Jewish Agency members—one very upsetting question comes to mind: who was Silver working with? What strange gods was he serving?

Almost everybody who can be named in the Zionist establishment was against Silver, or at least was trying (quite unsuccessfully) to contain, to control, or sooner or later to topple him: Stephen S. Wise, Louis Lipsky, Israel Goldstein, Nahum Goldmann, Chaim Weizmann, David Ben-Gurion, Henry Montor, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and many others. Silver rose in a tempest on that unforgettable evening of August 30, 1943, at the American Jewish Conference, when he was literally catapulted into the leadership of the budding Zionist movement for Palestine. Silver was brought down in a tempest when in early 1949 he was toppled by a strange coalition of American non-Zionists and Zionists, backed by the Israelis. His only steadfast supporter in the American Zionist leadership was Emanuel Neumann, the enig-

matic Talleyrand of American Zionism, and incidentally, the man who had masterminded the almost-coup of August 30, 1943.

Raphael uses the term "leader" carefully when referring to Silver's position in American Zionism. Indeed, Silver "chaired" AZEC and "led" the Zionist-Jewish movement in the United States for Jewish statehood, but he never managed to dominate the core structure of the ZOA. He rode the crest of a tide: the upsurge in American Jewry directed to one specific goal. Silver was "chosen" by the forces beneath that upsurge, the undefined masses of American Zionists and American Jews, yearning for Jewish statehood in Palestine and rising up in the hundreds of thousands in support of this goal, backed by large sectors of American public opinion.

Silver understood and identified with that vision, and served it to the utmost of his great abilities. But the astonishing public-action apparatus he set up and directed in 1946 and 1947 had no permanent foundations. Already by 1948 (actually, by the end of 1947!) the ebb had set in. Soon the structure collapsed beneath Silver, and his adversaries only formalized what had already occurred. In fact, this was not the first time that such a flow-and-ebb pattern had occurred in American Zionism. A similar pattern had occurred in 1915-1921 during the Brandeis years. In fact, it can be argued that in a sense Brandeis was no more the leader of American Zionism in the days of World War I than Silver was in the few years after World War II.

Abba Hillel Silver was but one of the participants in the very complex political process that led to the creation of Israel in 1948. One of the merits of Raphael's book is that he has managed to keep himself focused on his man, without deviating to the so many important issues along the way. Raphael allows us to look at the developing political scene in 1947-1948 through Silver's eyes, but without apologizing. The Silver we are offered in this book is one whose great qualities and many shortcomings are put straight before us, "warts and all." Professor Raphael's biography is a most useful contribution to a field where much remains to be done.

Evyatar Friesel is professor of modern Jewish history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is the author of, among other works, *The Zionist Movement in the United States, 1897-1914* (1970), *Zionist Policy After the Balfour Declaration, 1917-1922* (1977), and *Atlas of Modern Jewish History* (1990).

Notes

1. Memorandum of conversation dictated by Marshall in *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, vol. 5, pt. 2 (Washington, 1976), pp. 972–977.
2. “Israel in the Evolution of American Foreign Policy,” in *The Palestine Question in American History*, ed. Clark M. Clifford et al. (New York, 1978), p. 64.
3. *The Political World of American Zionism* (Detroit, 1961), p. 295.

Book Reviews

Heinze, Andrew R. *Adapting to Abundance: Jewish Immigrants, Mass Consumption, and the Search for American Identity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. 276 pp.

The good Lord must love social historians, because He made so many of them; and their books have continued to annex territory that once belonged to other scholars. Though *Adapting to Abundance* seems at first glance to be modestly confined to examining the first generation of Eastern European Jews who lived in New York at the turn of the century, the range and implications of this monograph are more ambitious. Along with its triangulation of the traditional subfields of ethnic, immigration, and urban history, Andrew Heinze's study is deeply enmeshed in what once would have been economic history, stressing how neatly one group of arrivals managed to fit into the marketplace, how their skills and inclinations suited a nation that was energetically democratizing luxuries and felt no embarrassment at riches. By stressing the values, the sensibility, and the predispositions of these Jewish immigrants as pivotal to their behavior, Professor Heinze also draws upon the working insights of intellectual and cultural historians, who plunge into the past head-first. *Adapting to Abundance* is also influenced by the symbolic interactionist school of social psychologists, who consider a cigar to be neither a phallic symbol nor just a cigar, but a token of the changing meanings that are inevitably attached to human associations. The result is an important book that invites reflection upon the national character, a concept that is central to the interdisciplinary field of American Studies as well.

Although Moses Rischin is thanked and praised in the acknowledgments and bibliographic essay, and though Heinze's revised Berkeley doctoral dissertation portrays the same ethnic group in the same metropolis during the same period as does *The Promised City* (1962), the different approach that the younger social historian has adopted is more striking than the indebtedness. Whereas Rischin depicted the

relationship of toiling masses to the means of production, Heinze has highlighted the immigrants' relationship to the culture of consumption—a term that appears neither in the index to *The Promised City* nor in its extensive discussion of “urban economic frontiers.” Instead of the rights of labor, *Adapting to Abundance* discusses the rites of leisure, as when a day supposed to be hallowed for rest, study, and prayer is transformed from *shabbos* into shopping. Instead of the *farbrente*—the feisty female organizers of the needle trades, Heinze describes the *baleboste*—homemakers whose consumption preferences determined the character of so much of family life in the tenements. Though the Triangle Fire is unmentioned, fire sales are noted. “Der Proletarisher Magid” is absent—but not the sellers of Crisco vegetable shortening, which Procter & Gamble specifically targeted at Jews conscious of purity and the dietary laws. Morris Hillquit and Sidney Hillman do not show up, but five pages are devoted to “Roxy” Rothapfel, whose gaudy palaces gave the experience of watching movies a touch of “class.” The parameters of this kind of Jewish history are defined by the pushcart—not the polling booth, and by commerce—not citizenship.

Earlier students of immigration like Oscar Handlin (to whom Rischin dedicated *The Promised City*) stressed the poignancy and difficulty of adjustment to a New World. With naturalization papers came the price tag of estrangement. By contrast Heinze shows how easy it was to make the shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*—at least for the Eastern European Jews, whose own exemption from nostalgia for the Old World made them good consumers (and hence good Americans). Even though they read and cherished the socialist *Jewish Daily Forward*, Heinze portrays typical *Forverts* subscribers as Horatio Alger wanna-be's, more influenced by the advertisements than by the editorials. The materialism of the Lower East Side was rarely dialectical, and its egalitarianism was—Heinze argues—less a reflection of political ideology than of participation in the cornucopia of a mass market. While acknowledging the squalor and poverty of the immigrant neighborhoods, the author is more impressed with how much more comfortably their inhabitants lived than they had in the shtetl, and by how quickly they prized the democratization of taste that the burgeoning consumer economy promised.

The author, who teaches at the University of California—Davis, has

picked up a cue from Abraham Cahan's David Levinsky, who remarks that "the very clothes I wore and the very food I ate had a fatal effect on my religious habits." Whereas the sublimity of the Sabbath had been intended to be demarcated from the rest of the week, the far greater availability of what were considered luxuries in the Pale of Settlement collapsed the distinction between the sacred and the ordinary, between the holy and the profane. In New York the newcomers "found themselves in a world where spending rather than saving money was promoted; where the rising standard of living had to be reconciled with religious customs that had to be fitted to the fact of ongoing scarcity; where a new suit of clothes was understood to be an instrument of cultural transformation; where women, as rulers of domestic consumption, assumed a new power over the social adjustment of their families; where such symbols of affluence as the vacation, the parlor, and the piano were put at the disposal of wage earners; where modern corporations, instead of local shopkeepers, solicited business through sophisticated advertising, instead of countertop chatter; where sellers of consumer goods had a mecca of consumers before them and could thus become magnates in the province of mass consumption" (p. 4). The result, Heinze strongly implies, was a new kind of Jew, living in an environment too enticing to be felt as exile.

In support of this argument, Heinze throws in just about everything but the kitchen sink. From the objects of material culture, from the detritus of daily life, he summons up and explains the social significance of the gas oven, the pocket watch, the family photograph, the fashionable attire, the Catskills resort, the insurance policy, the brand-name advertisements, the charitable ball. This book is an historical foray into the semeiotics of desire, an anatomy of what Daniel J. Boorstin termed a "consumption community." It is nevertheless sad to report that Heinze, like almost everyone else, lacks the uncanny skill that Boorstin displayed in *The Americans* for making the once-eccentric seem central, the once-marginal seem meaningful. Heinze's own fixations are unlikely to become fascinating to the reader, who will probably find this book a bit colorless. Part of the reason is the strategy of organizing *Adapting to Abundance* around themes rather than phases, which may have been necessary but which also drains the text of the suspense of change and makes the entire argument seem rather mechanical and undramatic. All of the evidence that the author draws

upon (mostly from memoirs and contemporary newspaper accounts) reinforces his theme of national hospitality and Jewish receptivity. In this account of adaptation, nothing gets qualified, altered, or contradicted by the end; as “greenhorns” smoothly acculturate themselves, nothing interesting “happens” in the book. Even the epilogue is mostly a summation that restates for lip-readers the case that Heinze has already presented. *Adapting to Abundance* is a solid and generally convincing book, but it is not (despite the potentialities for mordant observation inherent in the topic) a clever one. It is indeed so dry that the publisher could have marketed this account among the products that Heinze himself studies; call this book dry goods.

Having no eye for friction or paradox, the author has emerged with a consensus history in which the communal tensions that other scholars have documented and emphasized—between Uptown and Downtown, between the first generation and their children, between the pious and the unobservant, between the bosses and the workers—have evaporated in the allrightnik satisfactions of acquisitiveness. Comparisons with Jewish immigrants in other countries (England, Argentina) and with other immigrants in America (Irish, Italians) are aptly if dutifully advanced, but without the detail needed to permit analytical consideration of how much weight to give to the cultural baggage that the Jews brought with them to America, and how much to give to conditions that distinguished the United States from other havens for the afflicted Jews of Eastern Europe.

Adapting to Abundance is nevertheless bound to add to the debate in comparative ethnic studies, a field that is booby-trapped with volatile controversy over economic performance. Despite the initial disabilities of poverty and prejudice (often quite severe), certain American minorities have made it to the fast lane, while other groups have had trouble even getting to the on-ramp. How to assign proper importance to the effects of discrimination and negative stereotyping, to the perpetuation of values that can be dysfunctional, and to the role of public policy continues to vex historians and social scientists. Heinze ignores (or at least minimizes) the challenging case that sociologist Stephen Steinberg made in *The Ethnic Myth* (1981) that Jews, for example, entered an expanding economy with bourgeois skills already honed abroad that were suitable to an urban market. *Adapting to Abundance* stresses instead the mentality that made Jewish immigrants and

their children successful, not the structural advantages that white skin and entrepreneurial experience provided. Whether these newcomers were producers or consumers, they were shrewd enough to see the American social contract as a bargain.

Heinze's book also fits into the growing scholarly interest in consumption (not only production) and in marketing (not only manufacturing) in the achievement of prosperity. Thanks to specialists like Daniel A. Pope, Michael Schudson, and Richard S. Tedlow, twentieth-century history can now be told more fully in terms of how the extraordinary profusion of goods came to be distributed more widely than earlier generations could have envisioned, how dreams of acquisition have been stoked and stroked. Even though claims for the superiority of the American system in ensuring affluence for a "people of plenty" can no longer be sustained, and the resurgence of the western and northern European and the Pacific rim economies have buried in a potter's field the notion of a unique flair for attaining the good life, the promise of the New World did indeed entail escape from the travail and toil of more primitive societies, with the rewards for effort and enterprise showered less unevenly than a static, hierarchic Europe could manage. We now know that "the way to wealth"—the title of Benjamin Franklin's blockbuster best-seller—is marked by all sorts of national deviations, and that the socialism of the Lower East Side and its congressman, Meyer London, would have been a detour (if not a U-turn). But how the American economic system got to its present state, and how its vindication came to be expressed in terms of individual opportunity and freedom of choice, should merit curiosity. In giving an ethnic twist to the genesis of affluence, *Adapting to Abundance* has also injected a new appreciation of a group famously considered to be like other Americans, only more so. *Intellegatur emptor*—let the buyer be understood.

—Stephen J. Whitfield

Stephen J. Whitfield is the Max Richter Professor of American Civilization at Brandeis University. His most recent publication is *The Culture of the Cold War* (1990).

Jaffe, Dan. *Round for One Voice*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1988.

Juergensen, Hans. *Testimony: Selected Poems, 1954-1986*. Tampa: University of South Florida Press, 1988.

In the *American Jewish Archives* issue of November 1988, devoted to "The German-Jewish Legacy in America, 1938-1988," Hans Juergensen writes, "Being a product of three cultures—German, Jewish, and American—I can attest to the lasting influence of German thought. Goethe and Kant are as important to me as Maimonides and Buber." He was thirteen on January 30, 1933, when Hitler was appointed chancellor of the Reich. Juergensen grew up in Germany almost unaware of anti-Semitism, but after January 1933 life became increasingly intolerable for Jews, and on November 9, 1934, as one of fourteen boys in the first children's transport to America, he reached New York. Some years after fleeing the Nazis, he found himself fighting against them as an American soldier.

Testimony: Selected Poems, 1954-1986 offers a rich sampling of Juergensen's verse. While some of his poems reflect his preoccupation with biblical prophets and King David and other historical figures, the Holocaust dominates the volume, providing its power and passion. "Testimony," the first and title poem of the collection, suggests the poet's depth of feeling about the Holocaust through images and symbols. In addition, the hypnotic chantlike rhythm contributes to the poem's force.

The sun again
The hawk again
This time himself
The hunted
The days
Then
Starting from the sun
Meeting the east of
My horizon

Sting like pebbles
Trapped in a shoe
Never to be cast off
never to be cast off

The lowercase *n* of the second “never” adds to the ongoingness of the pain, the sting. The mystery of the poem is crucial to its effectiveness, for Juergensen is best when he does not overstate his case.

Among the moving poems on the major theme is “Holocaust,” a catalogue in one- and two-word lines, culminating in the final three-word line “earth earth earth.” Again, the concrete form facilitates the power and mystery of the poem. In “The Scar— August, 1934,” the first-person narrator describes walking through the countryside with an older friend when suddenly boots and black tunics appear, and then:

. . . a sharpness of flame
Spewed toward me.
One black arm jerked back
With the report I never heard:
It was my friend who died.

The re-creation of the catastrophic event through sensuous details captivates the reader, who shares the event and can feel it in his pulse.

Although Juergensen’s Holocaust poems are often compelling, when he writes about other subjects, whether biblical prophets, sectarians, or John the Baptist, where he has no personal experience to draw upon, he sometimes has a harder time bringing the subject to life and writing convincingly. In these less successful poems, the language can be flowery or overstated, as in “Sectarians”:

Dispersing
at propitious times
from their
clandestine caverns
they made condolence calls
on the oppressed.

This may, as he discerns in "Preface," have something to do with being a "stranger" speaking in a strange tongue.

With only phrase roots
the hebrew's
native tendrils
in everwhich soil
german
by cosmic joke
so happened . . .

Consumed by the Holocaust, Juergensen sometimes uses words to preach and provoke, and becomes a poet of impassioned statement as opposed to a visionary witness, but he has many successes in this unusual and appealing retrospective collection, such as "Forty Years After Liberation," in which the poet argues with God via the voices of survivors; "Anniversary—October, 1965," an eloquent testimonial to the will to live and create despite death and destruction; "The Chagall Windows," an artful verbal reproduction; and "Chai":

Now the oak looms
in its tallith
of ochre leaves
against the dun
of hollow skies.

Dan Jaffe is an American Jew writing about life in America. One does not detect the marginality of the stranger in his work. While *Round for One Voice* seems to have no central theme, he writes skillfully on a variety of subjects, but his technical accomplishments predominate. *Round for One Voice* shows the capabilities and the limitations of Jaffe's virtuosity as a poet.

Many of Jaffe's poems have intricate schemes, but the test of a poem's effectiveness is not the rhyme scheme alone but the overall impact of its lyric, visual, and dramatic effects. While poems such as "Black Woman, Enroute" and "Disillusionment at Dawn" seem constricted by their formal symmetry and incomplete in their dramatic realization, "On U.S. 1" and "Ninth Street Bar, Seen Through Glass" picture

their subjects memorably as well as maintaining their formal symmetry. I particularly admire "On U.S. 1" for its dynamic vision of the here and now:

We stop. Cops in slickers wave us by.
A tractor-trailer steams on the shoulder, wrecked,
Its windshield wipers moving slowly, slowly,
Like antennae of a dying insect.

Here form and content merge in the image of the experience. Here the verbal music of assonance and alliteration as well as rhyme and heavily stressed rhythms complement the visual acuity of the writing.

Some of Jaffe's poems are in a deliberately minor key and suffice as light verse, such as "The Body of this World":

Was it sinus that kept Shakespeare up
Last in the London candlelight,
Or did Falstaff swearing cup by cup
And banging on the walls all night?

Other examples would be "Biography" and "The Soviet Flu." Poems such as these show a witty side of the poet's virtuosity, but they do not add to the central tenor of the volume.

It almost goes without saying that Jaffe's volume is part of the formalist revival in recent American poetry, and he exhibits some substantial formal achievements here. "Lady in Waiting" describes the seduction and humiliation of a callow immigrant in the formal context of an intricate rhyme scheme (*a b c, c b a, d e f*, etc.) along with an irregular iambic pentameter meter in a luminous revealing way.

She slit his pockets, dismembered both his shoes,
with a grotesque giggle kicked his underwear
into the shadows underneath the bed.

In "Tragedy of Shylock," the poet skillfully retells Shylock's story from *The Merchant of Venice* in seven rhymed and metrical sixteen-line sections. But even in these two poems of impressive formal achievement, the reader is hard-pressed to find powerful and fresh

content. There is no doubt about Jaffe's artistry, but he does not seem to be seized by, inspired by his subjects.

Yet there are excellent poems in *Round for One Voice*. "Waiting for You to Reappear in the House We Never Left" is written in a clear, straightforward style and captures the power of memory.

You live in photographs
and in my memory give me solace.

The narrator waits for his loved one to return and tell him where she has been. Although the poem is not a technical feat, it renders its subject with sufficient detail and subtlety to move the reader.

One of Jaffe's best poems is his tribute to Whitman, "Whitman on the Scaffold." While it may be influenced by Louis Simpson's "Walt Whitman at Bear Mountain" and "Pacific Ideas—A Letter to Walt Whitman," it can stand on its own as a strong, intricate portrait of the great American poet, who "Leans over the world," seeing all and forgetting nothing. While he may be gone from his perch,

one of us will surely notice
across a porthole of our spaceship
a miraculous strand of beard.

Jaffe writes in the tradition of the poet as craftsman, as maker, not as bard. What stays in the reader's mind is not so much what his poems suggest as the poet's skill in making them.

—Gary Pacernick

Gary Pacernick is the author of *The Jewish Poems* and *Memory and Fire: Ten American Jewish Poets*. He is professor of English at Wright State University.

Levendel, Lewis. *A Century of the Canadian Jewish Press: 1880s-1980s* Ottawa: Borealis Press, 1990. xxii, 556 pp.

In studying any North American Jewish community, researchers cannot ignore the Jewish press. Since the nineteenth century, North American Jews have been engaged in the creation of a periodical literature in English, Yiddish, and other languages which, taken together, makes up an indispensable primary source for the reconstruction of the history of the organized Jewish community. The importance of this literature is indicated, among other things, by the care with which the American Jewish Archives has set up an American Jewish Periodicals Center to preserve this material.

What is less immediately apparent, but just as indispensable, if the study of this material is to be conducted on any sort of sophisticated level, is that the press itself must be studied. Historians utilizing newspapers for a reconstruction of the past need to understand the publications they are reading. What news is covered? What is not covered? What are the social and ideological presuppositions of the proprietors, editors, and reporters? What influence does the periodical's financial structure have on the quality and quantity of news presented to the public? In short, the press itself is in great need of investigation before we can properly understand its contents.

Louis Levendel, a former Jewish journalist, has set himself the task of writing a history of the Jewish periodical literature of Canada. In so doing, he has attempted to present a comprehensive account of all periodical publications aimed at Jews and published or edited in Canada in the last century. This is a daunting task for two reasons. First of all, there is no Canadian equivalent to the American Jewish Periodicals Center, and so Levendel has to seek his material in scattered libraries, archives, and basements. Second, and perhaps more important, the state of Canadian Jewish historiography leaves something to be desired. To cite perhaps the most blatant lacuna, Montreal, by all accounts the most important Jewish community in Canada for most of its existence, has not, to date, received an adequate social and religious history of its Jewry.

It is to Levendel's credit that he largely succeeds in overcoming these obstacles. He does so by capitalizing on the strengths of his journalistic training. While he relies on the periodicals themselves and the sparse secondary literature on the subject, the real strength of the book lies elsewhere. It rests on the extensive interviews he has conducted, in person and by telephone, with nearly every significant figure in the Canadian Jewish press that he was able to locate, as well as his own experience as assistant and later associate editor of the *Canadian Jewish News* of Toronto and Montreal from 1971 to 1978.

The author thus presents us with an insider's view of the Canadian Jewish press. From this point of view, the real heroes are not necessarily the writers and reporters, but rather the business people who ensure that bills and salaries are paid. Thus for every periodical he surveys, Levendel invariably comments on the number of advertisements per issue, a constant reminder of the fact that the periodicals were and are business propositions first and foremost.

As with any book which attempts to be comprehensive, this one has both strong points and weak ones. The weak link in the book is in the author's treatment of the non-English-language periodicals, particularly those in Yiddish. It is clear that he has no great facility in Yiddish and is unable to deal with the Yiddish press directly. He does the best he can with the English-language sources available to him as well as through his interviews. However, the result is a less than adequate treatment of the Yiddish press despite his acknowledgment of its importance. Through the 1930s, after all, the average Canadian Jew was more likely to be literate in Yiddish than in English. An adequate account of the Canadian Yiddish press remains to be written. As well, the author clearly does not deal more than superficially with Jewish periodicals in French and in other languages, such as Hebrew and Hungarian.

Levendel does a much better job with the English-language press. He is able to deal comfortably with the personalities, politics, and problems of the Anglo-Jewish press of Canada. In his evaluation of this press, he is far from neutral. His sympathy seems to lie with those periodicals which remain independent of communal funding, rightly seeing that they retain the ability to criticize the communities they have a mandate to cover in a much more trenchant fashion. He recognizes, however, that the trend in the North American Jewish press is

for more rather than less official communal financing.

The author is at his very best, near the end of the book, in two "case studies" of newspaper coverage of relatively recent major stories: a rabbinic conflict at Congregation Beth Tzedec in Toronto, and the 1982 Israeli campaign in Lebanon. In both cases, Levendel makes clear what happened, what was reported, what was not reported, and why. The account of how the Canadian Jewish press, and, particularly the *Canadian Jewish News*, covered these stories, and the editorial constraints which were at work in the situations, makes for fascinating reading.

All in all, the book is an important contribution to the literature on Canadian Jewry as well as to the history of the Anglo-Jewish press in North America. Despite its unevenness, and despite the fact that the book might have been leaner and would read better with some good editing, it fills an important gap in our knowledge and serves as an invaluable guide to one of the primary resources of future historians of Canadian Jewry.

—Ira Robinson

Ira Robinson is associate professor of Judaic Studies in the Department of Religion, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada. He is the editor of *Cyrus Adler: Selected Letters* (1985) and co-editor of *An Everyday Miracle: Yiddish Culture in Montreal* (1990).

Burt, Robert A. *Two Jewish Justices: Outcasts in the Promised Land*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988. 165 pp.

This interpretive essay, which admires Louis D. Brandeis and despises Felix Frankfurter, is loaded with personal opinions, important insights, and speculations; in the long run, however, it may serve as a productive discussion of the theme.

Burt's thesis is that Jewish "homelessness" was elevated to compassion by Brandeis and degraded into callosity by Frankfurter. The reader may well benefit from the analyses of the judicial opinions of the two. Moreover, the very search for an interaction between ethnicity and the judicial realm seems to me quite promising. But the author is too far from sustaining his thesis.

The organizing principle of the book is Hannah Arendt's European-bent concept that minority Jews in majority cultures can only be either pariahs or parvenus (pp. 62 and passim). The pariah case, according to Burt, is Zionist Brandeis, who proudly made a virtue out of his outsideness. Frankfurter, conversely, was a parvenu and *arriviste* who aspired to be assimilated, and overidentified himself with establishment America.

It is highly questionable, however, whether the United States—pluralistic as it is—lends itself to the "either/or" of Arendt's concept. Though ethnic pluralism emerged relatively late, religious and political pluralism have been deeply rooted and very influential in American history. Undoubtedly, the United States of Brandeis and Frankfurter was pluralistic enough to offer to its minority members much more than the pariah/parvenu dichotomy.

Though partly isolated by social anti-Semitism, Brandeis did have many American allies to cooperate with in his social battles. Also, personalities of New England's philo-Semitic tradition favorably interpreted the modern Jewish prophet's campaigns. In the rather conducive American circumstances, Brandeis was not a pariah, nor did he hold just one culture's set of values.

Typically, under the American set of conditions, Brandeis's way to Zionism was not involved with the rejection of one allegiance for an-

other. In contrast to Burt's simplistic, *deus ex machina* explanation (pp. 117–123), Brandeis's change was a process along which he came to believe that conscious Jews and Zionists were especially tuned to ethical values shared by the American and Jewish civilizations.

Brandeis himself adhered to the philosophy of cultural pluralism (evolved roughly during 1905–1915), which meant that he adopted the American ethos and aspired to complement it by refining American Judaism (and the cultures of other minorities as well). Indeed, Zionist Brandeis admired American civilization, and more particularly cherished, all his life, the old Puritan tradition.

Frankfurter's course of life, too, was not one-dimensional. Burt does not bring evidence to bear that Frankfurter's Americanism came in lieu of his Judaism. Actually, the author does not directly discuss Frankfurter's experiences as an immigrant or as a resident of ethnic New York City's East Side. The relevant question to ask is whether these experiences were traumatic enough to cause Frankfurter to be ashamed of his Jewishness or to develop a self-hatred complex (phenomena that were certainly not rare among Central and Western European Jews).

Burt depicts Frankfurter as a thoroughly self-denying Jew. But—in addition to the well-known Zionist and Jewish tasks he carried on in the late 1910s and the early 1920s—Felix Frankfurter visited Palestine several times, and assumed some important Zionist positions in the late 1930s. Although not an observing Jew, he retained a familiarity with Jewish lore, and toward the end of his life he felt himself drawn closer to his heritage.

According to one of Burt's pariah/parvenu schemata, Brandeis is to be related to the prophet type and Frankfurter to be associated with the priest pattern. Thus, the great prophet Moses led his people out of Egypt and gave it the Ten Commandments. The defaced priest Aaron, on the other hand, built for the loose masses the non-Jewish calf of gold. In the same vein, claims Burt, the prophet-type Brandeis spoke in the name of Jewish ethics while Frankfurter ever aspired to appease the callous establishment. The trouble with this dogma, again, is that the United States has never been an "Egypt" for its Jews; and an exodus—physical or spiritual—has never been contemplated by American Zionists. That is, "prophet Brandeis," when engaged in a political fight or on the bench, did not derive inspiration mainly from a Hebrew

revolt; nor did the moderate liberalism and the advocacy of the rule of law by “priest Frankfurter” necessarily originate in a slavish ethnic disposition.

Again, this is not to say that the different social and judicial options of the two men were not related to their different ethnic backgrounds and dispositions. I doubt, however, whether the Arendt/Burt formula is rich and flexible enough to fruitfully serve the theme. Also, the squeezing of the two personality constructs—the idolized Brandeis and the detested Frankfurter—into their respective pariah/prophetic and parvenu/priest slots is associated with more than a few minor and major errors.

The deficiency of the Arendt/Burt dichotomy regarding the American condition is also evident in the societal fields. In rounding up the pariah/parvenu concept, Burt interprets Frankfurter’s socializing habits mainly as a flattery designed to win over WASPish America (pp. 37–40). By the same concept, Brandeis is described as leading a virtually solitary existence (except for his friendship with Frankfurter) and proudly carrying the burden of his ethnic homelessness by himself (pp. 9–18, 40, 122–123). This dichotomous sketching minimizes Frankfurter’s social help to Jews and dilutes his warm, outgoing personality. At the same time, depicting Brandeis as an ethnic, solitary figure dogmatically prunes away his devoted activity as an extended-family man and as a leader of a closely coordinated Zionist group. In variance to Burt’s formula, Brandeis cultivated very friendly relations with progressive Zionist emissaries from Palestine, and eventually two kibbutzim were named after him and his intimate associate in Zionist affairs, Julian W. Mack.

Unfortunately, then, a would-be productive interpretive direction has been largely blocked by a rather dogmatic approach. Furthermore, the author doubly overstretches his adopted thesis when he claims that homelessness characterizes American life in general (pp. 67 and *passim*). Obviously, this stand might drastically nullify the effort to apply Arendt’s concept to any specific American ethnic group. All these shortcomings notwithstanding, the author’s courageous discussion of the interaction of jurisprudence and ethnic background is an intriguing contribution.

—Allon Gal

Allon Gal is an associate professor in the Ben-Gurion Research Center and the Department of History, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. He is the author of *Socialist-Zionism: Theory and Issues in Contemporary Jewish Nationalism* (1973, 1989), *Brandeis of Boston* (1980), *David Ben-Gurion: Preparing for a Jewish State* (in Hebrew, 1985), and *David Ben-Gurion and the American Alignment for a Jewish State* (forthcoming).

Judaica Latinoamericana: Estudios Historico-Sociales. Jerusalem: Editorial Universitaria Magnes, Universidad Hebrea, 1988.

Just as Latin American history can no longer be conceived without its Jewish dimension, so the history of the Jews must include its Latin American branch. Fortunately, the past decade has seen a flourishing of scholarship in Latin American Jewish studies, and more is being published each year.

Three collections of scholarly essays on Latin American Jewry are now in print as the result of international research conferences organized by the Latin American Jewish Studies Association (LAJSA). *Resources for Latin American Jewish Studies* grew out of the first such conference, which was held in October 1982 at the American Jewish Archives. Assembled for the benefit of newcomers to the field, *Resources* consists of five bibliographic essays that together provide access to the most important Latin American and Jewish library and archival collections in the United States.¹

The Jewish Presence in Latin America consists of edited proceedings of LAJSA's second research conference, held at the University of New Mexico in 1982.² Its seventeen chapters represent the mature work of established scholars, many of them coming from Latin American studies and having had no previous involvement with *Judaica*. The collection provides a multifaceted view of the subject, ranging from immigration studies to analysis of Jewish educational systems, and from demographic trends to Merckx's insightful essay "Jewish Studies as a Subject of Latin American Studies." The fact that the book found a commercial publisher confirms the growing acceptability of Latin American Jewish studies, with a readership of its own.

Now a group of Israeli scholars who work together under the name Amilat have brought out a book of essays based on presentations made in Jerusalem in 1984 at sessions of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies.³ This book, *Judaica Latinoamericana: Estudios Histórico-Sociales*, illustrates the distance Latin American Jewish studies has come in so short a period of time, and how far it has yet to go. *Judaica Latinoamericana* is preeminently a Jewish book, presenting

themes whose importance appears far greater from inside the community than from outside it. Most of its chapters concern small but heavily researched topics, showing their origins in master's or doctoral theses. Not without importance, they are circumscribed in both intent and execution. Fourteen are in Spanish, five in English.

Following a general introduction by Haim Avni, P. A. Alsberg describes the Israel state archives as a source for research on Latin American Jewry. Zvi Loker, a former Israeli consul in the Caribbean, and Günter Böhm, historian of Chile and Peru, contribute essays on these areas during the colonial period. Five essays focus on immigration, among which two are of exceptional interest: that by Marta Kowalska, who appears to be the first researcher to utilize Polish government and private archives for her study of the immigration of Polish Jews to Argentina; and that by David Bankier on the German exile community in Mexico during World War II.⁴

The section on community organization focuses on "administrivia." Silvia Schenkolewski demonstrates scholarly maturity in drawing important conclusions from her research. In "Cambios en la relación de la Organización Sionista Mundial hacia la comunidad judía y el movimiento sionista en la Argentina, hasta 1948" (a title that adequately reflects her prose style), Schenkolewski finds that for forty years the relationship of the World Zionist Organization to the Argentine Jewish community was based solely on the collection of funds for the Yishuv; that change occurred only when the disappearance of the European communities had left a vacuum; and that WZO finally turned its attention to these lesser communities not so much because they were valued for themselves, but because it saw that they could be used to exert leverage on their governments in favor of Israel. That is stiff medicine coming from a scholar who has made her life in Israel. Unfortunately, we look in vain for similar insights to emerge from other essays in this group.

Alicia Backal provides an interesting historical footnote with her review of Mexican nationalist movements and their campaign against Jews and Chinese. Ignacio Klich contributes one of the most rewarding essays, "A Background to Peron's Discovery of Jewish National Aspirations." Klich, a conscientious historian and trenchant observer of international politics, provides documentation and analysis that seem to require us to revise the traditional views of Peron, his relation-

ship to Jews and to Zionism, and the role of U.S. Ambassador Spruille Braden. Unfortunately, the essay is so poorly edited that some of its passages are not intelligible.

In the literary section of the book, the ubiquitous Alberto Gerchunoff makes yet another curtain call, while Nelson Vieira breaks new ground with his discussion of the absorption of Jewish symbols into modern Brazilian literature. These are followed by two essays on Jewish identity among Latin American immigrants to Israel and among Jewish medical students in Mexico, both of which are more suggestive than definitive.

Taken as a whole, *Judaica Latinoamericana* presents some solid advances in our exploration of the Jewish archipelago. As with any book that grows from conference proceedings, the collection reflects an element of chance in the selection of authors who were able to attend the Jerusalem conference and who subsequently chose to submit their articles for publication in this particular volume. The quality of the essays is uneven, but some are outstanding. This is a book every Jewish library should own—especially libraries that have Spanish-language readers.

Judging by the procession of collected works over a period of seven years, Latin American Jewish studies is at a crossroads.⁵ The days are past when easy gains were to be made by putting Jewish history up against Latin American history (and Jewish creative writers up against Latin American culture) and seeing where they meshed and where they clashed. The territory has been staked out, and now the researchers—the foot soldiers of history—are slogging over the terrain inch by inch, forcing secrets from the unforgiving soil of the past. What questions will they ask? What insights will they gain? Is it worth studying yet one more burial society, one more agricultural colony, one more parochial school? Or will new researchers have the vision to ask larger questions, those that will elicit important responses from the past?

—Judith Laikin Elkin

Judith Laikin Elkin is a research scientist with the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan and founding president of the Latin American Jewish Studies Association. Her most recent book is *Latin American Jewry: An Annotated Guide to the Literature* (1990).

Notes

1. Available from LAJSA, 2104 Georgetown Blvd., Ann Arbor MI 48105.
2. Edited by Judith Laikin Elkin and Gilbert W. Merkx (Winchester, Mass.: Allen & Unwin [now Harper Collins], 1987).
3. Most of the essays were published previously, in short form, as part of the *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress, Division B*, vol. 3, *The History of the Jewish People: Modern Times* (Jerusalem, 1986).
4. German exile studies (including its Jewish component) is just now coming into its own. See the recent *Europäische Juden in Lateinamerika*, ed. Achim Schrader and Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, published by the Westfälische Wilhelmsuniversität Münster and containing twenty-five essays on this subject.
5. Proceedings of LAJSA's fourth research conference, held at the University of Florida in 1985, were not published in a separate volume. Proceedings of the fifth, held in Buenos Aires in 1987 under the auspices of AMIA—Comunidad Judía de Buenos Aires and the University of Buenos Aires, were published by Editorial Mila, Buenos Aires, 1989.

Gurock. Jeffrey S., Editor. *Ramaz: School, Community, Scholarship and Orthodoxy*. Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav, 1989. xiv, 203 pp.

This book is first and foremost about a New York City day school, but it is also about an era in American Jewish life, 1937–1987. During these years the Jewish community in the United States established a modern educational system that would ensure its survival in unprecedented conditions of freedom and opportunity.

The name “Ramaz” is taken from the first letters of the title and personal names of Rabbi Moses Zevulun Margolies (1851–1936). Rabbi Margolies, who was born in Lithuania, emigrated to the United States in 1881 and after a period of rabbinic service in Boston assumed the position of rabbi of Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun in New York City (see pp. 9, 19, photo facing p. 112). After his death, the congregation established the school that bears his name.

The objectives of the educational institution whose fiftieth anniversary is commemorated with this volume are twofold: to provide “excellence in general studies” (Nathalie Friedman [see below], p. 84) and “intensive grounding in Hebrew, Jewish history, biblical studies, and the intricacies of talmudic reasoning” (ibid.). Because the Ramaz approach to education struck a responsive cord in the hearts of American Jews of varied backgrounds, it has served as a model for many schools — Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and community (i.e., nondenominational). It has also stimulated a high level of commitment to Israel (Friedman, pp. 106–109). Consequently this book will be of interest to many people beyond the Ramaz “family.”

The essays in the volume deal with three topics: (1) the Ramaz School, (2) Orthodox Judaism in the United States, and (3) contemporary Jewish scholarship and history.

In the opinion of the reviewers, the decision to include categories outside of Ramaz and its era, while introducing some interesting material, nevertheless constitutes a distraction. This is most evident in category (3), Jewish Studies, which contains articles on the Pharisees, the American reaction to the Holocaust, pluralism in Orthodox Judaism, and the Jews of Iraq. The articles are by and large unrelated to Ramaz

history or to each other and are in some cases disappointingly superficial.

The book has been well edited by Dr. Gurock (though it is marred now and then by typos). A section with twelve pages of photos gives the reader an idea of the variety of activities going on at the school as well as the physical setting within which the institution grew. The inclusion of an index to persons and words discussed would have been helpful to the reader researching specific items.

Two significant articles, which represent over 40 percent of the text of the book, relate directly to Ramaz. They are Jeffrey S. Gurock's "The Ramaz Version of American Orthodoxy" and Nathalie Friedman's "The Graduates of Ramaz: Fifty Years of Jewish Day School Education." Gurock examines the "distinct Ramaz version of American Orthodoxy and Orthodox education" (see especially pp. xii and 43-49), which, however, remained "a minority opinion within this country's Orthodox community" (p. 77). The latter did not necessarily subscribe to the "progressive" notions of a comprehensive Jewish and secular education (i.e., one emphasizing more than Talmud and Codes).

Friedman, the daughter of Rabbi Joseph H. Lookstein, the school's founder and first principal, sets herself a threefold task, organized as follows: (1) Looking back: evaluations of the Ramaz experience by former students; (2) Ramaz graduates today: the demographics; (3) Ramaz graduates today: Jewish identity (p. 85).

The accent at the school was upon bicultural education (p. 84). According to Friedman, "the data suggest that these objectives [i.e., to 'achieve success in their professions . . . and in business, and be . . . good Jews . . . (and) good and loyal Americans'] have largely been realized" (p. 120). Ramaz graduates, participating fully in the life of America, continue to show close affiliation and involvement with Jewish institutions and thought; they have overwhelmingly provided a day school education for their children.

Two essays deal with the growth of Orthodox Judaism in the United States: Aaron Rakeffet-Rothkoff, "The Semi-Centennial Celebrations of Yeshiva and Yeshiva College," which describes the origins and evolution of Yeshiva University, culminating in the celebration of fifty years of growth in 1936; and Jenna Weissman Joselit, "Of Manners, Morals and Orthodox Judaism: Decorum Within the Orthodox Syna-

gogue," which portrays "the 'aestheticizing' of the synagogue service" (p. 21), with special reference to Kehilath Jeshurun (see Gurock, p. 41).

There are four articles in contemporary Jewish scholarship and history. Albert I. Baumgarten, "American Jewish Scholarship on the Pharisees," attempts to demonstrate how the affiliations of modern writers can color their arguments on topics having emotional undertones. This is an interesting study, but the reviewers feel uncomfortable with the classical *ad hominem* argumentation. Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, principal of Ramaz School, and son of its founder, observes in his "The Public Response of American Jews to the Liberation of European Jewry, January-May 1945," that during the first half of 1945, "The Jewish newspapers and magazines . . . devoted their columns largely to the war and its conclusion, to Jewish organizational issues, to local events and to general American interests" (pp. 152 f.). In other words, American Jews conducted "business as usual" despite the dreadful events that were occurring in Europe. Michael Berenbaum's "The Problem of Pluralism in Contemporary Orthodoxy: Politics, Power, Persuasiveness and Philosophy" is an exploration of "civility . . . in American religious life" (p. 162) and the Orthodox "synthesis between modernity and tradition" (p. 175). Reeva S. Simon, "The Impact of the Public Education Law of 1940 on Iraqi Jews," presents an essay that is useful in understanding the roots of impassioned Arab nationalism in Iraq half a century ago, thus indirectly helping us appreciate the challenges to the United States today in the Persian Gulf.

The final essay in the collection, "The Goals of Jewish Education," is by the late Joseph H. Lookstein, the founder of the Ramaz School. This essay (reprinted from *Tradition* 3 [1960]) brings us back to the themes of the earlier part of the volume. It reflects the philosophy of an educator whose ideas had a profound influence upon the thinking of many young people in America and Israel during this century.

At a time when pressures from those less tolerant are not wanting (e.g., see Gurock, "The Ramaz Version of American Orthodoxy," esp. pp. 72 and 76), it is encouraging to read the words of one alumnus, epitomizing the school's heritage:

What Ramaz teaches . . . leads to an independence of thought in religious matters. I certainly felt encouraged to reach my own decisions in particular areas of belief and observance, rather than to accept the authority of denominations or movements. This to me is Ramaz' strongest legacy. (p. 96)

A common theme runs through many of the essays in this book, reflecting the life of the Jew in America. It is the theme of harmony: harmony between the features of an ancient faith and the routines of life in a modern democratic state; and harmony between diverse branches of Judaism and different communities. This book will be of interest to those who wish to learn more about this theme and about the role of day school education in the life of the American Jew.

—Ophra and David Weisberg

Ophra Weisberg, Ramaz '56, is a first grade teacher in the Jewish Studies Program at Yavneh Day School, Cincinnati, Ohio. She taught at Ramaz from 1960 to 1962. Her husband, David, Ramaz '56, is a professor of Bible and Semitic languages at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati.

A printer's error in the Spring/Summer 1991 issue of this journal rendered the following review nearly unintelligible. We are reprinting it with apologies to the author and our readers.

Cardin, Nina Beth, and Silverman, David Wolf, Edited by. *The Seminary at 100*. New York: Rabbinical Assembly and Jewish Theological Seminary, 1987. xviii, 475 pp.

It is no easy thing to occupy the center of the American Jewish religious spectrum. In its efforts to blend a dedication to halakhic observance with a full acceptance of contemporary culture, the Conservative movement continually faces the question of the proper proportions of each. Factions tug to left and right; some constituencies argue for stronger adherence to tradition, while others, in the name of modernity, ethics, and equity, demand fundamental changes that may be incompatible with tradition.

In the midst of these tensions lies the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the dominant institution of Conservative Judaism, which has played a critical role in shaping the movement's particular approach to religion. It is fitting, then, that on the occasion of the centenary of JTSA the editors of this volume present a collection of essays which offer perspectives on both seminary and movement. The book, an anthology of evaluations of the present and future state of Conservative Judaism by thinkers from both within and without its ranks, examines the movement's successes and failures in reaching the desired balance between tradition and change. It thus reflects all the theological ambiguities, tensions, and disagreements of a group in the middle. It is an honest—at times painfully so—and consistently interesting portrait of what is arguably the most "American" expression of American Judaism.

Tensions, along with new ideas and strategies engendered by them, emerge clearly in the book's first section, whose essays discuss the role of JTSA in Conservative Judaism. Elliot Dorff, for example, discusses with great clarity the problem of rabbinic education in America: how can the seminary overcome the dissonance between a religious tradition that demands observance and an environment, of which its students are the product, that prizes freedom and autonomy? He de-

scribes as well some of the mechanisms adopted by the seminary to address the difficulty. Rela Geffen Monson criticizes the politics of the "clerical elitism" that characterizes the control exerted by the seminary over the movement. She offers a model for a more positive relationship between JTSA and Conservative congregations, one which she thinks might bridge the widening gap between a remote seminary and a powerless laity.

In the second section, seminary faculty confront the tension between the institution's commitment to the academic study of Judaism and the desire of its students for religious meaning: does *Wissenschaft* obscure the vision of the *Kadosh Barukh Hu*? Ivan Marcus offers an incisive look at how an historian can explore with students both the academic and the religious significance of texts and events without artificially synthesizing the two distinct disciplines.

The final section concentrates upon the Conservative movement and its prospects. Particularly interesting is Elliot Gertel's piece on the tenuous sense of Conservative Jewish identity among the laity; he finds that the movement has produced an entire generation which feels no loyalty to "synagogue, Seminary or United Synagogue." He calls upon JTSA to take the lead in teaching Conservative Judaism to Conservative Jews, providing them with a clear vision of the ideology and principles for which their movement stands.

Other tensions, religious and theological rather than intellectual and sociological, exist as well. What, for example, will be the ultimate impact of feminist ideology upon the movement's insistence upon halakhah as the guide to authoritative practice? It may not be enough, says Leonard Gordon, to remove halakhic impediments to women's participation in ritual. Rather, we must expect the inclusion of women to have significant and far-reaching effects on the very process of halakhic decision. If so, how does this square with the traditional view championed by Joel Roth, which holds that decisions must be rendered according to the immanent criteria of the halakhic system and not simply out of a desire to accommodate Jewish law to new historical reality? Conservative Judaism regards the congregational rabbi as *mara de'atra*, the final arbiter of halakhah within the local community. Paula Hyman, however, wonders "whether the Conservative house can survive . . . embracing both egalitarian and non-egalitarian positions" on women's participation, and suggests that the movement

cannot simultaneously, in the name of local rabbinic autonomy, affirm both without sacrificing its integrity. Ronald Price, meanwhile, urges that the movement must not abandon its historical pluralism, the ability of groups which hold contradictory religious positions to coexist within the Conservative structure.

All of these authors address the same issue: when it comes to “new reality,” how do we balance tradition with change? One senses that on this issue, a dialogue format would have been preferable to self-contained essays. It would also have been helpful had the editors included an essay by one of the movement’s “left-wing” halakhists with a differing view of the rabbinic legal process in Conservative Judaism.

These minor criticisms do not detract from the book’s indisputable value. The authors deserve our thanks. On this significant anniversary, they might have produced a puff-piece history lauding the seminary’s many achievements. Instead, they have given us a work of substance. This book is an indispensable guide to today’s Conservative Judaism, an excellent teaching tool for acquiring an understanding of the events and issues which occupy the rabbis, scholars, and laity who stand at the center of the American Jewish religious spectrum.

—Mark E. Washofsky

Mark E. Washofsky is assistant professor of rabbinics at the Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati. He has published numerous articles in the area of Jewish law.

Letters to the Editor

To the editor:

I refer to Mark Bauman's article "East European Jews in Atlanta" in your Fall/Winter 1990 issue, in particular his piece on "A Parallel Case in Minneapolis."

Anyone who purports to be an associate professor of history should be able to research his subject sufficiently to enable him to distinguish between fact and fiction. His statement "Heiman, like Epstein, guided his congregants into the Conservative fold" is pure fiction.

My father, Rabbi Hirsch Heiman *z"tl*, indeed was a colleague and close friend of Harry Epstein, but only until Epstein joined the Conservative movement, after which they drifted far apart.

Rabbi Heiman instilled in his congregants and students a deep love and appreciation for traditional Orthodox Judaism throughout his sixteen years as rabbi of Knesset Israel. On the contrary, after one hundred and two years, the congregation, the rabbi, and its many members have continued to be a strong and growing Orthodox influence in the midwestern United States.

My father passed away in Jerusalem last year, a devout, pious, learned Orthodox rabbi who never identified with the ideologies of Conservative or Reform "Judaism" and certainly never guided anyone into Conservative fold.

*Sholom A. Heiman
Jerusalem, Israel*

To the editor:

I have been a member of Keneset Israel Congregation since I came from Poland in 1921. I was very familiar and very close to Rabbi Heiman *z"tl*. At no time did my rabbi do anything that could be considered an attempt to move his congregation toward what is commonly called "Conservative Judaism." He believed in the immutability of the Torah and conducted his life strictly in accordance with the *Shulchan Aruch*. To mention that he guided his congregants into the Conservative fold is a gross untruth and a stain on the character of this distinguished *talmid chocham*.

*Reverend S. H. Roberts, Mohel
Minneapolis, Minn.*

Mark R. Bauman replies:

Mr. Sholom A. Heiman, son of Rabbi Hirsch Heiman, and Rev. S. H. Roberts of Minneapolis' Keneseth Israel Congregation have kindly informed me of an error in my article, "Rabbi Harry H. Epstein and the Adaptation of Second-Generation East European Jews in Atlanta," which appeared in the Fall/Winter 1990 issue of *American Jewish Archives*. On p. 142, I incorrectly indicated that Rabbi Hirsch Heiman "guided his congregants into the Conservative fold." Apparently he remained Orthodox, as did his congregation.

This information, along with a reading of Jenna W. Joselit's outstanding *New York's Jewish Jews* (1990), has caused me to alter my interpretation somewhat. In my larger biography of Epstein, the case of Rabbi Abraham Mesch of Birmingham will be used to illustrate a better parallel, as Mesch's congregation did proceed from Orthodoxy to Conservative affiliation. This transformation, however, was clearly not inevitable, nor was the only alternative total assimilation. While further study will be necessary to determine the impact of continued Orthodoxy on such factors as congregational membership and second-generation participation in congregations exemplified by Keneseth Israel, clearly historians will have to consider a very wide spectrum of traditional options and responses. A major question to be addressed will be why some congregations moved from Modern Orthodox to Conservative and others did not. The field being explored by Joselit, Jeffrey S. Gurock, Aaron Rothkoff, Marc Lee Raphael, and others is rich indeed.

To the editor:

For reasons that escape me, I somehow failed to read the 1990 Fall/Winter issue of the *American Jewish Archives*, and thus I missed—or was spared!—the article by Shlomo Shafir concerning Dr. Abraham Cronbach, my father-in-law.

I was recently sent a copy of the article, and I wish now to make a response. At first I was tempted to let the matter pass unremarked. Of making many articles there is no end. And besides, I never could get the hang of dealing with all those footnotes that article writers so adore.

But something that dad taught me kept pressuring me to respond. Concerning the time he had stood up at a public gathering to disagree with the speaker, he explained to me, "I had to say something lest my silence indicate acceptance."

I read the Shafir article several times and one question that kept whispering to me, one itch I could not scratch, was why the article had been written in the first place.

There was nothing new in what was written. There were no hidden facts to be exposed. No added knowledge to be offered. In essence the article described, in what several people have called "a mean-spirited way," the well-known pacifism of Abraham Cronbach, and his forlorn hope that following the war the Jewish community might not be among those clamoring for retaliation.

We may not agree with his position. Practically nobody did. But so what?

The article points out that Cronbach was practically a minority of one.

What a surprise!

Being a minority of one was practically a way of life for Cronbach. He was, we all agree, *sui generis*, and being a minority of one is part of the package.

So why the article? As I read it and reread it, I must confess it seemed to have been written not for scholarship, nor enhanced knowledge, nor even to show that Cronbach had no allies in his action. However unworthy, however unjustified, it seemed to have been written simply to criticize and ridicule.

I have since been told, by Abraham Peck, Administrative Director of the Archives, that such was not the ease; that the author "in no way set out to vilify Dr. Cronbach's name or reputation."

I am grateful.

The article was written, I am told, "to show a certain *mentalité* of American Jewry, one that was unable to understand the depth and tragedy of the Shoah."

Which raises two more questions. First, why would Cronbach be selected as example or exemplar of American Jewry when he was so totally alone in his beliefs?

Second, are we to assume that Cronbach was unable to understand what was happening in Germany? Cronbach was as much aware, and

as much unaware, as was the rest of Jewish leadership.

There has never been a day when something of Cronbach does not spring to mind. That goes back to the first day I met him in 1942, and it has continued every day of my life. And the picture I have, I dare say, is more accurate than that which was portrayed in the 1990 Fall/Winter Issue of the *American Jewish Archives*.

For example, the American Council for Judaism. When I pressed him on the reasons for his membership he admitted that when he joined he had assumed not that it was anti-Zionist, but that it favored a Judaism with an absence or minimum of rituals. It was only later that he learned that it was both anti-Zionist, and that it had rituals all its own. But when I urged him therefore, to resign, he said, "Your side [I being a Zionist] has all the brains, the abilities, the skills. You surely don't need me."

For example, his attitude toward the Nazis. The article gives the impression that he was somehow soft on Nazis or Nazism, or that he was afraid to speak out against them. What absolute nonsense!

(I had originally written "malevolent nonsense," but based upon Dr. Peck's assurances I have—cautiously and warily—eliminated "malevolent.")

I wonder if the author knew, or cared to know, what happened when the word came out that Jews were being forced to wear the yellow badge. While most of our leaders wrung their hands, he simply asked his wife to make him a yellow badge. Which she did. And sewed it on the jacket of his suit. And every day Dr. Cronbach would walk from his Cincinnati home in Avondale to the Hebrew Union College in Clifton wearing his yellow badge. His reason?

"We cannot stop the Nazis from forcing our people in Germany to wear the badge. But if men and women of good will throughout the world would wear it, it would become a mark of honor."

Yellow badge! The story of the King of Denmark and the yellow badge is a myth. With dad it was a reality.

Yellow badge! I sat in dad's study one night, with Cronbach and Leo Baeck. Dad brought out his yellow badge to show it to Baeck, who took it in his hands, examined it carefully, and finally said,

"Dr. Cronbach, I have heard about your yellow badge, and it is very fine. It is not, however, quite accurate. Therefore, I have brought you mine."

And I sat there as these two saintly human beings wordlessly exchanged their yellow badges.

For example, in the matter of war and peace. I can remember what happened on V-J day when Rabbi Victor Reichert called dad on the phone. He said,

“Dr. Cronbach, this day really belongs to you. Would you come to the Victory Service at the Rockdale Avenue Temple, and be our speaker?”

Dad said,

“Thank you, but no. Not now. Not yet. There is still too much rejoicing over the victory. But ask me again in five years, after the passions have died down, and I will gladly address your congregation. I will even tell you now what I shall say then. I shall tell them the Midrash of the Red Sea, when God admonished the angels for rejoicing, saying, ‘How dare you rejoice when My children, the Egyptians, are drowning in the sea!’

“I shall say to your congregation, ‘How dare we rejoice when God’s children, the Japanese, are dying in Hiroshima and Nagasaki!’ ”

For example, his impact upon his students. The two-dimensional picture of Cronbach in the *Archives* article is cartoonlike, with the author’s conclusion coming like a balloon at the end of the comic strip:

“He did not convince the ‘young and innocent mind’ of his students.”

There has likely never been a professor at the College who has had a greater impact upon the lives of so very many of his students, many of whom, I would assume, were as disturbed as I, by the article in the *Archives*.

Or maybe not. No matter.

How did Edwin Arlington Robinson put it?

*May they who shrink to find him weak
Remember that he cannot speak.*

I gathered that the goal of the article was somehow to do damage to Cronbach’s reputation. But that is all right, too. It was, I believe, Vachel Lindsay who wrote of Governor Altgeld,

To live in mankind is far more than to live in a name.

I have since been informed that this was not the goal of the article, and the assurances of Abraham Peck are greatly appreciated. Unfortunately, they are not persuasive. More persuasive are the words of the article itself that implied that Dr. Cronbach's words and deeds were either dangerously foolish, or foolishly dangerous.

Generations of rabbis, and generations of kids, and generations of people in between, have had their lives touched, moved, and changed by Dr. Cronbach. Not by what he said, and not by what he did, but by what he was. That may not sound dangerous, but apparently to some it was. And is.

Dangerous or not, I have always recognized that there was something unnerving about Abraham Cronbach. And I know full well what it was.

What was scary about Cronbach was that he took some of the noblest values of Judaism, and he not only preached them, which would have been bad enough. He practiced them.

Even worse, he lived them!

And elicited, thereby, more than one highly critical reaction, response, or evaluation.

Or article.

*Rabbi Maurice Davis
Narragansett, Rhode Island*

Shlomo Shafir replies:

During my continuing research for a monograph on American Jewish attitudes toward postwar Germany at a great many archives in the United States, Israel, and the Federal Republic, I saw a number of letters both at the American Jewish Archives and the American Jewish Historical Society Archives in Waltham, Massachusetts, from which I learned about the unusual viewpoint of Rabbi Dr. Abraham Cronbach, a distinguished HUC teacher, who at the end of World War II advocated clemency for the Nazi criminals, the slayers and tormentors of the Jewish people in Europe.

I know very well that Rabbi Cronbach was more or less a minority of one in favoring forgiveness and clemency, and that his attitude was not at all characteristic of the American Jewish community, although

on such issues as Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau Jr.'s initial recommendations for summary execution of major Nazi criminals or the so-called "pastoralization" of a divided Germany, major differences of opinion emerged among organizations and influential individuals. But I never thought that Cronbach's position being an exception to the rule in matters of clemency for the Nazis should prevent me from describing his attitude and from publishing the rather interesting exchange of letters between him and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise and Henry Monsky as well as between him and Rabbi Eugene Lipman, then a young army chaplain and a former student of his. In another historical situation Lipman became an outspoken opponent of the American involvement in Vietnam, which he and many others regarded as unjust.

My quotations from Rabbi Cronbach's letters never implied that he was soft on Nazis or Nazism, or that "he was afraid to speak out against them," as Rabbi Maurice Davis falsely alluded. For someone like myself, who wore the yellow badge from July 1941 in the ghetto of Kaunas (Kovno), it was interesting to learn from Rabbi Davis's comment about his father-in-law wearing such a badge demonstratively in the streets of Cincinnati.

I fully understand that he opposed punishing the Nazi criminals because of high moral principles and his regard for universal human rights. But I am still convinced that he was totally wrong and that the punishment of at least a part of the major criminals contributed to a positive political development in postwar West Germany. As a survivor of Dachau concentration camp, where I was liberated on April 29, 1945, by the U.S. Army, I of course never had the slightest doubt that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt made the right decision in engaging the United States in war against Adolf Hitler, the greatest enemy of Jews and of all humanity. By the way, I myself belong to the supporters of correct and reasonable relations with the now united Federal Republic of Germany and its people, but without forgetting Nazi crimes or forgiving them.

As for the American Council for Judaism, Rabbi Davis's story about Dr. Cronbach's refusing to leave it because the Zionists had "all the brains" and did not need him will hardly convince anyone. I do not have to elaborate here on the role that the ACJ played in the forties in joining forces with all the hostile elements in the American govern-

ment and establishment in order to prevent the creation of a Jewish state.

Moreover, whereas Rabbi Cronbach was a minority of one with regard to his plea for clemency for the Nazi criminals in 1945, as a lifelong steadfast pacifist and antinational universalist he reflected the views of a larger crowd, and despite changing circumstances the same tradition still has supporters among American Jewry and also other Jewish communities. Both as a Jew and an Israeli, I do not believe that kind of pacifism and universalism, with all its high moral values, is conducive to Jewish survival in our generation and probably also not in future ones.

The American Jewish Archives is pleased to announce the publication of *The Changing Concept of "Mission" in American Reform Judaism* by Professor Allon Gal of the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel. The publication is number X in our "Brochure Series of the American Jewish Archives."

Professor Gal's work examines the concept of mission, which has been a conspicuous characteristic of the American Reform movement's religious ideology for well over a century. Gal tries to answer two basic questions: How persistent has the mission idea been? What changes has it undergone?

The publication is available from the American Jewish Archives, 3101 Clifton Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45220 for \$5.00 and \$1.00 for shipping and handling.

Brief Notices

Bletter, Diana, Interviews, and Lori Ginker, Photographs. *The Invisible Thread: A Portrait of American Jewish Women*. Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1989. 224 pp.

For Jewish men, the sight of a Jewish woman reading from the Torah or holding the holiest of Jewish objects evokes little if any response. This is true in the Reconstructionist, Reform, and, to a lesser degree, Conservative movements.

But that was not always the case, and few men concern themselves with the hurt and frustration of generations of Jewish women who suffered the indignities of a male-crafted and male-controlled religion.

It took Jewish women to articulate their feelings and struggle for their rights as Jews.

And yet, Jewish men still do not as a rule listen. What does it mean to be a Jewish woman in America?

This beautiful volume of statements and photographs introduces an incredible variety of Jewish women in America and gives voice to a wide-ranging and wonderful group of interpretations on the female Jewish experience.

Women who read this volume will perhaps find someone like themselves in it. Men who read this volume will experience the wonder of knowing that Judaism is a many-layered and leveled religious experience, and that there are layers and levels into whose domain Jewish men may not venture.

Susannah Heschel, the daughter of Abraham Joshua Heschel and one of the women featured in this book, is very direct in espousing such a point of view: "I can see things that a man can't because I'm included and excluded at the same time. Having been born a woman gives me insight, and an understanding of Judaism that no one has."

Jewish men may find such directness intimidating but they cannot ignore it.

Elkin, Judith Laikin and Ana Lya Sater, Compiled by. *Latin American Jewish Studies: An Annotated Guide to the Literature*. Westport, Conn. Greenwood Press, 1990. xxiv, 239 pp.

In a little more than a decade, the Latin American Jewish Studies Association, founded at the American Jewish Archives, has become the major clearing house and scholars network on the Latin American Jewish experience.

This was not always the case. Professor Judith Elkin, the driving force behind the LAJSA during the years of its existence, found great obstacles in her quest to do a scholarly dissertation on the subject. Fortunately, she was not deterred and her research led to the publication of *Jews of the Latin American Republics*, still the best overview in print.

Now Elkin along with Ana Lya Sater, a serials librarian specializing in Latin America, have produced the essential guide to the most important scholarship in the field as well as to the important Latin American Jewish serial publications found in American libraries.

There are nearly 800 annotated entries in the section on monographs, articles and dissertations and over 200 publications published in over a dozen Latin American nations.

We are grateful for Judith Laikin Elkin's persistence and to Ana Lya Sater's research skills. Together they have created one of the essential scholarly tools of an established discipline.

Singer, David, Edited by. *American Jewish Yearbook (Volume 91)*. New York and Philadelphia: American Jewish Committee and Jewish Publication Society, 1991. xi, 636 pp.

The 1991 edition of the *American Jewish Yearbook* is devoted to three important themes in the American Jewish experience. Arnold Eisen discusses "Jewish Theology in North America: Notes on Two Decades"; Sylvia Barack Fishman writes on "American Jewish Fiction Turns Inward, 1960-1990"; and Ruth R. Seldin describes "American Jewish Museums: Trends and Issues." There are also very moving obituaries on the great historian Salo W. Baron by Lloyd P. Gartner and on John Slawson, the long-time executive vice-president of the American Jewish Committee, by Murray Friedman.

Cohen, David, Edited by. *The Jews in America*. San Francisco: Collins Publishers, 1989. 223 pp.

We have had a number of books over the past five or six years which chronicled a day in the life of a nation. America has been featured, as have the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.

Now a new "day in the life" volume has appeared, photographed by the same team which did America and China and published by the same house that published the other volumes.

But this book is not about a country of 500 million, or 300 million or even 10 million. It is a book about a group of individuals who number less than six million and live within a nation of varying ethnic and religious groups.

Why the Jews and not the Irish or the Italians or the African-Americans? Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that of all the ethnic groups in this nation only the Jews claim to be a religion and a people, so in a sense qualifying for nationhood.

Or perhaps it is because the image of the Jew in America is one of wealth and success, a group that will be able to afford the nearly \$50 cost of this volume.

Whatever the reason, this is a beautifully done book that shows the generally healthy face of a small but diverse community at the end of the twentieth century. It is one day in the life of American Jewry but there have been many days in that life, and they, too, need to be a part of the historical record.

Dicker, Herman, Edited and Annotated by. *The Mayer Sulzberger, Alexander Marx Correspondence, 1904-1923*. New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1990. ix, 206 pp.

The library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America is universally regarded as one of the few "world-class" Judaica libraries in existence.

Yet such an exalted position was not always a part of the library's history. Perhaps it did not start out quite as small as the library of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, whose books in the early years of its existence were kept in a shoe box, not to guard against theft but against mice.

But it was not until Professor Alexander Marx, a student of the legendary bibliographer Moritz Steinschneider, arrived at the Seminary to become professor of history and librarian that the library began its climb toward world-class status.

It was fortunate for Marx that he made the acquaintance of Judge Mayer Sulzberger of Philadelphia, one of American Jewry's great leaders of the early twentieth century and an architect of the modern Seminary. Judge Sulzberger, too, was a bibliophile and a collector of rare books and manuscripts. Together both men shaped an institution that would reflect their own genius.

The nearly three hundred letters of extant correspondence between the two men reflect a world of books and book collections that tell us much about the creation of a great American Jewish landmark.

Gordis, David M. and Yoav Ben-Horin, Edited by. *Jewish Identity in America*. Los Angeles: University of Judaism, 1991. xv, 296 pp.

In 1989, the Susan and David Wilstein Institute of Jewish Policy Studies, which is housed at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles, decided to test the waters of American Jewish identity. They assembled the "best and the brightest" of those social scientists who study American Jewish life and asked them to assess the state of that identity.

Such an assessment was necessary, especially in light of Professor Seymour Martin Lipset's observation that "as we approach the beginning of the twenty-first century of the common era the Jewish community in the United States is probably the least committed, the least involved, it has ever been in Jewish religious belief, practice, and ritual."

Attempting to understand why this should be so and what the future of the community will be was the task of such notable scholars as Bruce Phillips, Steven M. Cohen, Henry Feingold, Jonathan Sarna, David Ellenson, Harold Schulweis, Alan L. Berger, Deborah E. Lipstadt, and Marshall Sklare.

Karp, Abraham J. *From the Ends of the Earth: Judaic Treasures of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.*: Library of Congress, 1991. xxiv, 376 pp.

For the better part of this century, the Library of Congress has been one of the great world repositories of Judaica.

In 1986, the American Jewish Archives published the first comprehensive guide to Jewish manuscripts in the Library (Gary J. Kohn, compiler. *The Jewish Experience: A Guide to Manuscript Sources in the Library of Congress*).

Now, on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Hebrew collections of the Library of Congress, that august institution has mounted a major exhibit of its holdings and published this beautiful catalogue to accompany it.

The Library was indeed fortunate to acquire the services of Abraham J. Karp, one of the most important historians of the American Jewish experience and himself an internationally-recognized collector of American Judaica.

In the narrative which accompanies the beautiful illustrations from the Library's Judaica collection, Professor Karp has written a truly masterful and wide-ranging essay which provides ample evidence of his erudition and his gifted narrative style.

Koenig, Samuel. *An American Jewish Community, 50 Years, 1889-1939: The Sociology of the Jewish Community in Stamford, Connecticut*. Stamford: Stamford Jewish Historical Society, 1991. xxv, 175 pp.

Over 50 years since it was completed, this study of a small New England Jewish community during the Depression years has finally been published.

Samuel Koenig was for many years a professor of sociology at Brooklyn College. But for a number of years before that he had directed sociology studies for the Connecticut Federal Writers Project, one of the many outstanding projects formed as part of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Works Projects Administration (WPA), a New Deal agency created to help America's great Depression-era unemployment.

Much gratitude must be given to the Stamford Jewish Historical Society for its persistence in seeing Professor Koenig's manuscript through to publication. Although, of course, historians of today might ask some different questions and interpret their data differently, Koenig's work does represent one of the earliest efforts to chronicle the history of an American Jewish community at a time when both America and American Jewry were very different.

Perlman, Robert. *Bridging Three Worlds: Hungarian-Jewish Americans, 1848–1914*. Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991. 302 pp.

This is not a book for those who tend to divide the American Jewish community of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries into “German” and “East European” Jews.

Indeed, an important part of Robert Perlman’s book is devoted to proving categorically that the “invisible” Jews of Hungary, 100,000 of whom emigrated to the United States in the years after the failed revolutions of 1848 until the eve of the First World War, never fit neatly into either category.

Indeed, what Robert Perlman forces us to realize is that this categorization of the “Bayer” and the “Polack” (in the memorable description of Rudolf Glanz) was just as erroneous as trying to describe a single entity known as Hungarian Jewry.

When one compounds this with the fact that Perlman suggests at least three co-equal identities for these immigrants, well then, one is not certain anymore whether this is not also a book on statistics.

Yet, quite seriously, this is an important book, even though it deals with a minor group in the larger scheme of East European Jewish immigration to America. Perlman makes a strong case for the necessity of carefully understanding the world of pre-1900 East Central Europe before attempting to assess the kinds of cultural baggage brought over by the various Jewish immigrant communities and especially their relationship to the host countries from which they came. This must be understood in its linguistic, regional and religious senses.

Fortunately, Perlman does not dispute the final aspect of the Hungarian-Jewish journey to and in America: Hungarian Jews are today American Jews and co-exist easily in both worlds despite the inherent tensions that are a part of even this identity.

Urofsky, Melvin I. and David W. Levy, Edited by. *“Half Brother, Half Son”: The Letters of Louis D. Brandeis to Felix Frankfurter*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991. 659 pp.

If such a thing as “the Jewish seat” on the Supreme Court ever existed, it was due in great part to the extraordinary talent and achievements of Louis D. Brandeis and Felix Frankfurter.

Indeed, the power wielded by both men in their respective periods on the Supreme Court belies the continuing argument about the total “powerlessness” of the American Jewish community in the years before 1939.

The two editors, who also previously published five volumes of the letters of Brandeis, claim that because of these letters “it should now be possible for historians to trace back to these two men a host of congressional and judicial initiatives, political appointments in all branches of the federal government, developments in Zionist politics and Palestine policy, the hiring of particular personnel by leading American law schools, and even some specific laws and social programs.”

If one adds to this the lingering controversy over a 1982 book (*The Brandeis/Frankfurter Connection: The Secret Political Activities of Two Supreme Court Justices* by Bruce Allen Murphy) which concluded that the extrajudicial activities of both men were at best unethical, then the 671 letters written by Brandeis to Frankfurter in the years 1910 to 1941 are a welcome and important addition to the scholarly sources available for our understanding of these two legal giants of American Jewish life and history.