

BOOK REVIEWS

C.S. Monaco, *Moses Levy of Florida: Jewish Utopian and Antebellum Reformer* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), xi + 240 pp. Illus.

If David McCullough decided to write about Moses Levy, Levy would instantly be ranked as one of the most incredible figures of the nineteenth century. His life might make a novel except for the fact that, while many things are too strange to be believed, nothing is too strange to have happened. Born in Morocco in 1780, Levy also lived in Gibraltar, the Danish West Indies, Puerto Rico, Cuba, England, Florida (both Spanish and American), and various places in the United States. He was more than the reformer and utopian mentioned in the book's title; he was a merchant, arms dealer, land speculator, and major figure in the transatlantic Jewish community, whose role in trade far exceeded the relatively small number of families involved.

And I doubt McCullough could have done a better job at telling Levy's story than C.S. Monaco has. The cover blurb informs us that Monaco is obtaining a doctorate from the University of London. Given the quality of this book, he should be awarded it at once. Archival research in several countries; knowledge of several bodies of scholarship, including the histories of North Africa, the Danish West Indies, and the Spanish empire, as well as the diplomacy that connected them; nineteenth-century American reform; and Judaism have all informed his work. Not only does he bring Levy to life with his lively prose, but he also provides enough contexts that will enable readers to understand what Levy tells us about his world.

A court Jew who handled trade and finances for the Sultan of Morocco, Levy's father was an exceptionally nasty man who, despite the prejudice from which all Jews suffered in that country, became wealthy, in part by arranging for the execution of his major competitor. When a virulently anti-Semitic sultan ascended the throne in 1790, the elder Levy managed to escape to Gibraltar, along with enough money to set up his son in trade with the Danish West Indies. Moving his operations to Puerto Rico and Cuba, Moses Levy became friends with important Spanish officials. He grew to be an important arms dealer and supplied the troops trying to put down Bolivar's revolution in Spanish America.

Levy prospered in his twenties and thirties, during which time Spain opened its colonies to foreign trade. His main misfortune was an unhappy marriage that produced four children and led to a separation. Levy educated his two sons and two daughters at private schools in England and the United States, but he rarely saw them, and when he did their relations were poor. Son David changed his last name to Yulee (a modification of his father's Arabic surname), entered Democratic politics in Florida in the 1840s, and became the first Jewish U.S.

senator. Unlike his father, Yulee took little interest in the Jewish community; disinherited by Levy and forced to sue to collect an inheritance, Yulee assembled documents and wrote a disparaging account of his father's life that he termed a "diary." Until Monaco's painstaking research, historians generally accepted Yulee's account.

As a Jew, Levy fell between Orthodox Jews trying to retain their distinctiveness and reformers, such as those led by Isaac Harby of Charleston, South Carolina, who founded America's first Reform congregation in 1824. Levy believed Jews should not assimilate to the well-disposed societies of England and the United States, as that would threaten their survival; he looked forward to the eventual creation of a Jewish homeland to prevent this. At the same time, he rejected the Talmud and rabbinic authority in favor of ideas of the Enlightenment. Because his philosophy did not fall neatly into either camp, Levy's activities remained marginal and have been neglected historically.

By the time he was forty, Levy had committed his life and considerable fortune to improving the lot of the Jews in particular and humankind in general. In 1821, he founded the first nationwide Jewish philanthropic society in the United States. Its mission was twofold: first, to organize schools that would implement his own distinctive variety of Judaism, and second, to create a utopian community similar to the one envisioned by Mordecai Manuel Noah. While Noah's Ararat, in the vicinity of Niagara Falls, never got off of the ground—he promoted it with a comic theatricality that nearly wrecked his reputation as one of America's leading Jews—Levy's Pilgrimage, founded in 1823, was, temporarily, successful. Located in north-central Florida in a far more congenial clime, it fared well for twelve years as a sugar-producing community until it was destroyed in the Second Seminole War in 1837.

After launching Pilgrimage, the first Jewish communitarian settlement in the United States, Levy wrote *Plan for the Abolition of Slavery*, which was published anonymously in London in 1828 and was the first major abolitionist work produced by an American Jew. (Levy's authorship remained unknown until 1999, when Monaco edited and published it in *The American Jewish Archives Journal*.) Levy envisioned a multiracial society where farmers lived simply and raised their children communally in accordance with his "law of operating and being operated upon"—that is, reciprocal helpfulness. While nothing came of this social vision when Britain abolished slavery in 1834, Levy contributed to the abolition movement by becoming an important lecturer during his sojourn in England in the 1820s.

No portrait of Levy survives; he shunned publicity throughout his life. One reason is that he preferred working behind the scenes so as not to let personal issues interfere with his schemes. Another is his ideas were too idiosyncratic to attract much support. While his wealth gave him entrée to the best societies, both Jewish and gentile, his ideas only mattered in the long run when they

coincided with mainstream abolitionists. Still, we should beware of assuming that the abolishment of slavery was inevitable: Levy was one of many whose vision of a better world contributed to the excitement and humanitarian fervor of the age. Monaco's sympathetic but not uncritical biography captures this excitement and, with it, Levy's own amazing story.

William Pencak, Professor of History at the Pennsylvania State University, is the author of Jews and Gentiles in Early America: 1654–1800.

Donald Weber, *Haunted in the New World: Jewish American Culture from Cahan to The Goldbergs* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), 250 pp.

Donald Weber's *Haunted in the New World* invokes familiar cultural signposts on the American Jewish journey from striving immigrant to native son. This multigenerational struggle has been a consuming preoccupation of the great works of the Anglo-American Jewish canon through the mid-twentieth century—among them Abraham Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky*, Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*, Anzia Yezierska's *Bread Givers*, and Saul Bellow's *Seize the Day*—as critics and scholars such as Leslie Fiedler, Irving Howe, and Ruth Wisse have shown. Weber, a professor of English at Mount Holyoke College, does not limit his tour of American Jewish culture to the celebrated achievements of a literary elite, however. His exploration of the American Jewish imagination encompasses popular culture, too—or, more precisely, artfully crafted output from the new mass media of film, radio, and television, such as *The Jazz Singer* and *The Goldbergs*, which American Jews embraced as reflections (or at least refractions) of their everyday struggles and successes.

Weber devotes much of the book to close readings of his chosen works, but he is also interested in providing the historical context for his canon, whether through assessments of contemporaneous cultural criticism, analyses of literary and celebrity personae, or his own recollections of growing up in the warm glow of Milton Berle's televised comedic shticks in the 1950s. Thus, for example, Weber situates *The Rise of David Levinsky's* thematic interplay of money and manners in the immigrant journey toward civility against the backdrop of both Henry James's fiction and Randolph Bourne's social criticism. For Weber, James's and Bourne's opposite takes, negative and positive, on the immigrant influx in turn-of-the-century America illuminate Cahan's literary preoccupation with the immigrant as self-made outcast, severing Old World roots in favor of tenuous New World respectability. While perhaps not as startling a juxtaposition as Weber purports—Cahan was, after all, a colleague of the eminent Anglo-American writer-editors Lincoln Steffens and William Dean Howells, in addition to serving as dean of Yiddish life and letters as editor of the daily *Forward*—his comparison of Cahan with James broadens the subject

from an exploration of “Jewish immigrant fiction” alone to a consideration of the reverberations of the immigrant presence in elite American culture.

Likewise, his chapter on “The Goldbergs” combines extensive analysis of the language, rhetoric, and recurring motifs of Gertrude Berg’s wildly popular radio and then television program with a discussion of the show’s history and audience. Setting aside the highbrow American literary scene for the simpler pleasures of Berg’s middle-class domestic confections, Weber evaluates the program as an expert reworking of the ethnic stereotyping prevalent in Depression-era popular culture in light of the universalizing agenda of postwar entertainment. Whether aspiring to the Anglo-American artistic pantheon or pitching to the Yiddish-inflected American living room—or both—Weber’s cast of dexterous writers and show-biz geniuses were men and women of their times, informed by the same humiliations and triumphs as their American Jewish brothers and sisters, neighbors and friends.

Rather than simply providing a catalogue of greatest hits, however, Weber is interested in uncovering the sensibilities that produced the works in question. His aim is to tease out the fundamental emotional patterns at work in the American Jewish psyche by mining exemplary cultural artifacts—texts, films, performances—of the first half of the twentieth century. Weber is after a “social-psychological core of affects” (158) that characterized American Jewish identity throughout the period under consideration. Surveying the affective landscape of American Jewish culture, Weber pinpoints a discourse on the travails of Americanization that, he argues, has shaped and been shaped by American Jewish collective memory.

Nowhere is this clearer than in Weber’s exploration of food and eating as a psychologically fraught, symbolically resonant theme in many of these works. Weber shows that the seemingly pedestrian ritual of eating has served again and again to magnify the anxieties and pleasures of acculturation and the ambiguous lure of the past. Thus, meals set in the supposedly neutral territory of the gentile restaurant are often scenes of acute anxiety—Weber dubs this the “David Levinsky syndrome”—in which “the self-monitoring... of voice and gesture signif[y] the shame and self-hatred that comes with the territory of alienation” (107). Eating with elegant manners (or at least inconspicuously) among gentiles is, Weber shows, the sine qua non of “passing” in *The Rise of David Levinsky*, *Bread Givers*, and Henry Roth’s *A Diving Rock on the Hudson*. Eating can also be an instance of transgressive pleasure, however; Jack Robin’s eating ham and eggs lustily at Coffee Dan’s in *The Jazz Singer* signifies for Weber the democratic ethos of the show business world, which takes its cues from the street, not the salon, and certainly not from Jewish tradition. For little David Shearl in *Call It Sleep*, fixating on the borscht, sour cream, and strudel of his mother’s kitchen serves a different function: It is a source of comfort, allaying the panic of being lost in the big city. For Molly Goldberg, meanwhile,

a gift of gefilte fish and (tsimmes to the gentile neighbors confirms her status as a loving suburban mother, her cooking an exemplar of a domesticated postwar ethnicity.)

Whatever their medium of expression, the works and personalities treated here all share the same basic ambition: to conjure the spectacle of assimilation for an audience that ultimately viewed Americanization as a happy ending. That this is a book about Anglo-American Jewish culture ultimately precludes a discussion of true dissent from the drama of acculturation to American norms; writers of Hebrew and Yiddish literature in America were, on the whole, both less disdainful of the Old World and more darkly suspicious of the New than their English-language counterparts, as the works of Shimon Halkin, Reuven Wallenrod, Borukh Glazman, and Moshe Leib Halpern attest.¹ However ambiguous their feelings about the process of Americanization, the Anglo-American writers and artists in *Haunted in the New World* were making sense of “making it.” For them, America may have been haunted, but it was home.

Emily Alice Katz is a doctoral student in modern Jewish studies at the Graduate School of the Jewish Theological Seminary. She is writing her dissertation on Israel in American Jewish culture in the middle decades of the twentieth century.

Notes

¹For more on American Hebrew writers and the theme of Americanization see Ezra Spicehandler, “*Amerika’iyut* in American Hebrew Literature,” in *Hebrew in America: Perspectives and Prospects*, ed. Alan Mintz (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 68–102. On the subject of the alienation of immigrant Yiddish writers from the American scene, see, for example, the chapter “Allure of the Red-Haired Bride” in Ruth R. Wisse, *A Little Love in Big Manhattan: Two Yiddish Poets* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1988).

Lee Shai Weissbach, *Jewish Life in Small-Town America: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 436 pp.

University of Louisville professor Lee Shai Weissbach’s *Jewish Life in Small-Town America: A History*, a tremendous scholarly undertaking, represents more than fifteen years of research on the part of the author. The sheer volume of material that Weissbach has collected and analyzed boggles the imagination; he has perused seemingly innumerable census records, narratives, interviews, and manuscripts. His lucid prose makes for a volume that is both readable and difficult to put down. All in all, one will find *Jewish Life in Small-Town America* a magisterial work.

Weissbach begins by describing the methodology he has employed to complete the volume. To his credit, he admits that such an undertaking presents challenges. These include the problem of defining “small-town” Jewish communities; the author bases his study on 490 localities where the Jewish population in 1927 exceeded one hundred but not one thousand inhabitants, thus giving rise to his “triple digit” community designation. There is also the

challenge of using statistical records from sources whose accuracy, because of contradictory numbers and/or omissions, may be compromised, including the 1854 *Jewish Calendar for 50 Years*; the 1880 *Statistics of the Jews of the United States*; the *American Jewish Yearbook*; and the *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*. While enumerating the limitations of these compilations, however, Weissbach does acknowledge that “the aggregate data they assembled are tremendously useful” (23).

Chapter two, “Patterns of Settlement: The Early Years,” recounts a saga that is familiar to virtually all students of Jewish history: Jews had engaged in trade in Europe, and they continued as peddlers and later merchants in the American commercial centers. In chapter three, “Patterns of Settlement: The Era of Mass Migration,” Weissbach attributes the rise of most triple digit communities to the influx of east European Jews (53). Of particular note to the author is the Industrial Removal Office (founded in 1901), which sought to transport Jews away from the East Coast; one of its patrons, shipping magnate Jacob Schiff, established a colony in Galveston, Texas, for this purpose (65–66).

Chapter four, “Patterns of Stability and Mobility,” illustrates that there was no clear-cut tendency for Jews to either stay situated in or move from small towns. The Sam Stein family, of Greenville, Mississippi, demonstrated stability; they inaugurated the retail giant Stein Mart and maintained the enterprise’s headquarters in Greenville until 1984 (74). Economic opportunities would lead some notables such as Julius Rosenwald and the Gimbel brothers to leave small towns in the Midwest for the more profitable climes of Chicago and New York, respectively (79–80). Jewish celebrities with small-town roots who followed a similar pattern included author Edna Ferber and magician Harry Houdini (both of Appleton, Wisconsin), film magnate Jack Warner (New Castle, Pennsylvania), financier Bernard Baruch (Camden, South Carolina), economist Milton Friedman (Rahway, New Jersey), and trumpeter Harry James (Albany, Georgia) (80–81). In addition to limited economic opportunities, the lack of kosher foods, poor quality religious education, and small-town conservatism also contributed to out migration (90–92).

Chapter five is titled “Patterns of Livelihood and Class.” Of note here is that in small towns there rarely existed a Jewish component of industrial laborers, cigarette rollers in Durham, North Carolina, being one exception (117). By virtue of being merchants, Jews, whether of German or eastern European extraction, could move into the middle class (95). In addition to mercantile trade, Jews were involved in entertainment, livestock, cotton sales, distilleries, textile manufacture, scrap metal, and resorts (104–112).

In chapter six, “Patterns of Family Life,” Weissbach emphasizes that Jews were family people and tended to embrace education to a higher degree than their gentile counterparts (127–38). Also relating to family life is his assertion that because of the paucity of potential Jewish mates, (a) intermarriage with

Christians occurred, particularly in the South, and (b) those who wished to marry within the faith frequently went to large cities to find mates. The author describes a kind of “pipeline” that existed between Wilmington, North Carolina, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for this purpose (143–146).

Chapter seven addresses “Patterns of Congregational Organization.” The religiosity that characterized small-town America was reflected in the fact that in 1927, 89 percent of the triple digit communities supported a synagogue, 18 percent of the communities had two congregations, and 2 percent of the communities had three (165). As in the large cities, the Germans identified with the Reform congregations and the eastern Europeans, at least initially, with the Orthodox *shuls*. Within the ranks of the Orthodox, there were sometimes divisions along ethnic lines (171).

In chapter eight, “Patterns of Synagogue History,” Weissbach states that Romanesque, Moorish, and Neoclassical, rather than Gothic, architecture characterized the more elaborate temple and *shul* buildings, while other congregations actually occupied vacated churches or, in the case of North Adams, Massachusetts, a “former theater” (181–184). Notably, the author pronounces that small-town congregations, though in some cases Orthodox, frequently gravitated to Reform as the pressure to conform and to be accepted by non-Jews proved substantial (188–197).

Chapter nine discusses “Patterns of Religious Leadership.” Weissbach describes that rabbis in small towns were expected to serve as “ambassadors” to the gentile community and therefore to affiliate with civic organizations (199). These expectations, along with limited opportunities, deterred many rabbis from coming to small towns; and despite the recruitment efforts of institutions such as the Reform Hebrew Union College (215), in 1919 only “one in five” of the triple digit communities employed a resident rabbi (207). Some small congregations actually conducted Sunday services in order to obtain a rabbi who would be otherwise engaged on Saturday, while in other instances, lay leaders and *shochets* (ritual slaughterers) might take up the role of congregational leader (216–218).

Chapters ten and eleven address the respective cultures of the German and eastern European Jews in small towns. According to Weissbach, the similarities outweigh the differences, but he does make some marked distinctions. German Jews, overwhelmingly Reform, were less likely to keep kosher and more likely to conform to the mores of their Christian neighbors. German Jews possessed a lesser affinity for Zionism than their eastern European counterparts (253, 261). Eastern Europeans continued to speak Yiddish long after they had settled in small towns, and some even taught their Christian neighbors the language (268).

Chapter twelve discusses “Patterns of Prejudice and Transformation.” While it has generally been assumed that small towns embraced anti-Semitism to a lesser degree than in metropolitan areas, Weissbach leaves no doubt that there

were examples of prejudice to be found. He notes that particularly in the South, Jews were regarded as the “people of the Bible” (273). In the Slavic enclaves of Pennsylvania and West Virginia, however, the mistrust existing between Jews and non-Jews in the old country sometimes carried over to the new (274). Some of Weissbach’s subjects remembered childhood ostracism, exclusively gentile country clubs, and “restricted neighborhoods” (276–277).

Weissbach concludes his work with an epilogue in which he demonstrates that World War II and the immediate postwar period marked the apogee of small-town Jewish life. A synagogue building boom following the war did allow some of the small-town congregations to prosper for a short while, but several factors would soon contribute to their demise. The children of “Main Street” merchants, having broadened their horizons through higher education and/or military service, frequently entered the professions and moved to large cities. Shopping malls undermined central business districts. Some small towns “suburbanized,” and their Jewish communities, while increasing in size, lost their identities to metropolitan “conglomerates” (300–307). There were exceptions; the burgeoning textile centers of Dalton, Georgia, and Spartanburg, South Carolina, actually increased the size of their Jewish populations during the postwar period (309). However, such triple digit communities would not consist of merchants, but rather college-educated professionals.

As an addendum, Weissbach discusses the method by which he examined census records to determine which residents of a town were Jewish. During the process he studied first and last names, places of birth, language, and relatives. Despite his own admitted limitations in employing these criteria, the author is to be congratulated on his meticulous and painstaking research. An exhaustive bibliographic essay and copious footnotes also contribute to making this opus, as stated on the book jacket by Yale University historian Jonathan Sarna, “the most thoroughly researched of all books on small Jewish communities.”

Jewish Life in Small-Town America contains few, if any, weaknesses. Weissbach’s statement that “settlements of fewer than 100 Jews were unlikely to have attained the critical mass necessary to constitute full-fledged communities” (29) might be contested by residents of towns where, despite the paucity of Jews, synagogues were constructed and in some cases still exist. The author also refers to Greensboro, North Carolina, as a “small town” (108), illustrating the challenge of whether to designate a municipality as a small town based on the number of Jewish residents or the entire population. There are, of course, notable small-town Jews in addition to the ones that Weissbach includes: North Carolina circuit rider Harold Friedman and Asheville rabbi Sidney Unger are two who come to mind. But then, this work constitutes a history of Jews in small-town *America*, not merely North Carolina.

Pedantic criticisms aside, *Jewish Life in Small-Town America* is an outstanding work, and the reviewer cannot bestow enough accolades on Lee Shai Weissbach for his monumental achievement.

James I. Martin Sr. is Associate Professor of History and is Chair of the Department of Government, History, and Justice at Campbell University in Buies Creek, North Carolina. He is writing a book on small-town Jews in North Carolina and has made extensive use of the Sidney Unger Papers at the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati.

Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin, *American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 721 pp.

Without Jews, the United States could not have inaugurated the atomic age.

The Manhattan Project had its origins in a 1939 letter that Albert Einstein sent to the White House at the urging of Leo Szilard, Eugene Wigner, and Edward Teller, three Hungarian refugee physicists who feared the Nazi acquisition of a nuclear bomb. An exceptional group of scientists—ranging from refugees such as John Von Neumann to native-born geniuses such as Richard Feynman—built the weapon at Los Alamos. After V-J Day, the challenge that confronted American statecraft was to reconcile the horror of nuclear warfare with the deterrence that the bomb seemed to provide, to achieve greater security—even though this weapon had made humanity far more insecure. In 1946, financier Bernard Baruch proposed to the United Nations a system of international control and inspection, but the arms race continued. To manage the growing American arsenal, David Lilienthal chaired the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) the following year. Also in 1947, Polish-born Hyman Rickover took charge of the nuclear reactor program of the U.S. Navy. Teller became the key physicist in the construction of a thermonuclear bomb, first detonated in 1952, a year before financier Lewis Strauss was appointed chair of the AEC. Jews such as Bernard Brodie, Henry Kissinger, and Herman Kahn became among the boldest analysts of nuclear deterrence, imagining how to risk warfare without crossing the trip-wire that would result in catastrophe.

No one, however, was more intimately associated with the terrible ambiguities of the atomic age than J. Robert Oppenheimer. Summoned at the age of thirty-eight to become scientific director of the Manhattan Project, he proved indispensable to the actualization of a weapon that could demolish an entire city. His brilliance was a given; but his charisma also enabled him to organize and inspire a team of titanic egos, enlisted to solve the technological impediments and to invent a weapon so awesome that its flash could have been seen from the moon. In the postwar era, however, Oppenheimer sought to decelerate the frantic arms race with the Soviet Union and to lift the veil of secrecy that was foreclosing public debate over the centrality of nuclear weaponry to national

defense. A seer as well as a savant, he yearned to alert humanity to the radical vulnerability for which he—as much as anyone—was accountable.

He failed. But even before his death in 1967 at the age of sixty-three, Oppenheimer's sensitive and enigmatic persona had become emblematic of the perversion of scientific curiosity; he symbolized the grandeur of the Faustian quest for knowledge that had gone horribly awry. Having enhanced scientific genius with a touch of the poet, Oppenheimer has haunted the imagination of historians as well. But among all of the books devoted to him, this biography deserves special attention; *American Prometheus* is likely to endure as the fullest and richest account of his extraordinary life.

Thanks to a childhood redolent of “our crowd,” Oppenheimer got off to a good start. His German-born father was rich, his mother was cultivated, and they lavished love upon their two sons. (Frank was eight years younger and would also become a physicist who worked on the Manhattan Project.) The family taste was exquisite; three of the paintings hanging in the New York City living room were by an obscure Dutchman named Van Gogh. Religion was reduced to ethical concern and excluded tribalism, ceremony, or faith, so that Judaism was displaced by Ethical Culture. Robert developed a precocious interest in science, but his versatility and erudition were formidable. He also became polyglot. The last language that he learned was Sanskrit, which is why, on 16 July 1945, when the first atomic bomb was exploded in the New Mexico desert, he remembered the *Bhagavad-Gita* and recited Sri Krishna's line about becoming “death, the destroyer of worlds.”

It was at Harvard that Oppenheimer's fierce love of physics was affirmed. His undergraduate years coincided with the efforts of leading Ivy League institutions to reduce the rising enrollment of talented Jewish applicants by imposing quotas; the admissions battle occurred within a wider political context that was contaminated with hostility to aliens and immigrants. Anti-Semitism was evident virtually everywhere, from the halls of Congress to the houses of Harvard College; and Oppenheimer's own loneliness and estrangement undoubtedly reinforced his pursuit of the abstract and distant mysteries of the physical universe. After completing a doctorate at Göttingen in 1927, he accepted offers to teach physics both at Berkeley and at Caltech; and in both institutions Oppenheimer turned the United States into an important site for the study of theoretical physics. Had he done nothing else with his life, his place in the history of American science would therefore be secure.

In the 1930s the Great Depression at home and the rise of Fascism in Europe politicized Oppenheimer. Bird and Sherwin attribute his pronounced progressive views to a reactivation of the ideals that Ethical Culture had inculcated. He contributed to Communist causes and was very close to Party members, including his fiancée and a second woman who became his wife, as well as his brother and his sister-in-law. Oppenheimer enjoyed associations

with other Communists as well. But *American Prometheus* is no better than the FBI was half a century ago in nailing down conclusive evidence of his own party affiliation. His leftist inclinations, combined with postwar opposition to the escalation of the arms race and to the construction of the hydrogen bomb, did, however, make Oppenheimer anathema to the U.S. Air Force. During the Cold War civilians such as Senator Joseph R. McCarthy were also insisting upon more exacting, less subtle standards of loyalty than had been imposed during World War II.

The result was appalling. In 1954, under the auspices of the AEC, an inquiry into Oppenheimer's career humiliated him by stripping him of his security clearance a mere day before it was to have expired anyway. No breach of security in his past was ever discovered, which did not prevent one of three members of the AEC security review board from privately musing that "almost without exception those who turned up with subversive backgrounds and interests were Jewish." The hearing was blatantly unfair. The AEC gave the prosecutor a security clearance that was denied to Oppenheimer's own attorney, whose conversations with his crushed and embittered client were bugged. Bird and Sherwin blame the personal and political enmity of Strauss, a devious operator who was ruthless in exploiting Cold War anxieties.

Oppenheimer's spirits never fully recovered from the ordeal, although he never spent a millisecond in prison. He remained the director of Princeton's ethereal Institute for Advanced Study, and four years before his death he accepted the Enrico Fermi Prize for distinguished service in atomic energy in a ceremony at the White House.

Politics had made Oppenheimer a victim, but he was no martyr, nor is it proper to elevate him into a hero. Though Japan was certain to surrender anyway, Oppenheimer did nothing to interfere with the wanton destruction of civilian life in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which he had known in advance were to be targeted. Also, he had informed on others in the 1940s and was thus implicated in the very system of suspicion that would without justification cut him down in 1954. Perhaps because of his own earlier complicity, he shriveled when his AEC accusers confronted him and failed to assert his democratic right to criticize the foreign policy and defense strategy of the very government that he had so indispensably served. In an era in which patriotism was so narrowly defined and a Jewish intellectual harboring progressive views was bound to have his allegiance impugned, the boundaries that determined respectable opinion had narrowed, and Oppenheimer was thrown badly on the defensive. What he should have done, the novelist André Malraux conjectured, was to refuse to cooperate with his inquisitors and to defy them by proclaiming: "*Je suis la bombe atomique!*"

Stephen Whitfield is professor of American Studies at Brandeis University.

Michelle M. Terrell, *The Jewish Community of Early Colonial Nevis: A Historical Archaeological Study* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), xiv + 183 pp. Illus.

The recent academic shift in interest toward studies of ethnicity and intercultural activity has created a renaissance in Caribbean Jewish studies. While Franklin Krohn noted in 1993 that the lack of available materials might pose trouble for conventional historical approaches to Jewish Caribbean study, works by Frances Karner, Carol Holzberg, Alan Benjamin, Thomas August, Robert Cohen, Eli Faber, Aviva Ben-Ur, and myself have brought new perspectives to Caribbean life by asking different and wider-ranging questions. Going beyond the genealogical or celebratory tone of earlier Caribbean Jewish accounts, these new studies consistently situate Jews into the broader context of Caribbean and colonial life, attempting to explore their lives in a manner that might shed light on broader questions of religious identity and cultural interaction.

Within this context, Michelle Terrell's book proves a welcome addition, though with caveats. Terrell brings her considerable knowledge and skill in historical archaeology to the conversation, offering through painstaking research a unique and illuminating perspective on Caribbean Jewish history and historiography. Yet, perhaps to make the archaeological study fill a book-length format, Terrell couches her work in a questionable and somewhat awkward historical context that clouds an otherwise stellar excavation.

Terrell begins her book with an intrigue: In 1957, as part of a cruise exploring various sites of Caribbean Jewish heritage, Malcolm and Louise Stern set foot on the tiny island of Nevis. Shortly before viewing the remains of the island's Jewish cemetery, the Sterns' guide pointed out a small ruin in town that local residents called the "Jews' School." Malcolm Stern immediately interpreted this description to mean the building had been the island's synagogue; and so the assumed designation would remain until Terrell began her excavation of the site in the early 1990s.

Terrell's story represents a colorful reassessment of the Sterns' experience and offers a respectful but necessary challenge to the local account. After two years of excavation on the sites of the cemetery and the Jews' School, in conjunction with diligent research in the local archives and the recorder of deeds office, she convincingly determined the ruin to be not the synagogue, but the cistern of a house occupied by relatively affluent residents throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For Terrell, however, the excavation did not end the story. Via archival records, she reconstructed a partial map of the island's seventeenth-century Jewish-owned properties and, using comments from the time, eventually (and compellingly) relocated the synagogue's original site to the plot currently housing the town's police station. Her additional work offered more than just clarity on the site itself; it commented on the intersection of folklore and archaeology, adeptly showing how investigations such as hers can

deepen our understanding of Jewish life in the Caribbean. Terrell's work at both the Jews' School and Jewish cemetery sites ultimately revealed a thriving seventeenth-century Jewish population on Nevis, with numbers she claims could compare to those of contemporary Jewish communities in Jamaica or Barbados (155). At the same time, it offered a clear-eyed portrait of the Jewish community's physical presence on Nevis, which would have remained relatively obscure from historical references alone.

Had Terrell limited herself to the Nevis Jews' School and cemetery projects, she would have produced a sterling and significant, though brief, piece of scholarship. Her somewhat ill-advised decision to broaden the work to take on Sephardic and Caribbean Jewish history, however—presumably to warrant a book-length study—leads to the publication's greatest weaknesses.

The inadequacy of Terrell's study of general history becomes apparent in her chapter "The Jewish Diaspora," in which she offers a broad and under-researched overview of Sephardic Jewry from c. 711 through the mid-seventeenth century. Reading more like a well-written undergraduate paper, Terrell's narrative does little more than synthesize general (and occasionally inaccurate) discussions by Cecil Roth, Jane Gerber, and Howard Sachar, while providing nothing of the considerably more nuanced discussions detailed in recent literature on the subject (for example, essays in Fiering and Bernardini¹). Terrell's chapter on Caribbean Jewish history holds up somewhat better; yet even here her work suffers from the omission of crucial sources in Caribbean Jewish literature, most significantly Isaac and Suzanne Emmanuel's monumental work on Curaçao.² Her failure to incorporate these works into her narrative undermines her discussion, including her central claim that "no one has looked at what the analysis of a single community could contribute toward understanding the role of Jews in the colonial Caribbean" (8). While Terrell's study is indeed unique in its methods, her topic must be recognized as *continuing* a dialogue, not starting it.

Less significant, but still somewhat troubling, are the semi-fictional narrative sections Terrell uses to begin the book's last eight chapters. This technique, adopted from recent popular practices in historical archaeological writings (14–15), allows Terrell to simulate scenes from the periods that relate directly to her field site and topic of interest. While well intentioned, these narratives feel forced and unnecessary in the early chapters and at times veer dangerously close to stereotypes: descriptions such as "[Isaac Pinheiro's] features and those of his compatriots belied their Iberian heritage" (16) or the focus on a Sephardic Jewish woman's "raven-black hair" (43) reflect the limits of Terrell's imagination more than illuminate the material. Thankfully, the awkwardness of such writing diminishes significantly upon entering the heart of the study, when the fictional passages begin to match more directly her original research.

Thus, *The Jewish Community of Early Colonial Nevis* earns a deserving, if mitigated, space within the exciting new literature on Caribbean Jewry. While

Terrell's lack of expertise in Jewish history makes early parts of the book unusable, her historical archaeological work ultimately wins out, adding important and well-needed perspectives on the fascinating and underrepresented populations of the Jewish Caribbean.

Judah M. Cohen is the Lou and Sybil Mervis Professor of Jewish Culture, and an assistant professor of folklore and ethnomusicology at Indiana University. He is the author of Through the Sands of Time: A History of the Jewish Community of St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, and the forthcoming book The Making of a Reform Jewish Cantor: Musical Authority, Cultural Investment, as well as essays on music in Jewish life.

Notes

¹Paolo Bernardini and Norman Fiering, eds. *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450–1800* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001).

²Isaac S. Emmanuel, *Precious Stones of the Jews of Curaçao* (New York: Bloch, 1957); Isaac S. Emmanuel and Suzanne A. Emmanuel, *History of the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles* (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives Press, 1970).

Dana E. Kaplan, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to American Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), xxvi + 462 pp.

A young man [in a recent] study of post-Holocaust Jewish identity among twenty- to thirty-year-old adults reveals the following when he recounts his typical Shabbat experience. After engaging in many of the traditional Friday night rituals, he and his other Jewish friends usually end the evening by singing “Amazing Grace”... “When I hear Amazing Grace,” says this young man, “I think Shabbos!” (174)

Understanding such a complex and unexpected expression of American Judaism requires what cultural anthropologists call a “thick description.” The contributions from leading scholars to *The Cambridge Companion to American Judaism* (*The CCAJ*) admirably performs this task by presenting recent developments and applying new methods in the study of Jewish religion in America. Ably edited by Dana Kaplan, the volume includes pieces from various disciplines that dialogically complement each other. Both the points of agreement and disagreement between the articles serve to highlight the major trends of American Judaism as well as areas of contested interpretation.

Consisting of twenty-three articles as well as an introduction by Kaplan and an afterward by Jonathan Sarna, *The CCAJ* is divided into two parts. “Part One: Historical Overviews” provides a diachronic glimpse of American Judaism in pieces by Eli Faber, Lloyd P. Gartner, and Kaplan himself. The bulk of the book, however, is in “Part Two: Themes and Concepts,” which Kaplan has subdivided into five sections: “Religious Culture and Institutional Practice,” “Identity and Community,” “Living in America,” “Jewish Art in America,” and

“The Future.” One might dispute the placement of articles under particular rubrics such as, for example, David Biale’s piece “The Body and Sexuality in American Jewish Culture” under “Identity and Community” rather than “Jewish Art in America.” To my mind, however, this classification underscores the numerous interconnections among all of the contributions as well as the overlap to be expected from a “thick description.”

Several pieces call attention to the privatization of Judaism. Byron Sherwin (“Thinking Judaism Through: Jewish Theology in America”) observes that the personalization of religion has moved Jews from autonomously deciding which aspects of Judaism to practice and believe to defining Judaism itself (118, 130). Charles Liebman, in “The Essence of American Judaism,” in part attributes such personalization to a lack of consensus on what the “essence” of Judaism is. The Holocaust and Israel, which have come to play an increasingly prominent role in American Jewish identity within the past twenty-five years, similarly reflect privatization. Lynn Rapaport (“The Holocaust in American Jewish Life”), critical of an overemphasis on the Holocaust, implies that *individuals* ultimately will determine the role of the Holocaust in their Jewish lives (203). Steven Rosenthal (“Long Distance Nationalism: American Jews, Zionism, and Israel”), through a historical survey of Zionism in America, identifies a transition from a virtually unanimous, unqualified, and uncritical support of Israel to opinions, both private and public, that run the gamut. Combining “Lcha Dodi” and “Amazing Grace” simply represents a particular instance of a general trend toward individuals actively determining the character and content of Judaism.

Corresponding to the increase in personalization is a decline in forces promoting communal religion. Nathan Glazer’s explanation of the suburbanization of Judaism (“The American Jewish Urban Experience”) underscores the replacement of public ideology with personal choice. In the suburbs, personal choice overrules the competing claims of place, ideology, and synagogue. Similarly, the ideological content of Reform and Conservative Judaism exerts increasingly less influence on Jewish practice, which leads Lawrence Grossman (“Jewish Religious Denominations”) to question the usefulness of denominations for understanding contemporary American Judaism (98–99). For secular Judaism as well, Jonathan Woocher (“‘Sacred Survival’ Revisited: American Jewish Civil Religion in the New Millennium”) notes the decreasing sense of Jewish ethnicity. Rather than setting the agenda for Jewish content, Jewish federations support individualistic approaches to Judaism.

One might expect feminism to be cited as a contributing factor toward personalization; however, in an extremely important piece (“Choosing Lives: Evolving Gender Roles in American Jewish Families,”), Sylvia Barak Fishman rescues feminism from being the “whipping boy” of contemporary ills. She asserts that highly educated “career” Jewish women are not necessarily less

Jewishly affiliated than stay-at-home mothers (243). Moreover, feminism may strengthen the marriage bond because gender-equal marriages tend to be more successful (247), and healthy families produce a healthy Judaism. Thus, changing gender roles of men and women do not necessarily result in changing Jewish vitality (247).

The CCAJ explores privatization more deeply and accounts for its relationship to suburbanization and declining denominationalism and ethnicity by applying multiple methods to the understanding of American Judaism. In “Patterns of American Jewish Religious Behavior,” Chaim Waxman discusses the useful concept of “post-materialism,” according to which a society satisfies its spiritual needs after it satisfies its material needs. Since self-fulfillment and personal autonomy serve as measures for the achievement of material success, these criteria are transferred to the measurement of “spiritual success.” Waxman also distinguishes between rituals and ceremonies, an idea expanded by Rela Mintz Geffen (“Life Cycle Rituals: Rites of Passage in American Judaism”). For Waxman (relying on the work of Liebman), rituals facilitate a relationship with the transcendent, while ceremonies “are symbolic acts that derive from an appeal to personalism” (104). According to Geffen, Jewish rituals today primarily function as vehicles to confirm personal rather than communal norms.

In a fine example of cultural studies, David Biale’s “The Body and Sexuality in American Jewish Culture” offers fascinating interpretations of contemporary culture. For example, Biale observes that the classic film *Cast a Giant Shadow* undercuts Israeli mythology by having a diaspora, American Jew liberate the Israelis both militarily and erotically (262). Since the body is a site for defining and contesting identity (254), and representations of the female and male Jewish bodies are constantly being reimagined, then Jewish identity is also fluid—which allows space for a personalized definition of Judaism.

In addition to such cultural studies, it is refreshing to see a political and economic approach applied to American Judaism. Alan Mittleman (“Judaism and Democracy in America”), drawing on Tocqueville, notes the inconcinnity between democracy and Judaism. Carmel Chiswick (“The Economics of American Judaism”) brilliantly explains the effect of “Americanization” on Judaism. Using an economic model, Chiswick essentially claims that Jewish “consumers” are more likely to engage in secular activities because they have more secular “currency” to spend than Jewish “currency.” Consumerism naturally spawns a culture of personalization.

The CCAJ addresses not only the causes but also the impact of privatized religion. In one of my favorite essays, Debra Renee Kaufman (“The Place of Judaism in American Jewish Identity”) argues for a more cautious approach to the results of survey data, which, by nature, oversimplify complex concepts such as ethnicity and religiosity. “Authentic” or “traditional” Judaism may not be reliable measures of religiosity (170). Since rituals like *kashrut*, Sabbath, and

synagogue attendance may possess different meanings and priorities depending on the group, these observances may serve an ethnic rather than a religious function (171). Moreover, the possibility of subjective engagement with nontraditional practices complicates the measurement of religiosity by distance from Orthodoxy. Indeed, it is Kaufman who describes the young man who thinks Shabbos when he hears “Amazing Grace.”

This attention to the complex, antithetical aspects of American Judaism represents the great strength of this collection. It also accounts for some minor quibbles I have with some of the essays. By promoting Jewish education as “more than the key to Jewish survival,” the piece “Contemporary Jewish Education,” by Isa Aron, Michael Zeldin, and Sara Lee, reinscribes the idea of an essentialized Judaism that the book goes so far to complicate. Similarly, Yaakov Ariel (“American Judaism and Interfaith Dialogue”) reduces the history of interfaith dialogue to measuring the progress of non-Jewish acceptance of Jews and Judaism (342) without attention to the developments in American Judaism articulated in the rest of *The CCAJ*. In this regard, the omission of any reference to “Dabru Emet,” a Jewish response to Christian rapprochement to Judaism (September 2000), is especially glaring. I also take issue with Lloyd P. Gartner’s assumption (“American Judaism, 1880–1945”) that institutions such as the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Jewish Institute of Religion represent mainstream Judaism since a place like JIR “possessed the advantage of location in New York City, the center of American Jewish life with its Jewish population of 2 million, while the senior school was rather isolated in provincial Cincinnati” (53). While no one would dispute that the Reform movement at this time was predominantly characterized by anti-ethnocentrism and an absence of Zionism, I question the implication that universalist views were unsophisticated and out of touch with the Jewish mainstream in contrast to a far more attractive Conservative Judaism. Kaplan’s survey, “Trends in American Judaism from 1945 to the Present,” does a much better job of highlighting the antitheses of American Judaism. For example, the predominance of suburban Jewry has resulted in increased synagogue membership without a corresponding increase in devotion, what Kaplan calls “religiousness without religion” (64). Kaplan’s survey makes our Jewish fan of “Amazing Grace” interesting and representative rather than shocking.

In the final essay, “American Judaism in the Twenty-First Century,” Bruce Philips highlights several trends identified by the 2000 National Jewish Population Survey, including a trend toward nondenominationalism or no Judaism at all. Given the new perspectives expressed throughout *The CCAJ*, I was surprised by his derivative approach that associates the decline of American Judaism with intermarriage (398). According to Stephen Bayme, the greatest threat to Judaism is Jewish indifference (trend 3), whose cause cannot be reduced to intermarriage. More compelling explanations would include privatization,

suburbanization, postmaterialism, the cost of acquiring and the declining value of Jewish capital, the decline in civil religion, and the transformation of rituals into ceremonies.

On the heels of the 350th anniversary of Jews living in America, the time has come to move from celebration to examination. *The Cambridge Companion to American Judaism* does this in a manner that animates the study of American Judaism. No one who reads this collection will view Judaism in America as simply a pale reflection of its European antecedents. The clear writing coupled with the introductory chapters on American Jewish history make *The Cambridge Companion to American Judaism* accessible to a broad audience. To be sure, experts in American Judaism will find this work to be more of a codification of significant scholarship over the past twenty years than a new development in the field. Nevertheless, the sheer volume of groundbreaking studies congregated in a single volume underscores the dramatic changes to our knowledge of American Judaism.

Matthew Kraus is a Field Service Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies at the University of Cincinnati where he also serves as the Department's Hebrew Language Program Director and the Posen Project Coordinator. His most recent publication is How Should Rabbinic Literature Be Read in the Modern World? (2006).

Uri Bialer, *Cross on the Star of David: The Christian World in Israel's Foreign Policy, 1948–1967* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), 240 pp. Illus.

As Uri Bialer of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem notes in the introduction to *Cross on the Star of David*, considerable research on the relationship between the Christian world and Israel already exists. Yet Bialer offers a new perspective on this relationship in the modern, post-statehood world. Instead of existing simply as passive players on the foreign policy stage, Israelis in Bialer's persuasive account are viewed as actively shaping their foreign policy in response to the Christian world—a new angle for the existing historiography. Bialer makes extensive use of newly declassified government papers in the Israeli State Archives to reveal, for the first time, the Israeli perspective on Christian-Israeli relations.

Bialer covers a wide range of issues in his eight chapters, including questions of land rights, the United Nations proposal for the internationalization of Jerusalem, the dilemma of enemy property claimed by Germany, and the role of theology in diplomacy, as well as the problems of Russian, Lutheran, and Greek Orthodox claims to property in Israel. The most central issue throughout the period covered, however, remains the question of the internationalization of Jerusalem after the 1948 War, the Vatican's attempts to force a vote on the issue, and Israeli attempts to thwart the internationalization plans.

According to Bialer, immediately in the aftermath of the 1948 War, Israel hoped to gain recognition from the Vatican and thereby gain worldwide Catholic acceptance of Israeli statehood. However, the Vatican had grown increasingly concerned for the fate of Christian holy places in Jerusalem and had lobbied aggressively in the United Nations for the support of a 1947 resolution calling for the internationalization of Jerusalem. Furthermore, the Church had hoped, in the aftermath of the war, to gain a foothold in Palestine to launch greater Catholic influence in the Muslim Middle East. Fear of a quickly emerging Arab-Catholic alliance hostile to Israel and influential in the United Nations haunted Israeli policymakers for several decades. Far from a peripheral issue, Israeli-Vatican relations posed a serious challenge to Israeli diplomacy in the first few decades of the Jewish state's existence. As far as policymakers were concerned, "the Pope appeared to be the most dangerous challenge to Israeli control over West Jerusalem, and indirectly, to all of Israel's gains in the 1948 war" (23).

Already controversial at birth, the role of theology and collective memory placed a particular weight on Israeli international diplomacy—a problem that few, if any, nations have faced so acutely. From the beginning, the Vatican State Secretariat, Cardinal Tardini, proclaimed "there is no possibility of control or negotiations with the killers of God" (63). The efforts to internationalize Jerusalem, and thereby challenge Israeli sovereignty, revealed "motives of historical vengeance" and "the squaring of an account" (25).

Throughout Bialer's analysis, the Vatican remained a perpetual thorn in the side of the Israelis who were quietly desperate to gain Catholic recognition in order to smooth the international acceptance of the new state. Israeli efforts continued to be handicapped by the theological and emotional realities of historic Catholic anti-Semitism and the geopolitical realities of Catholic interests in territorial control of parts of the Holy Land. Bialer offers a new perspective on this political and theological struggle by arguing that Israel and the Vatican shared *mutual* distrust and disdain. Frustrated at every turn, the Israelis adopted a hard line with the Catholic Church—a stance that forced the Vatican by the mid-1950s to diplomatic initiative to resolve the difficulties.

In the early 1960s, the Vatican's decision to reexamine doctrinal matters related to Jewish-Christian relations provided Israelis with the hope that they could enter into good relations with Catholics "through the back door." If theology could be revisited to eradicate traditional anti-Semitic teachings, doctrinal reevaluation could lead to diplomatic advances. Initial attempts to include Israeli diplomats in the Ecumenical Council were quickly wrecked, however, when word spread of the initiative. Jewish organizations around the world clamored for dramatic, highly publicized changes. Resentful of the intrusion and pressure, the Council's changes in traditional theology were minimal and fell far short of Israeli expectations.

While the Israelis operated from a position of weakness in terms of diplomatic relations with the Vatican and the international Christian community, “Israel held the upper hand on the local scene” (90). Throughout negotiations with Christian communities over property rights, Israel remained mindful that frustrated countries could force a vote on the United Nations’ internationalization plan for Jerusalem. Nonetheless, Israel engaged in effective and pragmatic negotiations with German Lutheran, German Catholic (in defiance of Vatican orders), Greek Orthodox, and Russian Orthodox communities. Ironically, the successful conclusion of property negotiations with Germany resulted in “the first agreement between Israel and any Christian church that openly and officially recognized the new political circumstances” (169).

A particularly important issue that confronted Israeli policymakers included the question of missionary activity in Israel. While the numbers of Jewish converts to Christianity remained small, the national and theological principle behind conversion, particularly against the historic memory of Christian anti-Semitism, grew ever more important. Forced to consider the weight of international condemnation should Israel ban missionizing, policymakers had to tread carefully. While a legally protected right, freedom of religion provoked a hostile and even covert antimissionary stance by Israeli authorities. For Israeli policymakers and civilians alike, the goal of “diminishing the Christian presence in Israel” garnered widespread support. Here, collective memory more than pragmatism dictated policy. As one government reportedly noted, “[D]eeply rooted prejudices still endure in Israel against Christians and their institutions, prejudices brought here from the Diaspora” (100).

A particular strength of Bialer’s work, as noted above, is the extensive use of newly declassified archival material. His analysis is heavily grounded in material from the Israeli State Archives, and he uses this new material to offer a more balanced account of Christian-Israeli relations by introducing the Israeli perspective. He succeeds in providing a sympathetic analysis of the failures, shortcomings, and successes that the new state faced in dealing with the Christian world. As Bialer notes in his conclusion: “Israel’s approach to the Christian world ... was dictated not only by rational realpolitik ... but also by the unique historical-emotional-religious burden it bore” (190). While Bialer’s examination concentrates almost exclusively on the Catholic Church (with scant attention to non-Catholic Christian communities), his analytical framework provides future scholars with a solid foundation for further study.

Caitlin Stewart is a graduate student in American history at Emory University in Atlanta and is writing her dissertation on Jewish-Christian relations and American-Israeli foreign policy.

Warren Grover, *Nazis in Newark* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 380 pp. Illus.

With *Nazis in Newark*, Warren Grover has picked up an important topic in American ethnic history: the threat of Nazi infiltration during the 1930s and 1940s and the minority conflict that evolved over Nazi propaganda in America. Grover has served on the boards of the New Jersey Historical Society, the Jewish Historical Society of Metro West, and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York. Such a background may have enabled him to portray a new perspective on the impact of Nazi propaganda in the United States. Although key to the understanding of the Nazi threat to America, historians who have dealt with the issue have largely overlooked ethnicity on the basis of German-American diplomatic relations. Carrying ethnic conflict—the idea of racial, religious, or ethnic superiority of one ethnic group over another—into American society, the Nazi's ideology, or *Weltanschauung*, sought to destroy the American nation from within. The concept of the United States as the first modern nation, a historical experiment that defined itself by a common value system and future mission rather than homogeneous ancestry—i.e., the “melting pot”—was consciously attacked to prove the American experiment would not withstand the attempt of a re-nationalization of its ethnic groups. After all, the Nazis figured, blood-related loyalties had to be stronger than any constructions of nationhood and would result in somewhat of a “balkanization” of the United States.

Grover draws a detailed picture of the influence of the German-American Bund and similar groups during the 1930s and 1940s in Newark, a suburb of New York City. He shows us right at the community level how civic unrest was created and where it took place. Here on the local level the story of America's Nazis takes on the immediacy of our own neighborhoods and opens up a new understanding of the subject. Grover shows that the conflict evolved not simply between Germans and Jews; rather, the author detects factions within “Germans” and “Jews.” Some of the former are ardent Nazis; others identify as Socialists, bourgeois anti-Nazis, or “Americans” and cooperate with anti-Nazi groupings of various backgrounds. The book hints at the friction that the Bund exposed in German-American life by the forced “Aryanization” of their numerous clubs and societies, which separated German Jews from fellow Germans. Grover also highlights the involvement of ethnic churches, which may be an inspiration for future work on the topic.

Grover tells his story in nine chronologically arranged chapters, an introduction, and a conclusion. Starting with the first local reactions to the emergence of the Friends of the New Germany in 1933, the reader is introduced to Newark's ethnic groupings, their leadership, and their press. In the second chapter the author gives details about the Minutemen, a group of mainly Jewish ward fighters and gangsters, whom Grover sees as the center of Jewish resistance to local

Nazism. He traces their early connection with the Jewish War Veterans and YMHA, which were soon to criticize the Minutemen's violent proclivities. The third chapter discusses the position of the Friends of the New Germany, the first German-American Nazi group, and their relationship with the larger German community and their organizations in the New York area. The United German Societies of Greater New York, a formerly independent regional roof organization, was coordinated and "Aryanized" by the Bund, which consequently tried to turn "German Day," an annual celebration of German immigration to America, into a Nazi celebration. Efforts to fight the Bund's activities included local legislation, the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League (NSANL), and the Committee on Un-American Activities or McCormack-Dickstein Committee.

In chapter four, Grover introduces the German-Jewish physician S. William Kalb, who is depicted as a local hero in the fight against Nazism. Kalb began as a major local organizer of the anti-Nazi boycott for the Jewish War Veterans and other Jewish organizations, such as the NSANL. A fifth chapter traces the reaction of local "liberals," such as Democrats, women's groups, peace groups, and liberal churches. Grover also portrays the rise of a new Nazi organization, the German-American Bund, to succeed the Friends of the New Germany. It was the political ambition and style of its "führer," Fritz Kuhn, that made this group a large and even more aggressive tool of Nazism. The Bund was well connected with American anti-Semitic, anti-Communist, "Christian," and Fascist-minded groups, which made it a far bigger threat than its predecessor. In his seventh chapter the author shows that it was *Kristallnacht* in 1938, in conjunction with the *Anschluss* of the ethnic German regions of Czechoslovakia, that added to the social and political tensions in New York's suburbs. Nazi anti-Semitism and Nazi ethnic policy seemed to grow closer. This not only caused Italian-Americans to express their opposition to anti-Semitism, but several Newarkers pledged solidarity with the Czechs, and even Czech-Americans joined protesters against Nazism. This was the time when Minutemen, the NSANL, liberals, and Communists were increasingly forming a united front against Nazism. Even the Catholic church and other Christian groups supported initiatives against Nazi anti-Semitism in America. More dramatic still were the results of the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the beginning of World War II in Europe on the Newark opposition, which separated the Communists from the anti-Nazi alliance. Both the NSANL and the Jewish Boycott Committee were weakened by the outbreak of the war and the British naval blockade of Germany. This left the Minutemen, joined by Polish immigrants, as the major opponents to Newark's Nazi movement, which had gained support from the Christian Front. In his last chapter, Grover explains how America's entry into the war changed the local scene: the Bund was illegal and barely visible; "opposition to Nazism" was now turning into patriotism and was integral to national unity in wartime.

Grover's focus is valuable and his story is well written, but it is not an academic treatise. There remains a lack of systematic historical analysis and research on the mechanics of American ethnic tensions or cooperation during this period. Although well documented, the book needs a more analytic approach, by telling the story around the Minutemen and Dr. Kalb, whom he depicts as the only true foes of Nazism in an American community such as Newark. Grover gives the impression that only the gangsters were fighting against the "evil" that the Bund represented. But in New York City there were other active opponents, such as attorney Louis Nizer; and German Jews who were excluded from German-American social life knew well where Nazism was heading. Culturally close to Germany and German-Americans, several of them—including Joe Roos of Chicago and Los Angeles and his more prominent uncle, Julius Klein—were alert to Nazism in America at an early stage and organized against it. The Klein family applied some Anti-Defamation League methods to fight such anti-Semitism. Ernest Klein, Julius's brother, tried to use his position as editor to gain control over a large German press consortium, *The National Weeklies*, to educate German-Americans at large about Nazism. Many such German Jews were instrumental in gathering information on Nazi activities for federal agencies, including intelligence services, which had an important impact. We should not be misled by the stereotype of the bourgeois "German Jew" as an easy victim to Nazism. Here, research needs to be done in American Jewish history.

Grover probably never intended to reach an exclusively academic audience, but he does provide a well-documented story on the impact of the idea of Nazi racial superiority and how it was resisted. *Nazis in Newark* will succeed in raising the scholarly interest in research topics such as ideology and ethnicity. Thanks to Warren Grover, such an agenda is now more visible.

Dr. Cornelia Wilhelm teaches Early Modern and Modern History at the Historical Seminar of the Ludwig-Maximilians-University of Munich. Her specialties include American history, Jewish history, German-American relations, and contemporary German history. She is the author of Bewegung oder Verein? Nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik in den USA, 1933–1945 and the recently published Deutsche Juden in Amerika: Bürgerliches Selbstbewusstsein und jüdische Identität in den Orden B'nai B'rith und Treue Schwestern, 1843–1914.