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The Immigration Clause that Transformed Orthodox Judaism in the United States

JONATHAN D. SARNA AND ZEV ELEFF

The 1921 Emergency Quota Act, Jeffrey Gurock has shown, ended “a century of constant unrestricted Jewish immigration” and inaugurated an era of “crisis and compromise” in American Orthodoxy. In the wake of drastic restrictions, directed especially at immigrants from Eastern Europe, the flow of Orthodox Jews into the United States slowed to a trickle. As a result, Gurock argues, the children of Orthodox immigrants (the “second generation”) came into their own, “with ears deaf to calls to return to tradition.”¹ The numbers seem to bear out Gurock’s argument. Between 1903 and 1914, according to standard accounts, some 115,000 Jews immigrated *annually* into the United States. Between 1925 and 1934, that number dropped to less than 9,200 annually. The growth of the American Jewish population from 1925 was largely due to natural causes, rather than immigration. During the 1920s, for the first time in the twentieth century, the majority of America’s Jews became native born.²

Yet, buried deep within the 1921 legislation, and usually overlooked by historians, lay a provision that would reshape the trajectory of American Orthodoxy, notwithstanding the rise of the “second generation.”³ The law read, “Aliens who are professional actors, artists, lecturers, singers,

1. Jeffrey S. Gurock, *Orthodox Jews in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 148–149.

2. See “A Century of Jewish Immigration to the United States,” in Jonathan D. Sarna, *The American Jewish Experience* 2nd ed. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1997), 360; Jacob Rader Marcus, *To Count a People: American Jewish Population Data, 1585–1984* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1990), 240–41. In a private communication, Roger Daniels has properly questioned the reliability of historical immigration and population figures involving Jews. In the absence of better data, we make use of standard numbers here. Many thanks to Professor Daniels for his helpful comments on this paper.

3. The point is also omitted in popular Orthodox biographies. See, for example, Shimon Finkelman, *Reb Moshe: The Life and Ideals of HaGaon Rabbi Moshe Feinstein* (Brooklyn: Mesorah, 1986), 48–53; Yonason Rosenblum, *Reb Yaakov: The Life and Times of HaGaon Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky* (Brooklyn: Mesorah, 1993), 115–19; Shimon Finkelman, *Rav Pam: The Life and Ideals of Rabbi Avrohom Yaakov HaKohen Pam* (Brooklyn: Mesorah, 2003), 45; and Yitzchok Dershowitz, *A Living ‘Mishnas Rav Aharon’: The Legacy of Maran Rav Aharon Kotler* (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 2005), 73. For an exceptional case in which the writers acknowledged the rabbinical exemption, see David Kranzler and Dovid Landesman, *Rav Breuer: His Life and His Legacy* (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 1998), 12.

nurses, ministers of any religious denomination, professors for colleges or seminaries, aliens belonging to any recognized learned profession, or aliens employed as domestic servants may, if otherwise admissible, be admitted notwithstanding [this quota].”⁴ From a Jewish perspective, this meant that the quota exempted rabbis. Even if their followers were restricted by quota from immigrating to America, they themselves could apply to do so as “non-quota immigrants.” This provision had dramatic, if unintended, consequences for Orthodoxy and for American Judaism generally. Hundreds of rabbis, most of them Orthodox, immigrated to America after 1921, changing the ratio of rabbis to congregants, revitalizing Orthodox leadership, resulting in the establishment of new Orthodox institutions, and setting the stage for the renewal of Orthodoxy, especially fervent or so-called Ultra-Orthodoxy, following World War II.

American immigration legislation had long distinguished between “desirable” and “undesirable” immigrants. The earliest restrictions in 1881–82, for example, barred Chinese “laborers,” but permitted the entry of Chinese subjects “proceeding to the United States as teachers, students, merchants, or from curiosity.”⁵ Similarly, the 1885 Foran Act, which banned the importation of workers (contract labor), exempted from its provisions, among others, professional actors, artists, lecturers, and singers. Clergy, however, were not explicitly exempted by the Foran Act. This led to an important Supreme Court decision, in 1892, declaring that immigration laws limiting contract labor could not be applied to churches. In his decision, Justice David J. Brewer, himself the son of a missionary, asserted that Congress never intended to limit the immigration of celebrated priests, ministers and rabbis to America, and the Court enjoined it from excluding less-celebrated ones as well:

Suppose, in the Congress that passed this act, some member had offered a bill which in terms declared that if any Roman Catholic church in this country should contract with Cardinal Manning⁶ to come to this country and enter into its service as pastor and priest, or any Episcopal church should enter into a like contract with Canon Farrar,⁷ or any Baptist church should make

4. Sixty-Seventh Congress, Session 1, ch. 8 (1921), 6. Available online at <http://legisworks.org/sal/42/stats/STATUTE-42-Pg5a.pdf>. The 1917 immigration law likewise contained a ministerial exception; see 64th Congress, session 1, ch. 29 (1917), 876–877 online at <http://library.uwb.edu/static/USimmigration/39%20stat%20874.pdf>.

5. As quoted in Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants since 1882* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2004), 19.

6. Cardinal [Henry Edward] Manning (1808–1892) was the Archbishop of Westminster and a prominent Catholic theologian; see Vincent Alan McClelland, *Cardinal Manning: His Public Life and Influence 1865–1892* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).

7. Canon [Frederic William] Farrar (1831–1903) was the archdeacon of Westminster Abbey and the Dean of Canterbury; see Norman Vance, “Farrar, Frederic William (1831–1903),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/33088>.

similar arrangements with Rev. Mr. Spurgeon,⁸ or any Jewish synagogue with some eminent rabbi,⁹ such contract should be adjudged unlawful and void, and the church making it be subject to prosecution and punishment. Can it be believed that it would have received a minute of approving thought or a single vote?¹⁰

As a result of this widely-applauded ruling, Congress amended the Foran Act, exempting from its provisions “ministers of any religious denomination” as well as “professors for colleges and seminaries.”¹¹ The immigration law of 1907 and subsequent restrictive laws through 1921 repeated these same exemptions.¹² This was the immigration clause that admitted rabbis into the United States without running afoul of either the ban on contract labor or the 1921 emergency quota.

The Supreme Court, in a painful 1924 case involving an immigrant rabbi named Solomon Gottlieb, his wife Gittel, and their son, Israel, tightened the application of this clause. Reading the 1921 law literally, the Court restricted non-quota status to the “minister” alone and ruled that his wife and child could not gain entry into the United States except in the ordinary manner—as determined by the quota. Justice George Sutherland, speaking for the Court, explained that there was nothing in the 1921 law “which gives the wife or children of a minister any right of entry beyond that enjoyed by aliens generally.” But the Court, clearly uncomfortable with the ramifications of its decision, which would have entailed great hardship and separated families, likewise observed that if the law as written seemed “absurd and unreasonable” then it was up to Congress to change it.¹³

8. Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892), known as the “Prince of Preachers,” was the pastor of London’s New Park Street Chapel (Metropolitan Tabernacle); see Russell H. Conwell, *Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the World’s Greatest Preacher* (Philadelphia: Edgewood, 1892).

9. England’s chief rabbi at that time was Rabbi Hermann Adler (1839–1911), but his name was apparently unknown to Justice Brewer; see Derek Taylor, *British Chief Rabbis 1664–2006* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2006).

10. *Church of the Holy Trinity v. United States* 143 U.S. 457 (1892) at 472; on Brewer, see Timothy S. Huebner, “Brewer, David Josiah,” *American National Biography Online*, Feb. 2000, accessed March 07, 2016, <http://www.anb.org/articles/11/11-00102.html>.

11. For the Foran Act and its amendments, see *The Federal Statutes Annotated Containing All of the Laws of the United States of a General and Permanent Nature in Force on the First Day of January 1903* (Northport, NY: Edward Thompson Company, 1903), vol. 3, 301.

12. For the text of the Immigration Act of 1907, see <http://www.historycentral.com/documents/immigrationact.html>.

13. *Commissioner of Immigration of Port of New York v. Gottlieb et al* 265 US 310, <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/265/310.html>; see on the case, Martha Gardner, *The Qualities of a Citizen: Women, Immigration and Citizenship, 1870–1965* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 125–132.

Fortunately, Congress did just that. As Louis Marshall who argued on behalf of the Gottliebs observed at the time, “the decision, though apparently adverse...proved a blessing.” Thanks to a Congressional resolution, Gittel and Israel Gottlieb were admitted into the United States and so were thousands of others in similar circumstances, including the families of at least seven rabbis. The Jewish press, as well as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), rejoiced that thanks to the *Gottlieb* decision immigrating rabbis would not be separated from their families.¹⁴

In 1924, Congress reworded and reinforced the special status of ministers, along with their wives and their minor children, through Section 4 (d) of the “National Origins” Act of that year (often known as the Johnson-Reed Act), which defined a non-quota immigrant as follows:

An immigrant who continuously for at least two years immediately preceding the time of his application for admission to the United States has been, and who seeks to enter the United States solely for the purpose of, carrying on the vocation of minister of any religious denomination, or professor of a college, academy, seminary, or university; and his wife, and his unmarried children under 18 years of age, if accompanying or following to join him.¹⁵

According to this new definition, which was repeated with minor modifications in the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, rabbis, their wives and their minor children could all gain entry into the United States outside of the regular quota system.¹⁶ Other classes of non-quota immigrants under the 1924 law included the wives and children of U.S. citizens; legal immigrants returning from temporary visits abroad; anyone born in Canada, Newfoundland, Mexico, Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, the Panama Canal Zone or other independent countries in Central or South America, along with their wives and children; as well as bona fide students over the age of 15. Thus, legal immigration did not “end” in 1924, as sometimes mistakenly alleged. In terms of Jews, the provisions of section 4 (d) kept the doors to the United States open just wide enough to permit rabbis, scholars, and some other transformative figures to resettle in America, even when others found America’s gates tightly barred against them.

Special interest groups made section 4 (d) possible. They had lobbied on behalf of each of its exempted classes of immigrants. In the case of ministers, Archbishop Edward J. Hanna and the National Catholic

14. *American Jewish Year Book* 27 (1925–26): 425–426; see Gardner, *The Qualities of a Citizen*, 130, note 22.

15. 68th Congress, Session 1, ch. 190 (1924), 155, <http://legisworks.org/sall/43/stats/STATUTE-43-Pg153a.pdf>.

16. Public Law 89–236; 79 Statutes-at-Large, 911 (October 3, 1965), Sect 8A (d).

Welfare Conference worked hard to ensure that Catholic priests born in foreign countries could gain admission outside of the 1924 quota so as to meet the growing needs of the Catholic population. Protestant foreign-language churches presumably expressed similar concerns.¹⁷ Given past precedent as well as the 1892 Supreme Court ruling, Congress's decision to exempt "ministers of any religious denomination" from the 1924 National Origins Act is readily understandable. The consequences of that exemption for Orthodox Judaism, of course, could not be foreseen.

The Jewish community viewed the "ministerial exemption" as an all-too-rare victory amid the many depressing communal defeats that characterized the era of immigration restrictions. Once the administrative procedures connected with the new law were clarified, HIAS exulted. Its press release, published in the Boston *Jewish Advocate*, read, "All Rabbis' Wives and Families are Quota Exempt." While the news was clearly welcomed by rabbis—most East European Jews, after all, had little hope of gaining entry into the United States under the strict quotas—the instructions issued to consulates by the State Department demonstrated that many burdensome obstacles still remained to be overcome before a rabbi and his family members could win a coveted entry document.¹⁸ All of the following had to be submitted—in duplicate:

Proof that he is a duly ordained Rabbi (*smiches* [ordination certificates] with sworn English translations of same); proof that he has been exclusively following said vocation for at least two years previous to his admission to this country; proof that he has exclusively followed and is now following said vocation since his admission to this country, the same to consist (among other things) of a duly verified copy of his contract with his present congregation, a sworn affidavit of the secretary of the congregation accompanying an extract from its minutes showing when the Rabbi was elected as such by the congregation, for what term, what salary, etc; affidavits of the president and secretary of the congregation showing when the congregation was organized and incorporated, whether they own or lease their place of worship, the location of the place of worship, its seating capacity, number of members, annual income and expenses, present financial condition of the congregation, etc.; affidavits or letters by responsible banks or business firms certifying to the credibility and high standing of the congregation, its officers, etc; the usual immigration affidavit of the Rabbi showing his means and willingness and ability to care for his wife and children, naming them and giving their ages,

17. Richard Gribble, "Church, State, and the American Immigrant: The Multiple Contributions of Archbishop Edward J. Hanna," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 16 (Fall 1998): 1–18.

18. For an instance in which a rabbi was delayed due to these procedures, see Department of State to William M. Butler, September 30, 1926, Box 161, Folder, 43, I-96, American Jewish Historical Society, New England.

places of birth, etc. Of course, the wife and children must submit to the Consul proof of the wife's marriage and proof of the birth, ages of the children, etc.¹⁹

Notwithstanding these wearisome procedures, however, numerous rabbis applied to enter the United States under the new regulations. The HIAS press release and the fact that all these precise details were spelled out in American Jewish newspapers suggests that HIAS went so far as to invite rabbis and their families to take advantage of their exemption from the quota.

But finding a pulpit, the prerequisite for entry, was not always easy. In 1932, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik entered the United States "with immigration papers issued by the Hebrew Theological College."²⁰ Amid the Depression, however, it became clear to the Chicago rabbinical seminary that it could not afford the young Talmud scholar. So with help from his father—who had likewise settled in the U.S., in 1928, with the aid of the ministerial exception clause—Soloveitchik secured a new position in Massachusetts, as "chief rabbi and spiritual leader" of Boston, a post that supposedly granted him authority over eleven Orthodox congregations in the area.²¹

Rabbi Fritz [Frank] Plotke (1906–1994), a non-Orthodox rabbi, likewise struggled to secure a steady rabbinical position when he arrived in New York in the late 1930s. Plotke offered much for prospective congregations in the United States. He had trained in rabbinical schools in Berlin and Breslau, and earned a PhD from the University of Wurzburg. Still, his chances of securing steady employment looked so dim that HIAS officials recommended that he consider resettling in Canada, where quota restrictions were more relaxed and job opportunities more plentiful. In 1939, Plotke, with great eagerness, informed HIAS that a colleague had helped identify a "rabbi-less congregation" that planned to issue him a contract in the very near future, so that he might fulfill the terms of the exemption clause. He obtained a position in a small congregation in Phillipsburg, Pennsylvania, and reunited with his wife and three-year-old son. For him and others like him it proved difficult to "carry on the vocation of minister" during the Depression, but it was

19. "All Rabbis' Wives and Families are Quota Exempt," *Jewish Advocate*, May 20, 1926, B4.

20. See Oscar Z. Fasman, "After Fifty Years, an Optimist," *American Jewish History* 69 (December 1979): 160.

21. "Will Install Dr. Soloveitchik Here Sunday," *Jewish Advocate*, December 9, 1932, 1. See also Seth Farber, *An American Orthodox Dreamer: Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik and Boston's Maimonides School* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2004), 29.

still far easier as a rabbi to enter the United States and settle there than it was for ordinary Jews.²²

Indeed, as quotas limited millions of ordinary Jews from legally entering the United States, and as tens of thousands of Jews, according to Libby Garland, entered the country illegally, rabbis and their families enjoyed the possibility of immigrating without running afoul of quota restrictions.²³ Rabbi Israel Tabak, who immigrated to the United States in 1924, took advantage of this fact. He recalled years later that, to avoid being drafted, he had traveled by train from Bukovina to Bucharest seeking a visa to the United States. Prospective immigrants at the U.S. consulate in Bucharest discouraged him, wondering why he had wasted money on his trip before receiving a coveted quota number, as standard procedures dictated. “I had no number,” Tabak explained, “since I had applied for a special visa granted...to ordained ministers.” To the surprise of onlookers, the consul called him in for an interview and within half an hour supplied him with a visa “under the special category of a...minister of the Jewish faith.”²⁴

America, in short, continued to offer refuge to rabbis long after its gates were closed to most other people. Considering the cruel persecutions faced by rabbis in Russia following the advent of Communism, the poverty endured by rabbis in Poland, conscription laws in some European countries and the dearth of jobs in others, it comes as no surprise that rabbis made the most of this bountiful opportunity. While not all emigrating rabbis entered the United States—some went to Canada and “a number of Jews in Palestine,” according to Philadelphia’s *Jewish Exponent*, “organize[d] a committee to devise a plan to enable some of them to settle in the Holy Land”—America was by far the preferred destination. That is why the American rabbinate remained disproportionately foreign-born so much longer than most other professions did, and why, in the case of Orthodox Judaism, the image of the rabbi as a bearded, accented, immigrant newcomer endured in popular culture well into contemporary times.²⁵

22. Fritz Plotke to HIAS, May 11, 1939, Box 112, Folder 43, I-96, American Jewish Historical Society, New England Archives; for a brief biography of Plotke see http://www.geocities.ws/schneidemuehl_pila/rabbis.html.

23. David S. Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis 1938-1941* (New York: Pantheon, 1985 [orig ed., 1968]); Libby Garland, *After They Closed the Gates: Jewish Illegal Immigration to the United States 1921-1995* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

24. Israel Tabak, *Three Worlds: A Jewish Odyssey* (Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing House, 1988), 84.

25. “Palestine to Admit Russian Rabbis,” *Jewish Exponent*, May 29, 1931, 4. Tony Kushner’s “Angels in America,” televised in 2003 and set in 1985, still features a bearded,

Exactly how many Orthodox rabbis immigrated to the United States under the “ministerial exemption” clause is difficult to gauge. The incomplete records of immigrants assisted by the Boston office of HIAS, the bulk of which cover the period between 1938 and 1954, list rabbis by title. We counted 67 of them, including such well-known local Orthodox rabbinic figures as Rabbi M.Z. Twersky (the Tolner Rebbe), Rabbi Arnold Wieder, Rabbi Isaiah Wohlgemuth, and Rabbi Maier Zaitchik.²⁶ The latter, a 53-year-old Russian rabbi, has a relatively complete HIAS file, which his grandchildren have kindly supplemented from their personal knowledge. It demonstrates poignantly how the ministerial exemption clause saved the lives of many—but not all—members of a rabbinic family (Figure 1).

Rabbi Zaitchik, forced to flee from the Communists who considered teaching Judaism a crime, received a non-quota visa as a minister of religion from the American consul in Riga, Latvia and migrated to the United States, along with his daughter, Sarah (Sally) in September 1927. There, he found employment, at least officially, at Temple Tifereth Israel in Everett, Massachusetts. He earned \$40 per week (today, \$550), and declared his savings to consist of \$1,500 (today, \$20,700). On this basis, after five months in the United States, he applied to bring his wife, Malke, and five of his children who were under eighteen—Moishe, Nahoma [Naomi], Elka, Shmerel [Samuel], and Abraham Josef [Joe]—to the United States under similar non-quota visas. Three children over eighteen, two of whom were already married, were ineligible for non-quota visas. As part of Rabbi Zaitchik’s application, he swore under oath that he neither belonged to nor had any connection “with any group or organization whose principles are contrary to organized government.” In addition, Zaitchik agreed and guaranteed that he would “properly receive and take care” of his wife and children, never allow them to become public charges, and that he would send any children under age sixteen “to the public schools.” The American consul in Riga, Latvia, Alfred W. Kliefoth, offered assurance on January 27, 1929, that when Malke Zaitchik and her children departed from Russia and appeared in person at the consulate in Riga, “all possible courtesies will gladly be extended to them and non-quota visa issued should they prove admissible under the

accented immigrant Orthodox rabbi, played by Meryl Streep. The Coen Brothers’ film “A Serious Man” (2009), set in 1967, likewise featured a bearded, accented immigrant Orthodox rabbi (“Rabbi Marshak”), played by Alan Mandell.

26. “Guide to the Boston Immigrant Aid Society Collection, 1886–1977,” American Jewish Historical Society, New England Archives, <http://digifindingaids.cjh.org/?pID=365459#serI>.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.
United
State of Massachusetts)
City of Boston) SS.
County of Suffolk)

RABBI MAIER ZAITCHICK , being duly sworn deposes and says:

That he is a Declarant of the United States of America, as evidenced by his Declaration Certificate # 205585, issued by the United States District Court of Boston, Massachusetts on Feb. 24, 1928.

That he resides at 56 Deering Road, in the City of Boston, in the County of Suffolk in the State of Massachusetts.

That he is a Rabbi by profession, occupying the pulpit at Congregation Tiffereth Israel, 34 Malden Street, Everett, Massachusetts.

That he earns Forty dollars (\$40.00) per week and has a savings of \$1,500.00.

That he is the husband of Malke Zaitchick and the father of the four children, due to arrive on the SS. Americana.

That he will relieve his wife and children upon their arrival, care for them and provide fully for their maintenance, and see that they do not become a public charge.

That he respectfully request the immigration authorities to discharge his wife and children to the custody of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America.

Sworn to before me this
30th day of September, 1929.

Notary Public. Seal

Figure 1. Rabbi Maier Zaitchik's testimony to his rabbinical credentials and employment status as a clergyman in Everett, MA. Courtesy of the American Jewish Historical Society, Jewish Heritage Center, Boston, MA and New York, NY.

laws and regulations in effect.” The family, minus one child who had in the meantime turned eighteen and become ineligible for a visa, finally arrived at Ellis Island on November 1, 26 months after Rabbi Zaitchik had immigrated. Once officials confirmed the rabbi’s immigration status, his family was allowed to enter the United States on non-quota visas.²⁷

Orthodox rabbis living in America during the 1920s did not always understand that rabbis like Rabbi Zaitchik were able to immigrate outside of normal quota restrictions. Rabbi Gedaliah Silverstone of Washington, D.C. made no mention of this fact when, in an impassioned sermon, he criticized the tragic decision of legislators to “close the gates.”²⁸ Rabbi Tobias Geffen of Atlanta likewise omitted the exemption when he shared with his congregants in Atlanta his consternation and uncertainty about the welfare of the suffering Jews of Europe who could no longer settle in the United States due to the “anti-Jewish legislation.”²⁹ A short essay authored by a student at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) in New York, Eliezer Ladizinsky, actually drew completely erroneous conclusions because he too failed to appreciate the importance of the clause that exempted ministers from the quotas:

Of late, the closing of gates to the United States to our brethren who wish to emigrate from Eastern Europe has occasioned much debate over the fate of Judaism in the not too distant future. Some say that now, as the source of our religious vitality has been halted, American Jews must, with all their power, generate the courage to fortify Judaism in its new environs; others reason that the foundations of this American Jew are not at all solidified and therefore first need to be strengthened.³⁰

Orthodox Judaism, according to Ladizinsky, could no longer rely upon European immigrants to teach piety and the observance of Jewish law. “The value of this moment is great, and the historical charge is immense,” he wrote, seeking to encourage his American-trained rabbinical friends to save Orthodoxy from imminent peril. History, however, showed his analysis to be far wide of the mark.

What Ladizinsky and so many others failed to understand was that the ranks of Orthodox rabbis dramatically swelled rather than declined in the wake of the immigration quotas. East European Orthodox rabbis took advantage of the clause exempting them from the immigration

27. See Box 176, Folder 4, I-96, American Jewish Historical Society, New England. Many thanks to archivist Judith Garner for her assistance with this material and to Dr. Alan Zaitchik for filling in important details.

28. Gedaliah Silverstone, *Sefer Me'irat Einayim* (St. Louis: Moinester Printing Co., 1924), 32.

29. Tuvia [Tobias] Geffen, *Lev Yosef* (St. Louis: Moinester Printing Co., 1924), 221.

30. Eliezer Ladizinsky, “She’elah Bi-Zmanah,” *Hedenu* 1, June 25, 1926, 2.

quotas and migrated to the United States in large numbers. This is evidenced by tracing the remarkable growth of the Agudath Ha-Rabbonim, the organization of East European trained rabbis, in the years that followed the quota's enactment. The Agudath Ha-Rabbonim, founded in 1902 with 59 members, only accepted as members "someone who was ordained to rule on Jewish law by the great and sagacious rabbis of Europe."³¹ It rejected American-trained rabbis. So changes in its membership must almost entirely have been due to immigration. The Agudath Ha-Rabbonim's growth can thus serve as a barometer of the ministerial exemption's singular impact.

In 1920, just prior to the Emergency Quota Act, the Agudath Ha-Rabbonim reported to the *American Jewish Year Book* that its membership stood at 200.³² By 1924, that number had grown to 225. In 1928, it rose to 315.³³ By then, Jeffrey Gurock reminds us, half of the organization's charter members were dead, but instead of shrinking, its membership numbers continued to grow, reaching 400 in 1933 and 450 in 1939.³⁴ By the time World War II ended, it boasted 500 members.³⁵ Its membership thus increased by 150 percent (200 to 500) during a period when, according to standard estimates, the Jewish population of the country as a whole increased by only about 36 percent (3.3 million to 4.5 million)! In contrast to others, the Agudath Ha-Rabbonim well understood that the exemption of rabbis from the immigration quota was the major reason for this fabulous rate of growth. It even claimed, back in 1928, that its leaders' own lobbying in Washington had helped to make the ministerial exemption possible.³⁶

Numbers alone, however, do not adequately portray the ministerial exemption clause's overwhelming impact. To better understand the importance of these new arrivals—described by Gurock as "Torah-world leaders" who transplanted the "European Agudath Israel's position to America" and "chart[ed] a course for their movement in line with their group's worldwide position"—one must look at the roster of "promi-

31. *Sefer Ha-Yovel: Agudath Ha-Rabbonim ha-Orthodoxim de-Artzot ha-Brit ve-Canada* (New York, 1928), 24.

32. *American Jewish Year Book* (henceforth *AJYB*) 22 (1920–21): 317. *AJYB* listed the organization by its official English name, "Union of Orthodox Rabbis of United States and Canada."

33. See "Jewish National Organizations in the United States," *AJYB* 29 (1927–1928): 182; and "Jewish National Organizations in the United States," *AJYB* 33 (1931–1932): 247.

34. Gurock, *Orthodox Jews in America*, 149; *AJYB* 37 (1935–36): 327; 42 (1940–41): 562.

35. *AJYB* 47 (1945–1946): 604.

36. *Sefer ha-Yovel shel Agudat ha-Rabbonim ha-Orthodoxim de-Artzot Ha-Brit u-Canada* (New York, 1928), 84.

ment” Orthodox rabbis who immigrated to the United States during the quota years (many more Orthodox rabbis, of course, loyally served their communities but never rose to prominence).³⁷ Moshe Sherman’s biographical dictionary makes such an analysis possible.³⁸ Of its 120 biographies of “rabbis, educators, and philanthropists who have made contributions to American Jewish life in general and Orthodox Judaism in particular,” some 32, or just over a quarter, were rabbis who had immigrated to America between 1921 and 1946, in most cases with their families. The complete list of prominent rabbis appears in the appendix of this article, but here it is sufficient to notice the most famous of these men; the year of their arrival in America is listed in parentheses. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1937), the foremost rabbinic decisor (*posek*) of his generation and the head of Mesivta Tifereth Jerusalem in New York; Rabbi Aharon Kotler (1940), the founder of Beth Midrash Gevoha, the Lakewood Yeshiva; Rabbi Yaakov Ruderman (1930), the founder of Ner Israel Yeshiva in Baltimore; Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Bloch (1940), the founder of Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland; Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner (1931), head of New York’s Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin; Rabbi Joseph Breuer (1939), the grandson of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch and the founder of K’hal Adath Jeshurun in Manhattan’s Washington Heights; Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky (1937), head of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath; Rabbi Yosef Henkin (1922), longtime director of the New York-based Ezras Torah organization that assisted Orthodox scholars; Rabbi Shmuel Aaron Pardes (1924), editor of *Ha-Pardes* in Chicago; Rabbi Samuel Belkin (1929), second president of Yeshiva University; Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (1932), Talmudist, philosopher, and Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva University; Rabbi Moshe Soloveitchik (1929), Rabbi Chaim Heller (1937), Rabbi David Lifshitz (1941), Rabbi Shlomo Polachek (1922), and Rabbi Moshe Shatzkes (1941), central rabbinic faculty members of Yeshiva University; Rabbi Yoseph Yitzhak Schneerson (1940), the sixth Rebbe of Lubavitch; Rabbi Menaham Mendel Schneerson (1941), the seventh Rebbe of Lubavitch; and Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum (1946), the Rebbe of Satmar. Together, these rabbis changed the face of Orthodox Judaism in America, winning it new adherents and power, transforming its institutional structure, opposing compromises with modernity, banning alliances with non-Orthodox Jews, and (with a few exceptions) battling

37. Jeffrey S. Gurock, “Resistors and Accommodators: Varieties of Orthodox Rabbis in America, 1886–1983,” *American Jewish Archives Journal* 35 (November 1983): 153–54.

38. Moshe Sherman, *Orthodox Judaism in America: A Biographical Dictionary and Sourcebook* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996); for some strengths and weaknesses of the volume, see the review by Kimmy Caplan in *American Jewish Archives* 68, no. 2 (1996): 221–229.

against Zionism. Absent these immigrant rabbis, Orthodox Judaism in America would have been rabbinically, educationally, institutionally, and numerically far weaker than it is today and the entire course of its postwar history would have been different.³⁹

The rise of Nazism underscored the importance of the non-quota immigration clause. One-third of the rabbis listed in our appendix left Europe in the face of the Nazi onslaught. Immigration to America was notoriously difficult for Jews during the late 1930s and early 1940s, for quotas were rigidly enforced. Consular officials were instructed to adhere closely to the ban on admitting persons “likely to become a public charge,” and State Department officials responsible for issuing visas advocated a policy of “postpone and postpone and postpone.” Nevertheless, and in large measure due to the non-quota immigration clause, various rabbis succeeded in hurtling these obstacles.⁴⁰

The efforts were spurred along by the formation of the Va’ad Ha-Hatzalah. Founded by the Agudath Ha-Rabbonim in 1939, the Va’ad was established to bring Orthodox rabbinic scholars and students to safety in the United States, although its valiant efforts proved instrumental in the survival of many other Jews as well. The challenge for the organization was to convince government officials that all official regulations were being properly enforced, and that the refugees brought to the United States would not become “public charges,” forced to rely on federal or state aid. Accordingly, the Va’ad Ha-Hatzalah vouched on many occasions that the “organization is [able] and willing to guarantee [the immigrant rabbis’] future maintenance from the day they will arrive [in the] country, and we guarantee to the Government of the United States that this group [will] not become public charges.”⁴¹ Of course, to secure employment for these rabbinic émigrés the Va’ad required the support of rabbinical seminaries and synagogues. Rabbi Oscar Z. Fasman of Hebrew

39. A counter-historian might want to consider how different American Judaism would look had the ministerial exemption *not* been written into the immigration quotas. For a thoughtful counter-history of this era, see Jeffrey Gurock, *The Holocaust Averted: An Alternate History of American Jewry 1938–1967* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015).

40. Sarna, *American Judaism*, 259–260; for additional sources see p.407 n.108; and Richard Breitman and Allan J. Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 67–83.

41. “Draft of affidavit of the Va’ad ha-Hatzalah on behalf of Shanghai refugee rabbinical scholars, March 1946,” in *Archives of the Holocaust*, vol. 18, ed. Jonathan Helfand (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991), 185; on the Vaad Ha-Hatzala, see Efraim Zuroff, *The Response of Orthodox Jewry in the United States to the Holocaust: The Activities of the Vaad ha-Hatzala Rescue Committee 1939–1945* (Hoboken: Ktav/Yeshiva University Press, 2000).

Theological College in Chicago and Rabbi Bernard Revel of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary found room in their budgets to hire rabbis as “professors,” per the 1924 legislation.⁴² These positions, though, were limited. The Va’ad, therefore, reached out to Orthodox synagogues and their lay leaders to absorb refugees and facilitate in the resettling process of rabbis and their families, under the terms of the “ministerial exemption.” To encourage synagogues, the Va’ad circulated the following sample letter to be submitted to consuls for the purpose of procuring visas for rabbis trapped in Europe:

Honorable Sir:

We are taking this means of informing you that our Congregation has extended a contract to Rabbi _____ of _____ inviting him to our pulpit and assume duties as our spiritual leader.

Rabbi _____’s fine personality traits and theological erudition is known to many of our members and he has also been highly recommended by Rabbinical authorities.

We shall appreciate any courtesies extended to Rabbi _____ (and his family) and trust the Consul will facilitate the granting of their visas and expedite their travel to America.

Respectfully yours,⁴³

The Va’ad Ha-Hatzalah figured prominently in this history but its energies contributed to larger initiatives among American Jewry, as well. The well-documented effort to bring the leadership of the Chabad religious movement to the United States illustrates this point, and likewise highlights both the importance and the limitations of the ministerial exemption clause in saving rabbis’ lives. In 1939, Rabbi Joseph Isaac [Yosef Yitzhak] Schneersohn, his son-in-law Rabbi Samarius Gourary, and his close aid, Rabbi Chaim Lieberman, applied to the American Consulate in Riga for non-quota visas as ministers of religion; they also sought visas for their wives and minor children, consistent with the law. Influential American politicians, such as Senator Robert Wagner of New York and Postmaster General James A. Farley, as well as Jewish leaders, including Justice Louis Brandeis and Benjamin V. Cohen, petitioned the State Department to assist in saving the Rebbe and bringing him to the

42. See Aaron Rothkoff, *Bernard Revel: Builder of American Jewish Orthodoxy* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), 209–13; and *B’nai Emunah: Tulsa Oklahoma, 1916–1966* (Tulsa, 1966), 55.

43. “Sample Consul Letter,” in *Archives of the Holocaust*, 13.

United States. The State Department expected “that other Rabbis of the Chabad will make similar applications.” Since “the intent of the law,” according to the State Department, was “to enable religious bodies to bring *needed Ministers* rather than to exempt such persons from quota requirements simply because of their vocational status,” the question was whether Chabad rabbis were eligible for non-quota visas. Compounding this question was the fact that the Chabad rabbis “were not technically affiliated with any Congregation or community as Rabbi.” The novel principle upon which Chabad’s lawyers met these challenges and applied for immigrant visas was “that they constitute members of the hierarchy of the Chabad; that the Chabad constitutes an independent sect or group among Orthodox Jews and is ruled by a hierarchy of which the supreme authority is vested in Rabbi Schneersohn, the Lubowitzer Rabbi, who holds a somewhat analogous position to that of the head of the Catholic Church.”⁴⁴ Thanks to financial obligations made by Chabad supporters in the United States to ensure that their leaders would not become public charges, as well as an extensive legal and lobbying campaign orchestrated by Washington attorney Max Rhoades on Chabad’s behalf, including direct intervention on the part of Robert T. Pell, Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs at the State Department, and also Secretary of State Cordell Hull, the non-quota visas were ultimately approved for the Rebbe and most of his entourage. The non-quota clause of the immigration act proved necessary to win these visas, but as so often the case in dealing with government agencies, the wording of the law hardly sufficed. A good lawyer and effective lobbying turned out to be no less essential.⁴⁵

The case of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the son-in-law and later successor to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, underscores these points. The future seventh Rebbe of Lubavitch was a student in Paris when World War II began. Since he had not, “for at least two years immediately preceding the time of his application for admission to the United States” been serving as a “minister” to any congregation, as the law demanded, he seemed to be ineligible to apply for a non-quota visa to immigrate to the United States. So, describing himself as an engineer, he and his wife (the daughter of the Sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe), applied for ordinary visas

44. “Memorandum of Investigation by U.S. Department of State re Transfer of Hierarchy of Agudas Chasidei Chabad to America (January 10, 1940),” in Rachel Altein and Eliezer Y. Zaklikovsky, eds., *Out of the Inferno: The Efforts that led to the Rescue of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson of Lubavitch from War Torn Europe in 1939–40* (Brooklyn, NY: Kehot Publication Society, 2002), 310–11.

45. Bryan Mark Rigg, *Rescued from the Reich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); for documents, see Altein and Zaklikovsky, *Out of the Inferno*.

on the tiny quota, limited to 2,248 people annually, reserved for those born in Russia. Their chances of obtaining a visa on that basis seemed vanishingly small. Back in New York, where the Sixth Rebbe had found refuge, Chabad's lawyers worked tirelessly to save the Schneersons. Applying on their behalf, the lawyers argued that as a member of the same "Chabad hierarchy" recognized in the case of his father-in-law, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson met the legal requirement for a non-quota visa. His "congregation," they insisted, was the worldwide community of Chabad followers. The American consul in Paris, on June 5, 1940, rejected this claim since Schneerson had submitted two different visa applications—one, that he submitted as an engineer, and the other, submitted in New York, that listed him as a rabbi in the Chabad hierarchy. So, on the heels of the Nazi occupation of Paris on June 14, 1940, Schneerson and his wife fled south to the spa town of Vichy and then to Nice. It took personal intervention by Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long, an ardent nativist and on other occasions a vocal opponent of Jewish immigration,⁴⁶ to save the Schneersons. "I see no reason why he should not be granted immigrant visa even though we authorized non-quota," Long wrote, doubtless aware of the torrent of correspondence that the State Department had received on behalf of the Chabad hierarchy. Political expedience thus trumped Long's nativist inclinations, and following his intervention the future Rebbe and his wife arrived in New York on June 23, 1941.⁴⁷

Orthodox Rabbis and their families were, of course, not the only Jews saved by the non-quota immigration clause (4d) of the Johnson-Reed Act. Reform rabbis, like Max Nussbaum and Max Wiener, likewise won visas on the basis of the clause, and so did some Conservative rabbis, like Rabbi Emil Schorsch. Scholars benefited from the clause too, for it specifically exempted from the quota anyone who was a "professor of a college, academy, seminary, or university; and his wife, and his unmarried children under 18 years of age, if accompanying or following to join him."⁴⁸ On this basis, as Michael A. Meyer has shown, such well-known

46. On Long, see David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 105-109, 190-191, *passim*; Richard Breitman and Allan J. Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 164-168, 173-179.

47. Chaim Miller, *Turning Judaism Outward: A Biography of the Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson* (New York: Kol Menachem, 2014), 122-140; the February 7, 1941 letter from Breckinridge Long is reprinted on p. 135; for a related account, see Altein and Zaklikovsky, *Out of the Inferno*, 328-331.

48. The government interpreted immigration laws in a highly gendered way ("his") permitting eligible men to bring their wives on a non-quota basis, but not permitting women to bring their husbands on that same basis. See Adena M. Rich, "The Status of Women Under the United States Immigration and Naturalization Laws," *Social Service Review* 23 (June 1949): 218-230.

academics as Eric Werner, Franz Rosenthal, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Isaiah Sonne, Eugen Täubler, and Samuel Atlas received non-quota visas to teach at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.⁴⁹ The State Department made it no easier for those scholars than it did for the Lubavitcher Rebbe; lawyers and high-level interventions were in all cases required. As Hebrew Union College's president, Julian Morgenstern, complained to Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Jr. in 1941, "I have never been able to accomplish anything whatever with that Department unless it was possible to bring pressure from some person high in the present administration upon the Office of the Visa Division."⁵⁰

Following World War II, amidst sympathy for Displaced Persons, conditions eased somewhat for rabbis seeking to enter the United States on non-quota visas. Although a literal reading of the regulations required a rabbi to have served in his position "continuously for at least two years immediately preceding the time of his application for admission to the United States," the State Department amended the rule for those living in Displaced Persons (DP) camps. "If facts in each case prove conclusively to the American Consul that the applying rabbi had been in the clergy at least two years and had not abandoned his profession, but merely was prevented from pursuing it," the Department explained, "he will be eligible for immigration to the United States as a non-quota immigrant." According to HIAS, many "bona-fide rabbis" were affected by that ruling.⁵¹ Most of them were Orthodox.

The Orthodox rabbinate, indeed, was at all times the prime Jewish beneficiary of the ministerial exemption to the immigration quota. Since the vast majority of rabbis in Central and Eastern Europe were Orthodox, the vast majority of rabbis who took advantage of section 4d exemptions in emigrating were Orthodox as well. For decades, prior to the existence of the quota, those Orthodox rabbis had been reluctant to immigrate to America. The country was known as a *treifene medinah*, an unkosher land where Jews violated the commandments and spurned

49. Michael A. Meyer, "The Refugee Scholars Project of the Hebrew Union College," in *Judaism Within Modernity: Essays on Jewish History and Religion*, ed. Michael A. Meyer (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001): 345–361; see also David G. Dalin, "Cyrus Adler and the Rescue of Jewish Refugee Scholars," *American Jewish History* 78 (March 1989): 351–362.

50. Julian Morgenstern to Henry Morgenthau Jr. (September 26, 1941), Samuel Atlas File, Box 3204, AJA, as quoted in Meyer, "The Refugee Scholars Project," 357. Student visas for those seeking to escape Europe were handled through a different clause in the Johnson-Reed Act (4e), with its own set of regulations.

51. "Rabbis Classified as Displaced Persons Will Be Considered for Non-quota Entry to U.S.," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, January 12, 1947.

rabbinic authority.⁵² Rabbi Moses Weinberger, one of but three or four rabbis in New York with the highest level of Orthodox ordination back in 1887, advised his colleagues in Europe to “stay home.”⁵³ Most Orthodox rabbis did. Even as hundreds of thousands of Orthodox and anti-Orthodox Jews immigrated to the United States, the number of rabbis who joined them was paltry. As late as 1927, according to the U.S. census, there was only about one rabbi per 2,415 Jews.⁵⁴ Later, as conditions deteriorated in Eastern Europe, and later still during the Holocaust years, America provided a haven for growing numbers of rabbis, as we have seen. Indeed, thanks to their exemption from the 1921 and 1924 quota legislation, immigration became far easier for rabbis than for ordinary Jews. As a result, the number of rabbis coming to America grew year by year, and the ratio of rabbis to laity narrowed.

This proved deeply significant, especially for Orthodox Judaism. Not only did it save the lives of many Orthodox rabbis, it also transformed Orthodoxy in ways that could not have been predicted prior to World War I. First, the rabbis who came to America following the immigration restrictions brought new levels of East European Jewish learning to the United States; some were world-class Orthodox scholars. These men enhanced existing institutions of Jewish learning, like RIETS and Yeshiva Torah Vodaath in Brooklyn, and also established new ones in places like Manhattan, Brooklyn, Lakewood, Baltimore, and Cleveland. In time, they created a cadre of thousands of American-trained Orthodox rabbis—some Fervently Orthodox, some Modern Orthodox—who made possible Orthodoxy’s post-World War II revival.

Second, the arrival of Orthodox rabbis after World War I did much to swing Orthodoxy to the religious right. Many of these rabbis, influenced by their European training, saw no reason to cooperate with their Conservative and Reform counterparts. They spurned institutions like the Synagogue Council of America (est. 1926) and the New York Board of Rabbis (est. 1946) that sought to promote Jews’ common religious interests. Indicatively, every single one of the eleven Fervently Orthodox rabbis who signed the celebrated 1956 ban on maintaining any official contacts with Reform and Conservative rabbis (“It is forbidden by the law of our sacred Torah to participate with them either as an individual

52. Arthur Hertzberg, “‘Trefene Medina’: Learned Opposition to Emigration to the United States,” *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (1984): 1–30

53. Jonathan D. Sarna, ed., *People Walk on Their Heads: Moses Weinberger’s Jews and Judaism in New York* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1981), 59.

54. Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 160; *AJYB* 31 (1929): 120, 306.

or as an organized communal body”) had immigrated to the United States after 1921.⁵⁵

Finally, by allowing rabbis to immigrate free of quota limitations while the immigration of other Jews remained severely restricted, the quota law unintentionally reversed the great imbalance between rabbis and congregants that characterized the prior era of mass immigration. Moses Weinberger, in 1887, had described America’s Orthodox Jews as “sheep without a shepherd” and that characterization remained true on the eve of World War I, when there were but 120 members of the Agudath Ha-Rabbonim and only 79 members of the Jewish Theological Seminary Alumni Association (many of whom, at the time, considered themselves Orthodox)—or about 200 Orthodox rabbis for some three million Jews.⁵⁶ In contrast, by 1945, the *American Jewish Year Book* noted the existence of some 875 Orthodox rabbis, as well as 301 members of the Conservative Rabbinical Assembly—or almost six times as many non-Reform rabbis for about 4.5 million Jews.⁵⁷ Eleven years after that, Yeshiva University President Samuel Belkin (who had himself immigrated in 1929) described the American Orthodox rabbinate as “the youngest movement on this continent ... not more than twenty-five years old.”⁵⁸ He likely excluded the Fervently Orthodox from his analysis, but his central point was correct. The Orthodox rabbinate, by then, had found a firm place in America. The clause exempting ministers of “any religious denomination” from the immigration quotas goes far to explain how that happened.

55. Rabbi Gedalia Shorr, who immigrated as a youngster in 1922, was the only signer who had spent significant time training in America. The other rabbis who signed were: Avraham Joffen, Avraham Kalmanowitz, Ahron Kotler, David Lifshitz, Chaim Mordecai Katz, Yaakov Kaminetsky, Yaakov Ruderman, Yitzchak Hutner, Menachem Yosef Zachs, and Moshe Feinstein; for the background, see Sarna, *American Judaism*, 303; for the text and signers, see Louis Bernstein, “The Emergence of the English-Speaking Orthodox Rabbinate” (PhD diss., Yeshiva University, 1977), 556; and on Orthodoxy’s swing to the right, see Samuel C. Heilman, *Sliding to the Right: The Contest for the Future of American Jewish Orthodoxy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

56. Sarna, ed., *People Walk on Their Heads*, 114. The *American Jewish Year Book* listed a total of 406 rabbis who belonged to rabbinical associations in 1914, including 207 members of the Reform Central Conference of American Rabbis, then the largest of the three rabbinical associations. An unknown number of rabbis belonged to no rabbinical body. See *AJYB* 16 (1914–15), 279, 297, 310, 358.

57. Orthodox rabbis were divided among the Assembly of Hebrew Orthodox Rabbis of America and Canada, with 125 members; the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of United States and Canada [Agudath Ha-Rabbonim] with 500 members; and the Rabbinical Council of America with 250 members; see *AJYB* 46 (1944–45): 428, 430, 459, 462. In all likelihood, there were many additional rabbis who paid dues to no rabbinical body.

58. Samuel Belkin, “The Jewish Community in a non-Jewish World,” in *Essays in Traditional Jewish Thought* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), 141–142.

APPENDIX

**PROMINENT ORTHODOX RABBIS ADMITTED UNDER THE
NON-QUOTA IMMIGRATION CLAUSE (1921–1946)**

Belkin, Samuel (1929)
 Bloch, Chaim (1922)
 Bloch, Eliyahu Meir (1940)
 Breuer, Joseph (1939)
 Chazan, Eliyahu Simcha (1946)
 Epstein, Chaim Fischel (1923)
 Feinstein, Moshe (1937)
 Greenwald, Yekutiel (1924)
 Grozovsky, Reuven (1924)
 Heller, Chaim (1939)
 Henkin, Yosef (1922)
 Hutner, Yitzchak (1931)
 Jablonski, Nissan (1922)
 Kalmanowitz, Abraham (1941)
 Kaminetsky, Yaakov (1937)
 Korb, Chaim Isaac (1927)
 Kotler, Aharon (1940)
 Krieger, Israel Abraham Abba (1923)
 Lifshitz, David (1941)
 Notelovitz, Chaim Ben Zion (1925)
 Pardes, Shmuel Aaron (1924)
 Polacheck, Shlomo (1922)
 Porath, Israel (1922)
 Rosen, Moshe (1928)
 Ruderman, Yaakov (1930)
 Schneerson, Menachem Mendel (1941)
 Schneersohn, Yosef Yitzhak (1940)
 Schwab, Shimon (1936)
 Shatzkes, Moshe (1941)
 Soloveitchik, Joseph B. (1932)
 Soloveitchik, Moshe (1929)
 Teitelbaum, Yoel (1946)
 Telushkin, Nissan (1924)

Source: Moshe D. Sherman, *Orthodox Judaism in America: A Biographical Dictionary and Sourcebook* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996). The year in parentheses indicates the year when these men immigrated to America. A far larger group of Orthodox rabbis who served their communities, but did not become “prominent,” likewise entered the United States under the non-quota immigration provision.