

A History *of the* Book *in* America

VOLUME 4

Print in Motion

*The Expansion of Publishing
and Reading in the United States,
1880–1940*

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Two Ambitious Goals

American Jewish Publishing in the United States

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A Great Day in Philadelphia Judaism

According to New York's leading Jewish newspaper, Sunday, 3 June 1888, was "a great day in Philadelphia Judaism." About 100 rabbinic and lay leaders from around the country — "the leading intellectual minds among the Hebrews" — gathered to create what became the Jewish Publication Society of America. A thirteen-page circular, published a few months later, appealed for "generous sympathy, active encouragement and liberal support" of the new organization. "We have given to the world the book, most wonderful in the effect it has produced on great masses in all climes and times," the circular declared. It expressed the hope that "Israel in America" would "proudly claim its literary period, as did our ancestors aforetime in Spain, in Poland and in modern Germany."¹

The reference to earlier centers of Jewish culture hints at the new publication society's grand objective: creating a new Jewish cultural center in America to succeed that in Germany, which, it was alleged, had stagnated amid "a revival of mediaeval prejudices." Nineteenth-century students of Jewish history, following Nahman Krochmal, believed that centers of Jewry experienced a natural cycle of growth and decline. The decay of one center stimulated the rise of another elsewhere. Themselves the children of German immigrants, these scholars believed that the late nineteenth-century rise of German anti-Semitism signaled the end of cultural progress in their former homeland. "It befits us as free citizens of the noblest of countries," they announced, "to take it up in their stead." The Jewish Publication Society was to be a key agent in this cultural revolution. Blending American patriotism with concern for the welfare of fellow Jews, the society's founders looked to publish books that would prepare American Jewry to assume the burden of Jewish cultural leadership and announce to the world that the American Jewish community had arrived.²

An additional objective also underlay the creation of the Jewish Publication Society: the aim of integrating a fractious American Jewry into a nationwide

community bound together by a common culture of print. More than 200,000 Jews from various countries had crossed to America's shores in the 1880s, nearly doubling the Jewish community's size. It would double again just ten years later. This massive in-migration, coupled with burgeoning intrareligious conflict, underscored for American Jewish leaders the importance of organizing and systematizing Jewish communal life, goals closely parallel to contemporary progressive reformers' hopes for American society as a whole. The Jewish Publication Society, as part of this effort, appealed to "all Jews of every shade of belief," and professed to favor "no special views and . . . no particular party." It sought to encourage "many men of many minds" to "work harmoniously together to one common end."³

These two ambitious goals — to forge a new Jewish cultural center in America and to integrate American Jewry into a nationwide community bound together by a common culture of print — highlight the central themes of American Jewish publishing from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century (see figures 19.1, 19.2). The print output of the American Jewish community multiplied many times over during these years, keeping pace with burgeoning Jewish population growth and resulting in a torrent of books, magazines, and newspapers published in as many as five different languages: English, Hebrew, German, Yiddish, and Ladino (Judeo-Spanish). The American Jewish community became culturally self-sufficient at this time, and after years of competition came to succeed Europe as the unofficial center of the Jewish diaspora, a status tragically confirmed by the Holocaust.

Much to the disappointment of the communal elite, however, American Jews never fully united. Even as improvements in communication strengthened ties among American Jews, the forces of social, economic, political and religious diversification impeded the creation of a common group culture. As a result, the much-heralded Jewish Publication Society, for all that it sought to appeal to every Jew, became in the end just one of many competing voices in American Jewish public life, while Jewish publishing became ever more complex and variegated. Books and periodicals appeared in different languages, reflected different ideologies, and attracted different audiences. Instead of uniting American Jews, print media represented all that divided them.

Forward from Backwardness

For centuries, the North American Jewish community was stigmatized as being culturally backward. Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, the leader of nineteenth-century Reform Judaism in the United States, recalled that when he arrived in New York in 1846 he found "but three men in private life who possessed any Jewish or any



FIGURE 19.1. For its thirty-fifth anniversary, in 1924, the Jewish Publication Society issued this collectors' volume setting forth its goals and accomplishments and appealing for funds. The volume also reprinted, in miniature, the title pages of every book published by the JPS since 1888.

△

This
little
volume
of which
250 copies
have been prin-
ted especially for
the friends of the So-
ciety contains the title-
pages of over one hundred
and twenty books issued by
the Society of which over 1,500,000 copies have been distrib-
uted The following are the names of the authors of these
publications [the names printed in *Italics* are no longer
among the living, may their memories be a blessing.
The living, may they be encouraged to produce more
books to the greater glory of God and our people]:

I. Abrahams, C. Adler, E. Adler, *L. Adler*, G.
Aguilar, Ahad Ha'am, N. Bentwich, H. Bern-
stein, W. Canfield, I. Cohen, S. W. Cooper,
A. Darmesteter, I. Davidson, Nina Davis,
M. Davitt, *L. N. Dembitz*, *E. Deutsch*,
S. M. Dubnow, H. Friedenwald, H.
Frank, U. Frank, L. Ginzberg, M. Gold-
smith, S. Gordon, R. Gottheil, *H. Graetz*,
Julius H. Greenstone, *B. Halper*, E. Harris,
I. Husik, *H. Iliowizi*, *A. S. Isaacs*, *J. Jacobs*,
G. Karpeles, K. Kohler, I. Kraft, Jacob Lazarre,
M. Lazarus, E. Levinger, M. Liber, *K. Magnus*,
Henry Malter, M. L. Margolis, S. Miller, M. Misch,
S. H. Mosenthau, S. Oppenheim, Louis Pendleton,
I. L. Perez, David Philipson, P. M. Raskin, M. Radin,
Jacob S. Raisin, A. B. Rhine, *Esther J. Ruskay*, *Solomon
Schechter*, *L. Schnabel*, Harry Schneiderman, N. Solusch,
Emily Solis-Cohen, *Judah
Steinberg*, Henrietta
Szold, *M. Wolfenstein*,
Yehoash, D. Yellin,
Israel Zangwill
Henry Zirndorf,
and others.

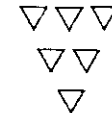


FIGURE 19.2. This colophon from the thirty-fifth anniversary volume, in the shape of a Jewish star, boasts that the Jewish Publication Society had distributed more than 1.5 million volumes since its inception. Note that the list of authors includes European as well as American names, men and women alike.

Talmudical learning . . . ignorance swayed the scepter, and darkness ruled."⁴ Cyrus Adler, then the librarian of the Smithsonian Institution, complained as late as 1894 that American Jewry had "no libraries, no publications and no independent scholars."⁵ The dearth of Jewish book learning and book publishing prompted nineteenth-century European rabbis to describe America as a *treifene medina*, an "unkosher land."⁶

The two leading American Jewish religious leaders of the nineteenth century, Isaac Leeser (1806–68) of Philadelphia and Isaac Mayer Wise (1819–1900) of Cincinnati, labored to combat this sorry situation. Concerned about the lack of quality in Jewish education and eager to strengthen Jewish religious life—one as a proponent of Americanized Orthodoxy and the other of Americanized Reform—both men mounted vigorous publication programs. Between them, they wrote, translated, and edited almost 150 different works. These included three of the community's foremost periodicals: Leeser's *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate* (1843–69), Wise's *Israelite* (founded in 1854 and renamed the *American Israelite* in 1874), and, in German, *Die Deborah* (1855–1902).⁷ Amid the democratization of print culture, the burgeoning growth of Christian religious journalism, and the manifest success in America of "books, tracts and publications of all kinds," Leeser and Wise looked to the printed word to achieve two central objectives that Leeser had articulated back in 1845: first, to provide American Jews with "a knowledge of their faith" and, second, to arm them with the "proper weapons to defend . . . against the assaults of proselytizers on the one side and of infidels on the other."⁸ Jewish education and communal defense have remained central objectives of American Jewish print culture ever since.

Jewish newspapers—those of Leeser, Wise, and others—dominated American Jewish cultural life in the nineteenth century. They were not the "grand engine of a burgeoning . . . culture" that evangelical newspapers are reputed to have been.⁹ They did, however, play a vital role in shaping the very notion of a national Jewish culture and community. They served as a prime source of in-group news and information, provided a forum for religious education and debate, and functioned as the hub of a communications web linking Jews from one end of the country to the other. By the 1860s Jewish newspapers published in New York, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and San Francisco reached hundreds of communities, some of them places where only a single Jew resided.¹⁰ They transmitted a broad range of national, international, and local news, as well as polemics, homiletics and apologetics, serious scholarship, popular fiction, and helpful advice. Monthlies, like Leeser's *Occident* and David Einhorn's German-language *Sinai*, targeted a more elite audience than the more family-oriented weeklies, but such selectivity was tempered by their dependence on subscribers

and advertisers for survival. Despite their different appeals, newspapers also projected a broad vision of American Jewish life, promoting among their far-flung readers a sense of community and group identity. These feelings of fellowship, mutuality, and interdependence transcended narrow limits and taught Jews to identify with the national community of "American Israelites."

Nineteenth-century American Jews also produced books—several thousand of them—but most were institutional documents (constitutions and reports), lectures and sermons, textbooks, prayer books, translations, and imports. Henry Frank, a Jewish immigrant from Bavaria, and later his son, Leopold, issued more than fifty volumes beginning in 1848–49. Isaac Mayer Wise's brother-in-law founded Bloch & Co (later Bloch Publishing Company) in Cincinnati in 1854, producing more than 150 volumes. Dozens of other printers, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, also produced books of Jewish interest.¹¹ Most of these volumes, however, lacked serious editing and required significant publishing subsidies. Compared to Germany, the center of Jewish scholarship and culture, the American Jewish community's literary output was embarrassingly small. American Jews imported far more cultural material than they created independently, and very little of what they did produce was deemed worthy of export.

Multiplication and Division

In the late nineteenth century, as America's Jewish population expanded, its cultural productivity kept pace. Robert Singerman's comprehensive bibliography of Judaica Americana published to 1900 makes it possible to track these changes.¹² The gross number of publications listed decade by decade (including everything from Christian conversionist literature and tracts about Jews to institutional documents, prospectus sheets, and broadsides) demonstrates slow, steady growth, followed by rapid expansion in the 1880s and 1890s (table 19.1).

During this time period, the quality of American publications pertaining to Jews also improved, as evidenced by the appearance of such volumes as *Statistics of the Jews of the United States* (1880) compiled by William B. Hackenberg, Isaac M. Wise's *History of the Hebrews' Second Commonwealth* (1880), Emma Lazarus's *Songs of a Semite* (1882), Moses Mielziner's *The Jewish Law of Marriage and Divorce in Ancient and Modern Times, and Its Relation to the Law of the State* (1884), and the first parts of Marcus Jastrow's monumental *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (1886–1993).

Yet, as the American Jewish community grew larger, the cultural ties that bound it together frayed. Generational, social, religious, and class cleavages de-

TABLE 19.1. Jewish publications by decade, 1850–1899

1850–59	507
1860–69	565
1870–79	659
1880–89	1,046
1890–99	2,017

veloped: natives versus immigrants, Germans versus East Europeans, Reform versus Orthodox, rich versus poor. Jewish newspapers proliferated and became more locally oriented at this time—hardly a surprise given the local character of American journalism generally—and this only accentuated divisiveness, for the newspapers now offered local instead of national perspectives on events, and their focus narrowed. Language too became a divisive factor in American Jewish life. Jews now spoke an array of different languages, including English, German, Ladino, and especially Yiddish, but they no longer shared a common language.

In this transitional era, Jewish leaders looked to books as a source of salvation. A traditional symbol of unity among Jews, books also historically brought status both to the individuals who wrote them and to the communities that produced and owned them. Communities that published quality books and boasted great libraries were elevated in their own eyes and in the eyes of world Jewry.¹³ The American Jewish community, having grown almost overnight into one of the five largest in the world, coveted precisely that status. The Jewish Publication Society and numerous other book-related projects promised to fulfill that desire while simultaneously unifying American Jews.

American Jewish Culture Emerges

America emerged as a cultural center of world Jewry between 1900 and 1920, just as the nation's impact on global issues began to intensify and diversify. Freed from dependence on Europe for great books and new ideas, both native and immigrant Jews experienced an unprecedented sense of cultural independence. They now knew that they could produce great books themselves. No longer did they feel compelled to turn to Europe as a source of legitimation; increasingly, if somewhat begrudgingly, Europeans came to recognize their contributions.¹⁴

Two early twentieth-century events heralded American Jewry's "arrival." The first was the publication of volume one of the *Jewish Encyclopedia* in 1901. Initiated in 1898 by the European immigrant writer Isidore Singer, the encyclopedia

(12 volumes, 1901–6) sated the long-standing desire for a synthesis of all Jewish knowledge, traditional and modern, including the fruits of the nineteenth-century German-based Jewish scholarly movement known as *Wissenschaft des Judenthums*. Hundreds of Jewish scholars from around the world participated in the undertaking, which was centered in New York and largely overseen by American scholars. Previous European attempts to produce such an encyclopedia in other languages had failed, making the symbolic significance of the American undertaking all the more potent. The publication of the *Jewish Encyclopedia* marked a rite of passage in American Jewish life. Historian Shuly Rubin Schwartz writes that it became "the symbol par excellence of the emerging cultural and intellectual independence of American Jewry." It signified both that Jewish cultural authority was passing to the New World and that the language of Jewish scholarly discourse was shifting to English. "To America, and not unto us, is the glory of the new house," wrote Anglo-Jewish scholar Israel Abrahams in a glowing review of volume one. "America, once a quantity to be neglected in matters Judaic, is here the main factor." The Hungarian Jewish scholar Wilhelm Bacher went so far as to crown New York as the new "center of Jewish scholarship."¹⁵

In 1902 the arrival in the United States of one of the world's foremost Jewish scholars, Solomon Schechter, seemed to confirm this judgment. He left England for New York to assume the helm of the newly reorganized Jewish Theological Seminary of America, reinforcing the great cultural transition and the new ascendancy of American Jewry. Schechter's goal was to transform the Jewish Theological Seminary into a European-style Jewish research institution, "a center of Jewish *Wissenschaft* [scientific scholarship] pure and simple."¹⁶ To this end, he appointed a faculty of young, European-trained Jewish scholars committed to joining him in leading American Jewry from the wilderness of insignificance into the promised land of Jewish cultural renown. "Jewish learning in this country . . . will be American in language, in scope, in method, and yet be distinctively Jewish in essence,"¹⁷ one of those scholars, Israel Friedlaender, grandly predicted in 1914. Refusing to pay obeisance to German centrality in the field of Jewish studies, the scholars of the new seminary moved to place the distinctive stamp of their new American homeland on the Jewish scholarly map. They produced great works of original scholarship and proudly published them in English, a symbolic expression of their cultural independence and new language loyalty.⁸

The books issued by the Jewish Publication Society, while geared to a more popular audience, also reflected these goals. In the 1890s their most important publications were still American adaptations of European volumes. To Lady Katie Magnus's *Outlines of Jewish History* (1890), for example, the society

added chapters discussing American Jewish history. It also improved the English and added a book-length index to the British edition of Heinrich Graetz's multivolume *History of the Jews* (1891–98). By the 1910s, in contrast, the most important Jewish Publication Society books were original works by authors living in America, including *The Legends of the Jews* by Louis Ginzberg (1909–13)¹⁹ and *Zionism* by Richard Gottheil (1914). Its most significant work was *The Holy Scriptures*, a new Jewish translation of the Bible overseen by the American scholar, Max Margolis.²⁰ This volume—which remained the standard English translation of the Jewish Bible for more than half a century—carried an announcement of American Jewry's cultural emergence right up front in its preface:

[W]e have grown under Providence both in numbers and in importance, so that we constitute now the greatest section of Israel living in a single country outside of Russia. We are only following in the footsteps of our great predecessors when, with the growth of our numbers, we have applied ourselves to the sacred task of preparing a new translation of the Bible into the English language, which, unless all signs fail, is to become the current speech of the majority of the children of Israel.²¹

Even the books published by eastern European Orthodox Jewish immigrants demonstrated an appreciation of the American Jewish community's new status. Menahem Blondheim shows that in the nineteenth century these Hebrew-language books usually carried approbations (*hashamot*) from rabbis in eastern Europe; the only rabbi practicing in America who was deemed significant enough to endorse a book was New York's chief rabbi, Jacob Joseph. By the first quarter of the twentieth century, however, the number of approbations from American Orthodox rabbis rose sharply. More than half of the Orthodox works that Blondheim examined between 1902 and 1925 carried endorsements *only* from Orthodox rabbis practicing in America; almost 70 percent were endorsed by at least one. What this means, Blondheim persuasively indicates, is that the source of legitimation for the immigrant Orthodox shifted to America in the twentieth century. Their books, like those produced by the Jewish Publication Society and by the scholars of the Jewish Theological Seminary, bespoke American Jewry's coming of age.²²

"A Great Library Is Indispensable"

Cultural independence, of course, did not depend solely on the publication of books. A Jewish cultural center with high-level scholarship also required world-class Jewish libraries. In America, these emerged early in the twentieth century.

Energetic Jewish book dealers like Ephraim Deinard traveled the world assembling and importing large collections of Judaica, while bibliophilic Jewish philanthropists like Mayer Sulzberger and Jacob Schiff purchased these collections for American libraries.²³ In 1904 Sulzberger donated his own private library, assembled in large part with Deinard's help, to the Jewish Theological Seminary. He aimed to make the seminary "the centre for original work in the science of Judaism, to which end the acquisition of a great library is indispensable." This hope was soon realized as the seminary became "the greatest Jewish library in the world in Jewish hands"—an easy boast to make since in Europe, the greatest publicly available Judaica collections (like those of the Bodleian Library at Oxford or the British Museum) were under government auspices.²⁴ Beginning about 1910, Cincinnati's Hebrew Union College library began to "gather and preserve every procurable literary record of the Jewish past," competing with the seminary. A timely visit to Europe just after World War I secured some 18,000 rare items, following which the library grew rapidly.²⁵

Munificent Jewish donations allowed American Jewish libraries to proliferate under government and university auspices at this time. Deinard's goal was "to establish [Jewish] libraries in all the leading cities of our land," and his collections were purchased for the Judaica Division of the New York Public Library (established in 1898), the University of California at Berkeley, the Library of Congress (which established its Semitic Division, later the Hebraic Section, in 1914), and Harvard University. Meanwhile, in 1915, George Alexander Kohut donated most of his father's 5,000-volume Judaica library to Yale.²⁶ Significantly, the major Judaica collections in these and several other public and university libraries were segregated from the general collections in their establishment, maintenance, and classification. For all that Jewish scholarship had achieved a place on the shelves of America's great libraries, Jewish books—like American Jews themselves—were still far from fully integrated into the mainstream.

The Schiff Library of Jewish Classics

All of these themes—American Jewry's cultural emergence, the quest to unite Jews around a common culture of print, the effort to strengthen Jewish education and Jewish religious life, and the relationship between Jewish and non-Jewish books—came together in one of the most ambitious American Jewish publication projects of the early twentieth century: the Schiff Library of Jewish Classics. Amid great fanfare, the Jewish Publication Society announced in 1915 that it would produce twenty-five volumes of carefully edited postbiblical Jewish classics with texts, translations, and scholarly notes. The model here was James Loeb's 1910 Loeb Classical Library, standard scholarly editions of the

great works of Greek and Latin authors. Jacob Schiff, who funded the Jewish project and for whom it was posthumously named, was Loeb's brother-in-law. According to legend, his wife had suggested that he "do for the Jewish classics what Jimmie is doing for the Greek and Roman," and he agreed.²⁷ The cultural and religious symbolism, expressed in each case through book sponsorship, could scarcely have been more transparent. Loeb, an assimilated Jew craving social acceptance, attached his name to the central literary canon of Western civilization, one that excluded all of the great Jewish cultural works written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic. Schiff, a proud Jew who scorned assimilation, attached *his* name to the very works that his brother-in-law excluded. Where the Loeb Classics implied that Jews kowtowed to Western civilization, the Schiff Classics were designed to demonstrate the opposite — that Jews had a rich classical literature of their own.²⁸

The Schiff series also demonstrated that painstaking textual scholarship — "the collation and accurate edition of . . . original sources and documents" — could now be accomplished by Jewish scholars working in America. Schechter considered this kind of research — a legacy both of German historicism and of the European Jewish enlightenment — central to the study of Judaism. It combined modern methods with age-old values, evoked a traditional Jewish concern for textual accuracy, and provided all Jews with a common core of reliable cultural works and a joint basis for study and reflection. Two decades earlier, such textual scholarship was largely impossible in America; the requisite books and manuscripts lay across the ocean. Now, the country's newly created Judaica library collections changed all that. The Schiff Classics demonstrated that in textual scholarship too, American Jewry had arrived.²⁹

Hebrew Printing from Old World to New

The Schiff Classics project also established America as a significant center of Hebrew printing. Until World War I, American presses had limited Hebrew printing capabilities. Demand was low, and Hebrew books could be printed at lower costs in Europe or Palestine.³⁰ The kind of high quality printing the Jewish Publication Society demanded for its classics simply could not be found in the New World. When the war cut America off from quality Hebrew printing and destroyed some of Europe's most famous Hebrew presses, the pitfalls of such dependency became readily apparent. In response, the society decided to acquire its own high-quality Hebrew press: a pair of European-manufactured Monotype machines with duplex keyboards. Inaugurated in 1921, the new press was managed by Moses Alperovich, a former employee of the highly prestigious and now destroyed Romm Press of Vilna. He embodied the cultural transfer

from Europe to America represented by the press and the classics series as a whole. Under the management of Maurice Jacobs at the society and then after 1950 as an independent venture under Jacobs's name, the press became one of the world's foremost printers of Hebraica and Judaica. Through books and printing it reenacted a perennial pattern in Jewish history, creating a new cultural center from the ruins of the old.³¹

Two Visions of Jewish Publishing

Despite its symbolic and substantive achievements, the Schiff Classics project ultimately failed. Sixteen of the twenty-five originally scheduled works were canceled before they appeared. The classics proved too highbrow for most readers: they neither united American Jewry around a common cultural canon nor broadened the corpus of "Western civilization" to include Jewish works. The series did, however, highlight a growing chasm within the American Jewish community concerning the meaning and purpose of Jewish books. The Jewish Publication Society's idealistic and somewhat elitist vision of cultural stewardship saw books as instruments for elevating, integrating, and transforming the American Jewish community. By contrast, the more popular mass vision judged books largely on the basis of their sales potential, usefulness, and enjoyment value.

Bloch Publishing symbolized the more pragmatic approach; its mission and mode of operations effectively represented everything that the Jewish Publication Society was not. Where the society was idealistic, Bloch was utilitarian; reputedly, publisher Charles Bloch "considered favorably any manuscript which in his judgment would yield him a profit." Like such American firms as Scribner and Putnam, but unlike the society, Bloch was both a publisher and a bookseller. It produced and sold a wide range of Jewish books — its own and others — in several languages, as well as textbooks and religious articles. It eschewed the society's selectivity, acting instead "as literary midwife for scholarly, semi-scholarly and popular books" alike. Indeed, Bloch sought to embrace *all* Jewish books. Its sales bulletin — for many years the most reliable listing of Jewish books in print — presumed that the Jewish community broke down into a medley of different brow levels, tastes, ideologies, and religious movements, each with distinctive book needs of its own.³²

A Segmented Community

More-specialized Jewish publishers also emerged at this time. The most important of these was the Hebrew Publishing Company (established in 1901), whose immigrant and Orthodox clientele read Hebrew and spoke Yiddish. As

a publisher and a bookseller, Hebrew Publishing produced and sold everything from effusive greeting cards and romantic sheet music to educational textbooks and pious religious texts, including highly profitable Bibles and prayer books. It helped its customers navigate their way between the Old World and the New, offering familiar devotional literature, pirated from Europe, alongside Yiddish-English dictionaries and highly touted self-help books designed to socialize and uplift those who sought to get ahead. Books such as *Harkavy's American Letter Writer with Useful Information and a Treatise on Book Keeping [in] English and Yiddish* (1902), *Ollendorff's Method to Acquire a Thorough Knowledge of the English Language without the Aid of a Teacher* (1909), and Tashrak [I. J. Zevin]'s *Etikette* (1912) were perennial best sellers. They buttress Daniel Soyer's claim that Americanization was not just a passive process, but that immigrants "exercised a high degree of agency in their growing identification with American society."³³ The press also published Yiddish classics and translations into Yiddish of secular classics like Chekhov, Goethe, Tolstoy, and Jules Verne. Books of high and low culture, religious works and secular ones all found willing readers within the immigrant community, and all were therefore issued by the Hebrew Publishing Company. Given the divisions and segmentations in the immigrant community, Hebrew Publishing reached out in various directions simultaneously.³⁴

During the interwar years, these communal divisions sharpened. The end of mass immigration, burgeoning generational and religious conflicts, the growth of universalist, nationalist, and revolutionary ideologies, the rise of anti-Semitism, and, of course, the inevitable impact of social, cultural, political, and economic forces operating within American society at large shook the foundations of American Jewry. Books and periodicals, far from drawing the community together, both reflected and fueled these divisions. By World War II, a procommunist Yiddish Cultural Association and an anticommunist Central Yiddish Cultural Organization were both publishing significant books in Yiddish; there were also Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox Jewish publishers, Zionist and Hebraist publishers, several scholarly publishers, and assorted publishers of textbooks for Jewish schoolchildren.³⁵

Periodicals proliferated even more broadly, spurred in part by demands from professional groups for journals of their own. In 1900 there were four English-language national Jewish periodicals: one for "young people" (*Young Israel*), one for "the Jewish Religious School and Home" (*Helpful Thoughts*), one for Hebrew Union College students and alumni (*Hebrew Union College Journal*), and one, the *Menorah*, the official organ of the Jewish fraternal organization, B'nai B'rith. By 1940 there were more than fifty such periodicals serving such diverse groups as agricultural Jews (*Jewish Farmer*), Jewish communal

workers (*Jewish Social Service Quarterly*), Jewish educators (*Jewish Teacher*), and Zionist Jewish Women (*Pioneer Woman*). Astonishingly, five of these journals—*Hebrew Union College Annual*, *Historia Judaica*, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, *Jewish Social Studies*, and the *Journal of Jewish Bibliography*—devoted themselves exclusively to Jewish scholarship.³⁶ This represented a sea change from the turn of the century when there were no such forums in America at all. By the 1940s Jewish scholars in America—like so many other community subgroups—were communicating more and more with one another and less and less with the community at large.

Unity through Books

Despite such evident fragmentation, however, the ideal of American Jewish "unity through books" continued to inspire leading Jews. The "book" remained an important Jewish cultural icon and being characterized as "the people of the book" still distinguished Jews from their neighbors. As a result, efforts through the medium of books to "bring Jews back together again" persisted throughout the twentieth century. In 1918, for example, the short-lived "Kehillah of New York City," the overarching communal organization of New York Jews established in 1909, published a 1,600-page *Jewish Communal Register* described as the first "comprehensive interpretation" of the city's Jewish communal life. Based on an exhaustive demographic, economic, and institutional survey, the volume attempted—within the covers of a single book—to bind together the many variegated segments of New York Jewry. This figurative "binding," the Kehillah hoped, would facilitate the achievement of its ultimate goal: a "well-ordered, well-organized Jewish community." The preface made the nexus between the book and the goal abundantly clear:

What, then, is the first duty of those who would bring order out of chaos in the communal life of the Jews in New York City? What is the immediate obligation of those who are eager to point the way for a sound and constructive policy of Jewish communal development in the years to come? Their first task, it would seem, is to help the community to know itself as it is at present. To perform this indispensable service for the Jews of New York City, "The Jewish Communal Register" has been projected and published. . . . It will help the individual Jew and the Jewish Community to see themselves as they really are in relation to each other, and will thus be the first step to a full realization of Jewish life in this city.³⁷

The *American Jewish Year Book*, published annually after 1899, promoted itself in a similar vein. Longtime editor Harry Schneiderman wrote in 1948 that this

annual record of events and trends in American and world Jewish life was designed to serve “as a force for the promotion of the homogeneity of the Jewish community of the United States.” The *Year Book*, he believed, was itself an agent of change, working, among other things, to “keep alive and to nurture in the hearts of American Jews that sense of kinship and common destiny which has inspired our community worthily to fill the role of big brother to our overseas brethren.”³⁸

Epilogue: Holocaust and Revival

The destruction of European Jewry in World War II—the brutal murder of scholars and writers, the burning and looting of libraries, the rack and ruin of established presses—brought together the two themes that had dominated the history of the Jewish book in America since the late nineteenth century. Even before the horrors of the Nazi regime were fully known, the Holocaust demonstrated for American Jews that they had become, in the words of historian Jacob Rader Marcus writing in 1941, “the heart of . . . Jewish life”: “Almost everywhere Jewish books are being destroyed. Almost nowhere outside the United States are they being printed. The Jewish Publication Society is the only surviving literary medium of mass instruction west of Jerusalem. . . . Jewish culture and civilization and leadership are shifting rapidly to these shores.”³⁹ Indeed, with the last remaining Jewish presses in continental Europe destroyed or shut down, only those in England, Palestine, and the Americas remained. The Jewish Publication Society took this as a challenge. “Our press,” Maurice Jacobs declared, “is ready to assume its greater responsibility. . . . The record of the scholarly presses of Europe can and will be duplicated and perhaps surpassed in the scholarly Press of Philadelphia.”⁴⁰

Suddenly burdened with the mantle of Jewish cultural leadership, American Jewry again looked to books to bring them together. The prayer book produced by the National Jewish Welfare Board for Jewish soldiers in the American armed forces reflected this quest for unity. Composed of sections from Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox liturgies, the volume received the endorsement of all three branches of Judaism and hundreds of thousands of copies were printed.⁴¹ The Jewish Book Council, founded in 1942 and subsequently (1944) sponsored by the National Jewish Welfare Board reflected this same quest for harmony. An outgrowth of Jewish Book Week (later book month), initiated by librarian Fanny Goldstein in 1925, the Book Council sought to spark “a Jewish renaissance in America” in response to the destruction of Jewish communities in Europe. To this end, it stressed its “impartiality as regards denominational loyalties” and promoted all manner of books in English, Hebrew, and Yiddish “to infuse in

both young and old the traditional ardent zeal for Jewish knowledge.” It looked to Jewish books in general—though not in this case to any one book in particular—to unite Jews and to help them, as one rabbi put it, “to understand better the creative Jewish spirit and the creators of Jewish values.”⁴²

In the wake of the war, the “American Jewish revival” produced a torrent of new books. The great Jewish historian Salo Baron thought that he saw “incontrovertible signs” in 1947 “not only of a general cultural awakening, but of a certain eagerness of the Jewish public to pioneer in the unexplored realms of a modern culture which would be both Jewish and American, and to find some new and unprecedented spiritual and intellectual approaches to the Jewish position in the modern world.”⁴³ Given these goals, most of the Jewish books appearing at this time—upward of 70 percent—were understandably published under non-Jewish auspices by trade publishers and university presses. Jewish books, like Jews themselves, could finally become mainstream. Indeed, in the 1940s, university presses alone produced twice as many Jewish books as did the Jewish Publication Society; by the 1960s, they would publish five times as many.⁴⁴

This mainstreaming of Jewish books posed no small challenge to Jewish publishers, especially the Jewish Publication Society, which saw its once formidable role diminished. More fundamentally, the move challenged the central aims of Jewish publishing: the twin goals of promoting America as a center of Jewish cultural life and of binding American Jews into a community shaped by a shared culture of print. By 1950 the first of these goals was already accomplished; only Israel rivaled America for Jewish cultural dominance. The second goal, meanwhile, proved illusory; American Jews remained divided. Postwar Jewish publishing was most successful when books focused on particular subgroups such as women, children, spiritual seekers, and the Orthodox. As the entry of Jewish books into the mainstream indicated, the more important postwar story lay elsewhere—in the increasingly vital role played by Jews within American culture as a whole.

51. Ruth Miller Elson, *Myths and Mores in American Best-Sellers, 1865-1965* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985), 185-92; Allene Stuart Phy, "Retelling the Greatest Story Ever Told: Jesus in Popular Fiction," in *The Bible and Popular Culture in America*, ed. Allene Stuart Phy (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 48-58; David S. Reynolds, *Faith in Fiction: The Emergence of Religious Literature in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 203-8.

52. Edelman, "Religious Publishing and Bookselling," 52; Tebbel, *A History of Book Publishing in the United States*, 3:239-40; Alice Payne Hackett, *60 Years of Best Sellers, 1895-1955* (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1956), 84.

53. Rubin, "Boundaries of American Religious Publishing," 215-16.

CHAPTER 19

Two Ambitious Goals:

American Jewish Publishing in the United States

1. *American Hebrew* (8 June 1888): 70-71; *Announcement: The Jewish Publication Society of America* (Philadelphia, 1888), as cited in Jonathan D. Sarna, *JPS: The Americanization of Jewish Culture, 1888-1988* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 20-22. The *Announcement* is reprinted in Sarna, *JPS*, 355-59.

2. Sarna, *JPS*, 357; Michael A. Meyer, *Ideas of Jewish History* (New York: Behrman House, 1974), 189-214; Michael A. Meyer, "German Jewish Identity in Nineteenth-Century America," in *Toward Modernity: The European Jewish Model*, ed. Jacob Katz (New York: Transaction Books, 1987); Naomi W. Cohen, "American Jewish Reactions to Anti-Semitism in Western Europe, 1875-1900," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research* 45 (1978): 29-65.

3. Sarna, *JPS*, 355, 358.

4. Isaac M. Wise, *Reminiscences* (Cincinnati, 1901; repr., New York: Central Synagogue, 1945), 23-24; see also Isaac M. Wise, "The World of My Books," trans. Albert H. Friedlander, in *Critical Studies in American Jewish History*, ed. Jacob R. Marcus, 3 vols. (New York: Ktav, 1971), 1:154. First published in *American Jewish Archives* 6 (June 1954).

5. Cyrus Adler to the *American Hebrew*, 9 December 1894, in *Cyrus Adler: Selected Letters*, ed. Ira Robinson, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985), 1:70.

6. Arthur Hertzberg, "'Treifene Medina': Learned Opposition to Emigration to the United States," *Proceedings of the 8th World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: World Congress of Jewish Studies, 1984), 1-30.

7. Jonathan D. Sarna, "The History of the Jewish Press in North America," in *The North American Jewish Press: The 1994 Alexander Brin Forum* (Waltham, Mass.: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, 1995), 2-7; Arthur A. Goren, "The Jewish Press," in *The Ethnic Press in the United States: An Historical Analysis and Handbook*, ed. Sally M. Miller (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 203-28; Robert Singerman, "The American Jewish Press, 1823-1983: A Bibliographic Survey of Research and Studies," *American Jewish History* 73 (June 1984): 422-44.

8. Isaac Leeser, "Address of the Jewish Publication Committee to the Israelites of America," preface to *Caleb Asher*, no. 1 of *The Jewish Miscellany* (Philadelphia: Jewish Pub-

lication Society of America, 5605 [1845]), 1-4, reprinted in part in Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 461-63. On the growth of religious journalism, see Nathan Hatch, "Elias Smith and the Rise of Religious Journalism in the Early Republic," in *Printing and Society in Early America*, ed. William L. Joyce, David D. Hall, Richard D. Brown, and John B. Hench (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1983), 250-77.

9. Hatch, "Elias Smith," 250.

10. Rudolf Glanz, "Where the Jewish Press Was Distributed in Pre-Civil War America," *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly* 5 (1972-73): 1-14, and "The Spread of Jewish Communities through America before the Civil War," *Yivo Annual of Jewish Social Science* 15 (1974): 7-45.

11. The index to Robert Singerman, *Judaica Americana: A Bibliography of Publications to 1900* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), includes a gazetteer of publishers and printers, making it easy to trace the output of individual firms.

12. Singerman, *Judaica Americana*, is the authoritative bibliography of publications to 1900.

13. Cecil Roth, "The People and the Book," in *Personalities and Events in Jewish History* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1953), 172-73.

14. Michael A. Meyer traces this development to the last third of the nineteenth century; see his "German-Jewish Identity in Nineteenth-Century America," in *Toward Modernity: The European Jewish Model*, ed. Jacob Katz (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1987), 247-67.

15. Shuly Rubin Schwartz, *The Emergence of Jewish Scholarship in America: The Publication of the Jewish Encyclopedia* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1991), esp. 16, 86-87.

16. Solomon Schechter to Mayer Sulzberger, 5 March 1900, in Meir Ben Horin, "Solomon Schechter to Judge Mayer Sulzberger: Part 1, Letters from the Pre-Seminary Period (1895-1901)," *Jewish Social Studies* 25 (October 1963): 276. More broadly, see Abraham J. Karp, "Solomon Schechter Comes to America," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 53 (September 1963): 44-62.

17. Israel Friedlaender, *Past and Present* (Cincinnati: Ark, 1919), 317.

18. Jonathan D. Sarna, "Two Traditions of Seminary Scholarship," in *Tradition Renewed: A History of the Jewish Theological Seminary*, ed. Jack Wertheimer, 2 vols. (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1997), 2:55-63.

19. Additional volumes appeared in 1925, 1928, and 1938. Louis Ginzberg, of course, was an immigrant, and he wrote his original manuscript in German.

20. Sarna, *JPS*, 29-112; Joshua Bloch, *Of Making Many Books: An Annotated List of the Books Issued by the Jewish Publication Society of America, 1890-1952* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1953), 37-135.

21. *The Holy Scriptures*, ed. Max Margolis (1917; repr., Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1955), vi.

22. Menahem Blondheim, "Ha-Rabanut Ha-Ortodoksit Megaleh Et Amerikah" (The Orthodox Rabbinate Discovers America), in *Be-ikvat Kolumbus: Amerikah 1492-1992*, ed. Miriam Eliav-Feldon (Jerusalem: Merkaz Shazar, 1996), 492-94.

23. Adolph S. Oko, "Jewish Book Collections in the United States," *American Jewish Year Book* 45 (1943-44): 67-96; Robert Singerman, "Books Weeping for Someone to Visit and Admire Them: Jewish Library Culture in the United States, 1850-1910," *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 20 (1998): 99-144.

24. Meirhem Schmelzer, "Building a Great Judaica Library — at What Price?" in *Tradition Renewed: A History of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America*, ed. Jack Wertheimer, 2 vols. (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1997), 1:679-97; Herman Dicker, *Of Learning and Libraries: The Seminary Library at One Hundred* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1988), 15-31; Alexander Marx, "The Library," in *The Jewish Theological Seminary of America Semi-Centennial Volume*, ed. Cyrus Adler (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1939), 87-120.

25. Oko, "Jewish Book Collections in the United States," 73-87, esp. 76; Michael A. Meyer, "A Centennial History," in *Hebrew Union College: Jewish Institute of Religion at One Hundred Years*, ed. Samuel E. Karff (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1976), 72-74.

26. Grace Cohen Grossman with Richard Eighme Aihlborn, *Judaica at the Smithsonian: Cultural Politics as Cultural Model* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), 69-79, esp. 72; Simcha Berkowitz, "Ephraim Deinard: Bibliophile and Bookman," *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 9 (Spring 1971): 137-52; Abraham J. Karp, *From the Ends of the Earth: Judaica Treasures of the Library of Congress* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991), xv; Charles A. Madison, *Jewish Publishing in America* (New York: Sanhedrin Press, 1976), 60-62; Dan A. Oren, *Joining the Club: A History of Jews and Yale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 329; Arthur A. Chiel, "The Kohut Collection at Yale," in *Jews in New Haven*, ed. Jonathan D. Sarna (New Haven, Conn.: Jewish Historical Society of New Haven, 1978), 80-94.

27. Cyrus Adler, *Jacob H. Schiff: His Life and Letters*, pt. 2 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran, 1929), 64.

28. Sarna, *JPS*, 120-30, provides a full history of the Schiff Classics.

29. Norman Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter: A Biography* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1948), 259; Sarna, "Two Traditions of Seminary Scholarship," 59-61.

30. See, for example, Nathan M. Kaganoff, "American Rabbinic Books Published in Palestine," in *A Bicentennial Festschrift for Jacob Rader Marcus*, ed. Bertram W. Korn (New York: Ktav, 1976), 235-61.

31. Sarna, *JPS*, 127-28.

32. Madison, *Jewish Publishing in America*, 76.

33. Daniel Soyer, *Jewish Immigrant Associations and American Identity in New York, 1880-1939* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 8.

34. Madison, *Jewish Publishing in America*, 77-84, 206-7.

35. *Ibid.*, 34-100, 206-17; see also the annual bibliography of American Jewish books published in the *Jewish Book Annual*.

36. Sarna, "The History of the Jewish Press in North America," 6-7; *American Jewish Year Book* 43 (1941-42): 631-42.

37. *The Jewish Communal Register* (New York, 1918), iii-vi, 91-98; Arthur A. Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community: The Kehillah Experiment, 1908-1922* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 236-37.

38. Harry Schneiderman, "American Jewish Year Book, 1899-1948," *American Jewish Year Book* 50 (1948-49): 87-88.
39. *American Jewish Year Book* 43 (1941-42): 789.
40. Sarna, *JPS*, 183.
41. *Ibid.*, 188.
42. Madison, *Jewish Publishing in America*, 64-67; Oscar I. Janowsky, *The JWB Survey* (New York: Dial Press, 1948), 348-49; Michael N. Dobkowski, *Jewish American Voluntary Organizations* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1986), 202-4; Philip Goodman, "A Chronicle of the Jewish Book Council of America," *Jewish Book Annual* 25 (1967-68): 366-89.
43. Salo Baron, "Report of the JWB Survey Commission," in Janowsky, *JWB Survey*, xiii; Sarna, *JPS*, 219-20.
44. Sarna, *JPS*, 224; Charles A. Madison, "The Rise of the Jewish Book in American Publishing," *Jewish Book Annual* 25 (1967-68): 81-86; Amnon Zipin, "Judaica from American University Presses," *Jewish Book Annual* 42 (1984-85): 172-82.

CHAPTER 20

Running the Ancient Ark by Steam: Catholic Publishing

1. David J. O'Brien, *Isaac Hecker: An American Catholic* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 210-11.
2. Pastoral letter, Council of Bishops, in *The Memorial Volume: A History of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, 9 November-7 December 1884* (Baltimore: Baltimore Publishing Company, 1885), 7.
3. "Catholic" or "the church" should be understood in this essay as shorthand for "the Roman Catholic Church" rather than as a theological claim. By "Catholic publishing" I refer to any publishing efforts directed toward a Catholic audience, whether undertaken by Catholics or non-Catholics, as well as publications by Catholics directed at a general audience. For a discussion of Catholicism and print culture within the Hispanic United States, see Nicolás Kanellos, chapter 16 in this volume.
4. John G. Deedy Jr., "The Catholic Press: The Why and the Wherefore," in *The Religious Press in America*, ed. Martin E. Marty, John G. Deedy, David Wolf Silverman, and Robert Lekachman (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), 65-121.
5. Charles H. Ridder, "The United States Catholic Press Exhibit at Vatican City, 1936," in *Historical Records and Studies* (New York: United States Catholic Historical Society, 1937), 35. Also see L. G. Happel, "The Freedom of the Catholic Press," *America* 6 (24 July 1920): 320-22.
6. Ridder, "The United States Catholic Press Exhibit," 48. See also Apollinaris W. Baumgartner, *Catholic Journalism: A Study of Its Development in the United States, 1789-1930* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), and William L. Lucey, S.J., *An Introduction to American Catholic Magazines* (Philadelphia: American Catholic Historical Society, 1952).
7. William L. Lucey, "Catholic Press, World Survey," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 16 vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967-79), 3:317.