

# AJS Perspectives

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR JEWISH STUDIES





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*Duke University*

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*Grants and Communications Manager*

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*AJS Perspectives Managing Editor;  
Website Manager*

Jay Litzman  
*Public Programs Manager*

Please direct correspondence to:  
**Association for Jewish Studies**  
Center for Jewish History  
15 West 16th Street  
New York, NY 10011

Voice: (917) 606-8249  
Fax: (917) 606-8222  
E-Mail: [ajs@associationforjewishstudies.org](mailto:ajs@associationforjewishstudies.org)  
Web Site: [www.associationforjewishstudies.org](http://www.associationforjewishstudies.org)

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**Back cover:** Mirta Kupfermanc. *That No-Place*, 2007. Mixed media, 40 x 29 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

**Inside cover:** Mirta Kupfermanc. *The Writing of God*, 2004. Etching, 22.5 inches x 27.5 inches. Courtesy of the artist..

# Contributors to This Issue



Jonathan Hess



Laura S. Lieber



Pamela S. Nadell



Warren Hoffman



Michel S. Laguerre



Gerard Daniel Cohen



Erich S. Gruen



Gur Alroeyl



Aviad Moreno



Diana A. Burnett



Carol Zemel



Daniella Doron



Libby Garland



Aomar Boum



Amy Kaminsky



Bryan K. Roby



Devi Mays



Sander L. Gilman



Donna Gabaccia



Fatma Müge Göçek



Timothy J. Meagher



James B. Rives



Jack Tchen



Reuben Zahler

# From the Editors

## Dear Colleagues,

“My father was a wandering Aramean; he went down to Egypt and sojourned there ...” (Deuteronomy 26:5)—so begins the ancient liturgy of the firstfruits, with its rehearsal of Israel’s sacred history, so much of which is a narrative of migration. The story of the Jews is a tale of people in motion: voluntary or compelled; legal or illicit; gradual or abrupt; as an individual or as part of a larger communal movement. Deuteronomy writes of ancestral movement in the past tense, anticipating a time of settlement and stability, of routine and cyclical harvest holidays and sacred convocations, but in truth the wandering never ceased.

In this issue, we approach the subject of migration—of people in motion—from a variety of perspectives. Classic narratives, whether of ancient exile or modern immigration, are challenged, while “roads less traveled” are here brought to light. Laguerre, Cohen, and Gruen, while writing of vastly different time periods, draw our attention to the lexicon of migration: Diaspora and exile, multiple centers and fluid peripheries, and a plethora not only of “Jeruselems” but even, as Cohen points out in his exploration of Syrians, Eritreans, and other refugee and migratory populations in a post-Holocaust world, of “Jews.” Of course, in “classical” Judaism, there is only one Jerusalem, and Zion constituted the center of gravity of Jewish migration. Alroey addresses a locus classicus of that understanding: the mythologies surrounding the Second Aliyah, and the messy reality beneath the gloss. Moreno’s essay, in turn, reminds us that the narrative of the “rescue” of the Jews of Tangier denies the very real agency of these populations. Burnett brings us to the quotidian world of sound, reminding us of the ways in which migrants create “home” in the most fundamental of ways, while Zemel highlights how photography “paused” the urgent momentum of migration and froze it as a moment in time. Narratives of immigration to the United States are revisited and revealed as more complex than commonly held: Doron highlights the startling youthfulness of the migrants of 1870–1924; Garland recovers stories of illegal Jewish immigration across the Texas border—harrowing narratives of human smuggling that remain part of daily life today. Boum explores the dynamic and developing identities of Moroccan Jews in Los Angeles,

where language and history play out on the canvas of ritual and liturgy; and Kaminsky draws our attention not only to the power of art as a way of approaching political history, but to how our own stories shape us as scholars. Of course, migrations were often ongoing, even elliptical: Roby recounts individuals who challenged the ideas of *aliyah* (ascent to Israel) and *yeridah* (descent away from the Promised Land) by leaving Israel for Berlin and Iraq; and Mays highlights the distinctive peripatetic pathways of Sephardic Jews in the twentieth century and illustrates more broadly the lack of congruence among citizenship, nationality, residence, and identity. As Gilman reminds us, even the most deliberate of “cosmopolitans” did not necessarily abandon their particularisms. Taken together, these essays conjure a vast web of human motion: anything but linear, sometimes *movement toward* and often *flight from*, occasionally as individuals and at times en masse.

When we conceived of this issue, the migrations of non-Jews were as much on our minds as any Jewish wanderings, past or present. Issues of immigration to the United States (legal and otherwise) as well as the Syrian refugee crisis constituted daily topics of conversation and calls to activism, in the hallways and in our classrooms. The causes, experiences, and consequences of migration confronted us with great urgency, and we found ourselves reaching into the Jewish experience for analogies and insights. As fate would have it, within days of contacting prospective contributors for this issue, the first “travel ban” was announced, lending our choice of topic unexpected urgency and relevance. A protestor at an airport rally in Raleigh, North Carolina, could be seen the next day holding a sign: “My ancestor was a Syrian refugee (Deuteronomy 26:5)” —a translation that takes some liberty with language and yet remains true to the story of migration told, however episodically, in what follows.

Jonathan M. Hess  
*University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

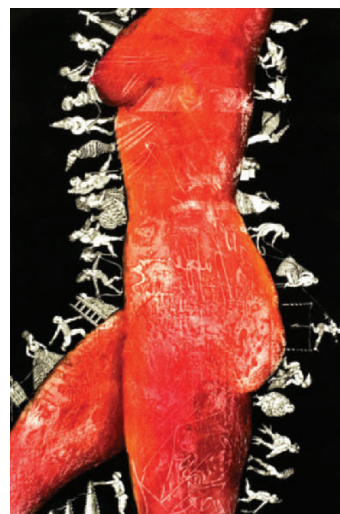
Laura S. Lieber  
*Duke University*



Mirta Kupferminc. *Life's Lines*, 1999.  
Etching intaglio, 31.1 inches x 23.2 inches.  
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Mirta Kupferminc. *Travel Fantasies*, 1999.  
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Mirta Kupferminc. *From the Skin*, 1999. Etching intaglio, 35 inches x 23.6 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

# From the President

## *Dear Colleagues,*

Scouting for a topic for this “Migration Issue” before I migrate out of the AJS presidency, I looked back at columns written by my predecessors. (I trust that readers know that back issues of *AJS Perspectives* are online.) Our past presidents chose subjects of deep concern to AJS members: access to libraries, the crisis in the academic job market, the promises and challenges posed by open access to our scholarship, the expansion of Jewish Studies, and the disparaging of the humanities. But, rereading these reflections, one subject’s absence looms large: teaching.

Having sat through decades of faculty meetings, I should not have been surprised. My department has spent countless hours debating weighty matters—new hires, tenure decisions, curricular changes—and also insubstantial ones. For too many years, use of the copy machine claimed a place on every September’s agenda. Oddly, I recall only two instances of department meetings devoted to ideas about the craft of teaching. This reticence to focus on teaching had once extended to our annual AJS conference; not until 2014 did pedagogy become a program division.

Yet, I am convinced that those reading *AJS Perspectives* care deeply about teaching. If we didn’t, we wouldn’t have chosen to spend our lives sharing what we have learned with others. When a class goes well, we are pleased; when what we have planned for the day does not, we mull over what went wrong to make certain that the next time we fix it.

Unlike those who teach in elementary and secondary schools, I assume that few of us have ever had formal courses in pedagogy. We have taken classes to master techniques—PowerPoint, Prezi, Blackboard, Chalk, or another cleverly named course management tool. But coursework in subjects that are foundational at schools of education, like educational psychology and instructional strategies, are not part of our training.

Instead, we learned to teach largely through osmosis. Having spent so much time in class on the way to the PhD, we have had countless hours to study many different teachers. Some were excellent. I remember one who was such an extraordinary lecturer that a hundred of us rolled out of bed for an 8:00 a.m. class that was not required for any major. I learned in that classroom that what we were studying mattered deeply to that professor, and that enthusiasm for a subject is infectious.

I also realized that great scholars care deeply about student learning. Surely, I am not the only AJS member to recall a packed classroom with the towering giant of biblical interpretation, Professor Nechama Leibowitz. To this day, I remember not only her masterful teaching but also that she roamed about the room peering over our shoulders to see if we had done our homework.

Great teachers inspire their students, and, as students, we—perhaps unconsciously, perhaps not—absorb and copy their styles. Sometimes, when I hear an advanced graduate student present, I recognize, by cadence and gesture, the dissertation advisor.

I also learned much from teachers who I, regrettably, found boring. I learned not to teach a large undergraduate class sitting at a desk reading from notes or repeating what was assigned in the textbook. I also picked up an invaluable lesson—the necessity for preparation.

When I first started teaching, I naively assumed that, after giving a lecture once or twice, I could breeze into class the next time the topic appeared on the syllabus. But the seemingly effortless teaching that I so prize requires, for me and surely for others, a remarkable investment of time. We know how much preparation a new course requires. But, even when I am teaching something that I have taught many times before, because it has been at least a year since I had given that lecture, orchestrated that discussion, thought about those readings, before I walk into the classroom, I must think through anew the objectives and the pacing of the class. Then there is the additional effort spent to adapt courses in my current stable: changing readings, bringing in new technologies, cutting a lesson that did not work, and inventing new assignments.

Syllabus crafted, notes organized, assignments drafted, I am ready to greet a new class. Knowing that I will have to master dozens of names in a few weeks, I also wonder: Who are these students? When and where were they born? Where do they stand in the world? The annual Beloit College Mindset List ([www.beloit.edu/mindset/](http://www.beloit.edu/mindset/)), a witty inventory that I recommend if you have never read it, reminds me that, for this generation, TV screens kept getting smaller; for mine, they got larger. Today’s students “chat,” but mostly without talking. They have little use for roadmaps; they have always had GPS, and Google has always been a verb. These quirky insights into their world provide crucial cultural information. They remind me that my contextual touchstones are likely inscrutable to my students.

I realize that masterful teaching leaves behind no article to send to colleagues, no book to display on our shelves, no citations to track in our peers’ work. Since only some of us train students for careers that follow in our footsteps, the legacy of our successful teaching is ephemeral, hidden in our students’ memories. Perhaps that explains the disinclination among scholars to spend too much time discussing what happens in the classroom.

As my term as AJS president ends, I thank our members—my teachers, my peers, and my students—for leading our learned society these past two years; and I look forward to having more time for conversations with you about our scholarship and our teaching.

Pamela S. Nadell  
*American University*

# From the Executive Director

## Spinning Forward

*Dear Colleagues,*

This summer I had the good fortune to attend a wonderful film screening: a live broadcast from London of the National Theatre's outstanding production of Tony Kushner's epic seven-hour play *Angels in America*. While the play is celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary, Kushner's opus about the AIDS crisis during the Reagan years feels (sadly) relevant as ever. Watching his larger-than-life characters grapple with questions of life and death, love and loss, I left the screenings simultaneously moved, saddened, and enlightened. And like with any good text that bears new fruit and insights with multiple viewings, I was struck by a certain theme this time around that, while hardly buried in the work, spoke to me more than usual: the topic of migration, which also happens to be the focus of this issue of *AJS Perspectives*.

Migration is of course very much in the news right now, with ongoing concerns about travel bans and the building of walls. In Kushner's play, though, migration takes on both literal meaning in the movement of people—the very Jewish play opens with a rabbi discussing the immigration of Jews to America, “the ones who crossed the ocean, who brought with us to America the villages of Russia and Lithuania”—but also the more metaphoric migrations of people, the move toward progress and change. In Kushner's work, filled with magical realism, Prior Walter, an AIDS-stricken drag queen, is visited by an Angel who has chosen Prior to be a prophet to the people. The message that he should tell society is to “stop moving,” as the migrations of humans have seemingly brought chaos into the world and may have even caused God to disappear forever. Prior, modern gay man that he is, though, refuses to preach this message, and like the biblical Jonah, runs away from his charge. As Prior says, “We can't just stop. We're not rocks—progress, migration, motion is . . . modernity. It's *animate*, it's what living things do.” While Prior's words ultimately serve as Tony Kushner's rationale for how progressivism is needed to solve the crises of our day (in this particular case, the AIDS epidemic), Prior's words are applicable to more mundane issues as well.

As the new Executive Director of the Association for Jewish Studies, I take Prior's words to heart. Progress, change, and migration are all unavoidable phenomena that must be embraced. Here at the Association, we are “spinning forward,” albeit in less grandiose ways than Kushner deals with, but moving ahead nonetheless. From finding new ways to serve our members to addressing a changing academic market to piloting new public programs, AJS refuses to sit still. Here are just a few of the changes that have taken place in the last few months and some inklings of further changes to come:

- The launching of our brand-new redesigned website and URL: [associationforjewishstudies.org](http://associationforjewishstudies.org)
- The successful piloting of our Writing beyond the Academy workshop this past summer in Ann Arbor, Michigan
- New activities at the annual conference, including a theater outing and a Jewish walking tour of Washington, DC
- A new mobile app for the conference
- An upgrade to *AJS Perspectives* as a glossy full-color magazine
- Coming soon! New membership portal
- Coming soon! New “look” for AJS
- Coming soon! New pricing structure for future conferences

The world spins forward and so too does the Association for Jewish Studies. As the Executive Director, I am always open to talk to you, our members, about your ideas for change, how we can better serve you, and how we can work together to strengthen the field of Jewish Studies both within the academy and in the wider world. To invoke Prior's final line at the end of *Angels in America*: “The Great Work Begins,” and I look forward to doing that work with all of you.

Warren Hoffman  
*Association for Jewish Studies*



Mirta Kupferminc. *People from Another Mirror*, 2001. Etching, 35.4 inches x 23.6 inches. Courtesy of the artist.



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# The Migration Issue

## COMING TO TERMS

### Immigration and the Jewish Multisite Nation

Michel S. Laguerre



The Palmach, Immigration to Israel. July 18, 1947. Courtesy of the Palmach Archive, via the Israeli Pikiwiki project.

**T**he general tendency to conceptualize the study of migration from a homeland to a hostland leading to the formation of cultural enclaves in the country of resettlement is a fruitful framework for most international migratory movement schemes. However, this traditional sociological approach is less insightful when applied to an analysis of the global, multigenerational,

and multidirectional Jewish case. The Jewish dispersion is exceptionally multifaceted: it has several points of origin; it has been continuous despite fluctuations in migratory rate, whether a trickle or substantial at times; it occupies urban enclaves, facilitating cross border social reproduction; and it interconnects diasporic sites of resettlement in a global landscape with the ancestral

homeland to form a multisite nation, or cosmonation, displaying a variable geometry.

A larger conceptualization of immigration that better fits the Jewish example must pay attention to the global ensemble arising from interconnected demographic patches despite the varied modes of formation, organization, connections, and status positions of nodes.

In this expansive context, immigration takes on a different meaning; it is an effort by an individual or group to reach out to other segments of the geographically distributed sites of the multisite nation. In other words, immigration is a mechanism that leads to the creation, expansion, consolidation, and ongoing reformatting of the global network, reflecting the architecture of its cross border engagement.

This multidimensional form of immigration produces both productive dividends and negative consequences. These outcomes are visible from the scale of the family unit to the global network of nodes that the distributed enclaves compose: for instance, in the multinationalization of the Jewish family-household with members dispersed in different sites if not different countries; the development of diasporic quarters that function as interconnected nodes; the repositioning of each enclave as a potential or actual place of refuge or settlement for persecuted members from other enclaves and for individuals in search of employment, educational facilities, or the realization of family reunification; the production of knowledge and goods in one site but consumed by the entire network; and the creation of global institutions headquartered in one country but providing services—either directly or through subsidiaries—to compatriots in other countries. The multiple cross border imbrications of these translocal communities allow them to function as a global network operating as a multisite nation, which shows them in a different light because of the ability to map out and understand the cosmonational landscape of their interactions.

Migration is a key element that helps us understand the step-by-step mechanisms of re-assembling the human infrastructure of the multisite Jewish nation. It sheds light on the formation of enclaves, the geographical distribution of sites, the directions of circulatory movements, and the agencies that provide social services to both the local communities to which Jewish immigrants belong and the extraterritorial communities to which they are connected. If immigration is essential to understanding the process of formation of Jewish enclaves, emigration is a *sine qua non* to deconstructing the process of their collapse.

Fruitful insights arise not only by studying the phenomenon of human mobility from homeland to hostland and vice versa, but also from a focus on the linkages

between extraterritorial enclaves. In *Global Neighborhoods: Jewish Quarters in Paris, London and Berlin* (State University of New York Press, 2008), I documented the unmaking and remaking of these neighborhoods of globalization after World War II. Their formation resulted from voluntary and forced migration from the Middle East, the Mediterranean region, and North Africa to Charlemagne's Europe; these neighborhoods served as homes to first and subsequent generations of Jewish immigrants. Over the years, these enclave-communities established unique traditions, religious organizations, commercial establishments, educational facilities, social and humanitarian protection agencies, and transnational ties. Each maintained a distinct identity despite earlier forced ghettoization (beginning with *il ghetto* in Venice in 1516), which has contributed to the social reproduction of the subalternity of daily life, but aided its social reproduction by a unique temporal structure of religious practice—a lunar-solar calendar that does not coincide with the Gregorian solar calendrical system of the hegemonic Christian West. As a result of this temporal marginalization and subjugation, the Jewish weekly cycle choreographs its rhythms within the interstices of the dominant Western week. Despite their local entrenchment, these diasporic enclaves have always functioned as transnational and global communities, their presence reflected in transfrontier interconnections and familial and institutional reliance on other enclaves in other countries for religious, commercial, and associational reasons.

These global forms of operation and cooperation of Jewish enclaves manifest themselves in different ways, including the transfer of rabbis from one site to another in the cosmonational network; the circulation of goods, information, and images from one enclave to another; firm headquarters in one site that have subsidiaries in other enclaves; social agencies established in one enclave that serve the needs of compatriots in others; and the vocation of each site to serve as a potential place of refuge for residents of other enclaves in cases of religious persecution, pogroms, regional conflict, war, or natural disasters.

The global networking of sites is seen not only through the solidarity they show toward each other, but also through the competition they exhibit when a site projects itself as the capitol of the network. For

example, from the mid-nineteenth century up to the Second World War, Jewish Paris was often referred to in common parlance as “Little Jerusalem,” Jewish Amsterdam as the “Jerusalem of the West,” and Jewish Vilna (now Vilnius) as the “Jerusalem of the East.” Each enclave competed to be the most significant site of the Jewish Diaspora either as a center of intellectual life, a hub of political organizations, or a bubbling site of Orthodox religious institutions.

The study of Jewish migration not only allows one to observe the circularity of human movements from site to site, the mutual solidarity of sites, and the contribution of each site to the operation and social reproduction of the global network, but also the role of such sites in the network governance of the cosmonation to minimize perturbations and maximize resilience. By looking at the network in addition to local community nodes, one gains useful insights as one transitions from the *logic of individual or group actions* to the *logic of the cosmonational network*, which serves as a framework for understanding the peculiarities of the contributions of each site to the construction, organization, and functioning of the Jewish multisite nation.

*Michel S. Laguerre is professor of Global Studies, director of the Berkeley Center for Globalization and Information Technology, and member of the executive committee of the College of Letters and Science at the University of California, Berkeley. He has written more than twenty scholarly books; his most recent volume, The Postdiaspora Condition, was published in 2017 in the NYU European Studies Series.*

# From Pariahs to Most Desirable Migrants? Jewish Refugees since 1948

Gerard Daniel Cohen

“Today, to our shame, Anne Frank is a Syrian girl,” wrote *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof on August 25, 2016. This latest appropriation of the child diarist to denounce indifference in the face of suffering has stirred the expected controversy over whether the Holocaust can or should be compared with contemporary humanitarian disasters. But the Anne Frank invoked in this article was not merely the young Jewish girl trapped in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam between 1940 and 1944. She was also the child refugee from Germany whose fate was sealed earlier by the reluctance of the United States to open its gates to Jews like the Frank family who sought in vain American visas to escape Nazism. “History rhymes,” contends Kristof: the nadir of Jewish refugee history in the late 1930s parallels—rhymes with—the desperate situation of Syrians and other migrants today. The image of the Jew-as-pariah became the epitome of “rightlessness” in the writings of Hannah Arendt, and the Jewish analogy is now commonly used in the media to illustrate the plight of other stateless refugees callously abandoned to their fate. Thus the Burmese Rohingya boat people adrift off the coast of Malaysia and Indonesia “are becoming the Jews of Asia,” the hapless inhabitants of the Calais Jungle awaiting a passage to England are treated like “Jews in Nazi Germany,” and in Israel human rights advocates urge the government to grant Eritrean refugees “the asylum that was denied to Jews in Europe.”

The popularity of the “new Jews” metaphor, however, masks a central dimension of Jewish history in the second half of the twentieth century. In the wake of the Holocaust, the exceptionality of Jewish “pariahdom” gave way to a normalization of Jewish international migration. To be sure, the Exodus affair of July and August 1947 put on full display the drama of “humanity at sea.” Indeed, until the creation of the State of Israel, the approximately 200,000 Holocaust survivors in the displaced persons camps of occupied Germany endured a world closed off to large numbers of Jewish refugees. With its restrictive stipulations, the Displaced Persons Act passed in June 1948 by the United States Congress favored anticommunist Poles, Ukrainians, and former nationals of

the Baltic states over Jewish immigrants. By 1950, however, most Jewish displaced persons had left for Israel, with others going to the United States (where the revised DP Act of 1950 lifted previous restrictions), Australia, Canada, and Latin America. For American and European policy makers, the swift stabilization of the displaced persons crisis in postwar Germany through the resettlement of “freedom-loving” refugees across the world aimed to countenance the spread of communism. Enabled in part by the International Refugee Organization (the predecessor of UNHCR), the emigration of Holocaust survivors from central Europe to Israel was also part of a broader “redistribution” of displaced Europeans in the early Cold War period. “If we are saved we feel humiliated, and if we are helped we feel downgraded,” wrote a gloomy Arendt in 1943, describing the travails of German Jewish exiles like herself. Yet despite the hardships of uprooting and new beginnings in Israel or the New World, this tragic vision of solitude and alienation was less applicable to post-1948 European Jewish migrants.

The recognition of “persecution” as a key determinant in the definition of refugees in international law also contributed to a qualitative upgrade in the status of Jewish (but even more so, in non-Jewish) asylum seekers. The still-effective 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees did not make any direct references to the Holocaust but stipulated that a “well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality” constitutes grounds for protection and asylum. That Israeli legal scholars and diplomats were influential in the passing of the convention—as well as in the adoption of the 1954 Convention on Statelessness—was not innocuous. Although the birth of Israel created a massive Palestinian refugee problem, the new state rapidly became a model for the wide-scale absorption and integration of stateless “ingatherers.” The experience of Jewish statelessness indeed loomed large behind the reevaluation of “citizenship” as a basic human right in postwar legal and political thought. If Arendt used the Jewish pariah negatively to emphasize the frailty of liberal citizenship and the “decline of the rights of man,” others,



New immigrants from Europe arriving at Tel Aviv port, 1948. Photo by Frank Shershel. Courtesy of the Israel Government Press Office.

such as Chief Justice Earl Warren in 1958, positively asserted that “citizenship is man’s basic right, for it is nothing less than the right to have rights.” Revealingly, it was the case brought in front of the Supreme Court by the Polish-born Jew Beys Afroyim in 1967 that led to the prohibition of forcible denaturalization in the United States, thus consecrating the advent of a “sovereign citizen” endowed with inviolable citizenship.

Jewish refugees from North Africa and the Middle East were unaffected by these new guarantees. In Iraq between 1950 and 1952, the forced departure of nearly 130,000 Jews to Israel was accompanied by collective deprivation of citizenship in addition to material dispossession, a pattern repeated in 1956 in Egypt. The approximately 800,000 Jews who, under various degrees of coercion, left Arab or Muslim countries after 1948 symbolized indeed the persistence of Jewish vulnerability: the Mizrahi replaced the German Jew in this new episode of destitution. But the experiences of Jewish refugees from Arab lands were ultimately different. In several cases, such as Yemen, Iraq, or Morocco, the State of Israel entered in secret negotiations with Arab regimes to facilitate the safe departure of Jews. Their abrupt abandonment of ancestral places of residence was undoubtedly traumatic, as was life in transit camps such as Grand Arénas near Marseilles, where Israeli doctors, welfare workers, and immigration officials placed Moroccan Jews under strict humanitarian governance. Yet the Law of Return passed by the Knesset in 1950 ensured the automatic reintegration of all Jewish refugees into the realm of citizenship. In other host countries, such as France and England, denaturalized Jews from Egypt easily obtained citizenship in the favorable postwar context of open-door immigration.

Persecuted or endangered Jews in Communist Eastern Europe faced different hurdles. In Romania, Nicolae Ceausescu allowed more than 100,000 Jews to emigrate in return for Israeli economic aid, merchandise, or cash. But fierce “anti-Zionist” campaigns in Poland forced small numbers of Jews to leave in the late 1950s and again in 1968. By then, however, East European Jews and Soviet refuseniks authorized to leave, as well as Iranian Jews who fled the new Islamic regime in 1979, transited in Vienna or Rome, where visas to Israel, the United States, or Western Europe awaited them. Potent symbols of human rights violations at the dawn of the 1970s,



Berlin, Germany, October 5, 2015. © UNHCR/Gordon Welters

refuseniks elicited transnational advocacy campaigns unthinkable in 1938, when the Jewish exodus from Hitler’s Reich reached its apex. In the United States, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment of 1974 put economic pressure on the Soviet Union in order to let Jews depart to Israel. As international human rights “exploded” in the West in the 1970s, so did expressions of solidarity with Jewish dissidents and emigrants from the Soviet Union. In the early 1990s, a century after their forefathers fled poverty and oppression in the Pale of Settlement to reach the *goldene medinah*, one million Jews from the former Soviet Union settled in Israel thanks to unprecedented American loan guarantees. Others directly immigrated (or re-emigrated from Israel) to the United States on special refugee visas issued under the Lautenberg Amendment of 1989. Despite the huge challenges presented by reunification, the Federal Republic of Germany similarly provided generous asylum to ex-Soviet Jews.

Today, thousands of young Israelis flock to Berlin to fulfill artistic or entrepreneurial dreams or reclaim the German citizenship lost by their grandparents during the Holocaust era. In Berlin too, well-meaning (non-Jewish) academics teach classes in Jewish history intended for Syrian migrants as part of their integration in Germany, or perhaps to help them make sense of their own “Jewish” predicament. Yet this Jewish metanarrative of “refugeeness” is

also one of hope. In the second half of the twentieth century, and even more so since 1989, Jewish migration has experienced a reversal of exceptionality: thanks to the safety net provided by the Jewish nation-state, American involvement and the official “philosemitism” of the European Union, the “specter of statelessness” has been kept at bay. The postwar rehabilitation of Jewish refugees in Israel, the United States, west European and other countries spelled the end of their previous undesirability. We can certainly bemoan the tragic similarities between “Syrian girls” and Anne Frank, but we should more urgently strive to alleviate the Syrian refugee crisis by replicating the successes of Jewish migration from 1948 to the present.

*Gerard Daniel Cohen is Eurias Fellow at the Institute für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen, Vienna and Samuel W. and Goldye Marian Spain Associate Professor in Jewish Studies at Rice University. He is the author of In War’s Wake: Europe’s Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order (Oxford University Press, 2012) and numerous articles on Jewish refugees, human rights, and humanitarianism in the twentieth century. He is currently completing a book on the uses and misuses of “philosemitism” in Europe from 1945 to the present.*

# Was the Jewish Diaspora in Antiquity a Migration or an Exile?

Erich S. Gruen



Dura Europos synagogue wall painting depicting Ezekiel and the hand of God. Via Wikimedia Commons.

The “wandering Jew” remains an emblematic image for the fate of the clan through much of its history. The critical moment came, so it is often thought, with the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE. That traumatic event, with its loss of the hallowed center, would seem to relocate Jewish consciousness to the periphery, to reinvent Jewish identity as forever adjusting to removal from the heartland, the temporary and shifting circumstances of the Diaspora.

The Jews of antiquity did indeed scatter themselves all over the Mediterranean in significant numbers and with enduring impact. But should one see this, in any meaningful sense, as a consequence of the temple’s destruction or the lamentable fate of a people exiled from their homeland and wandering in inhospitable lands with only the distant hope of a “return” to rekindle their spirits?

In fact, Jewish departure from the homeland had a long history prior to Rome’s crushing of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Even the Exodus from Egypt had been reversed many centuries earlier. Jews dwelled in that land already in the sixth century BCE, as papyri from a Jewish military colony at Elephantine reveal. The Murashu archive of documents

from Nippur in Babylonia from the fifth century BCE attests to Jews in a variety of trades and professions in that city, well after their supposed restoration to Judah. The flood tide, however, came after the conquests of Alexander the Great and the collapse of the Persian Empire in the late fourth century BCE. The arrival of Greeks and Macedonians in the Near East generated the installation of new communities and the expansion of older ones that drew a host of Hellenic settlers and attracted substantial numbers from eastern peoples, including the Jews. As Greeks found the prospects abroad enticing, so also did the Jews. A burgeoning Jewish Diaspora, it appears, followed in the wake of the Greek Diaspora.

By the late second century BCE, the author of 1 Maccabees could claim that Jews had found their way not only to Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, and the Iranian plateau, but to the cities and principalities of Asia Minor, to the islands of the Aegean, to Greece itself, to Crete, Cyprus, and Cyrene. We know further of Jewish communities in Italy, including large settlements in Rome and Ostia. The Greek geographer Strabo, writing at the end of the first century BCE (and he had no axe to grind on the subject) remarked that there was hardly a place in the world that did not possess

members of this tribe and feel their weight. All of this occurred well before the demolition of the temple. Even without explicit figures we may be confident that Jews abroad far outnumbered those dwelling in Palestine—and had done so for many generations.

Little of this population shift constituted exile. Nor did it signify mass migration in troubled times to flee oppression. The movement took place over a period of centuries. Some of it, to be sure, was involuntary and unwelcome. Many of those who found themselves abroad had come as captives, prisoners of war, and slaves. Conflicts between the Hellenistic kingdoms of Egypt and Syria in the third century BCE caused periodic dislocation. Internal upheavals in Palestine in the following century generated additional political refugees and enforced settlements. Roman intervention in the Near East accelerated the process. Pompey’s victories in Judea in 63 BCE, followed by battles on Palestinian soil over the next three decades, brought an unspecified number of Jews to Italy or onto the slave mart as human booty, the victims of conquest.

Compulsory displacement, however, cannot have accounted for more than a fraction of the migration. Overpopulation in Palestine may have been a factor for some,

indebtedness for others. But more than hardship was involved here. The new and expanded communities that sprang up as consequence of Alexander's acquisitions served as magnets for migration. Military service, perhaps surprisingly, proved to be an attractive proposition for Jews. Large numbers of them found employment as mercenaries, military colonists, or enlisted men in the regular forces of Hellenic cities or kingdoms. Others seized opportunities in business, commerce, or agriculture. Our best evidence comes from Egyptian papyri showing that Jews served in the Ptolemaic armies and police forces, reached officer rank, and received land grants. Jews had access to various levels of the administration as tax farmers and tax collectors, as bankers and granary officials. They took part in commerce, shipping, finance, farming, and every form of occupation.

How did Jews conceptualize this dispersal? Was it perceived or represented as exile? Some Second Temple texts, such as Jubilees, Ben Sira, Tobit, Judith, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs do echo dire biblical pronouncements about the sins of Israelites and the fierce retaliation of God that issued in uprooting from the homeland and the scattering as penalty for waywardness in times gone by. Some of this may represent warnings to current Diaspora dwellers not to lapse again. But the condition of Diaspora itself in the Second Temple period is not a target of reproach or a source of discontent. It bears emphasis that Second Temple Jews never felt a need to fashion a theory of Diaspora. Those who inhabited a world of Greek culture and Roman power did not wrestle with or agonize over the fact of dispersal. It was an integral part of their existence and a central element of their identity.

The sense of permanent settlement as migrants rather than temporary displacement as exiles is exemplified by a major development that occurred in the course of the third century BCE: the translation of the Hebrew Bible (or at least the Pentateuch) into Greek. The need for a Greek Bible itself holds critical significance. It indicates that many Jews dwelling in the scattered communities of the Mediterranean had lost the mastery of Hebrew but nonetheless clung to the centerpiece of their tradition. If they were to read the Bible it would have to be in Greek. Their Scriptures contained the record and principles of a people whose roots went back to distant antiquity but who maintained their identity in a contemporary society—and in a contemporary language.

An important question in this regard needs to be addressed. How did migratory Jews relate to the homeland? Adjustment to the circumstances of the Diaspora diffused any widespread passion for the "Return." This did not, however, diminish the sanctity and centrality of Jerusalem in the Jewish consciousness. The city's aura retained a powerful hold on Jews, wherever they happened to reside. Numerous texts acclaim Jerusalem as "the holy city." As the philosopher Philo asserts, even those for whom the place in which they were born and raised and in which their ancestors also dwelled was their *patris*, still regard Jerusalem as their *metropolis*. Jews everywhere reaffirmed their dedication to Jerusalem each year through the annual tithe paid to the temple. The ritualistic offering carried deep significance as a bonding device. The historian Josephus proudly observes that the donations came from Jews all over Asia and Europe, indeed from all over the world, for countless years. That annual act of obeisance constituted

a repeated display of affection and allegiance, visible evidence of the unbroken attachment of migratory Jews to the center. It also implied that the "Return" was unnecessary.

A comparable institution reinforces that inference: the pilgrimage of Diaspora Jews to Jerusalem for festivals. According to Philo, myriads came from countless cities for every feast, over land and sea, from all points of the compass, to enjoy the temple as a serene refuge from the hurly-burly of everyday life abroad. They were evidently not locked in exile—nor in aimless wandering. The holy city was a compelling magnet. But pilgrimage by its very nature signified a *temporary* payment of respect. Jerusalem possessed an irresistible claim on the emotions of Diaspora Jews, forming a critical part of their identity. But home was elsewhere.

Gifts to the temple and pilgrimages to Jerusalem announced simultaneously one's devotion to the symbolic heart of Judaism and a singular pride in the accomplishments of the Diaspora. The migrants had made a success of it.

*Erich S. Gruen is Gladys Rehard Wood Professor of History and Classics, emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley. His publications include Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition (University of California Press, 1998), Diaspora, Jews amidst Greeks and Romans (Harvard University Press, 2002), Rethinking the Other in Antiquity (Princeton University Press, 2011), and Constructs of Identity in Hellenistic Judaism (De Gruyter, 2016).*



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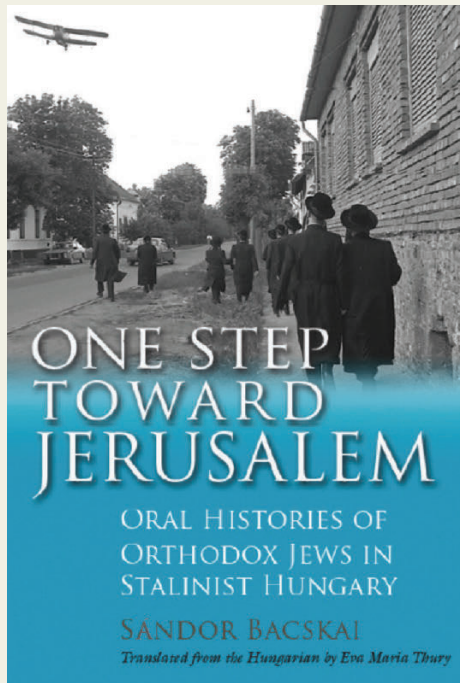
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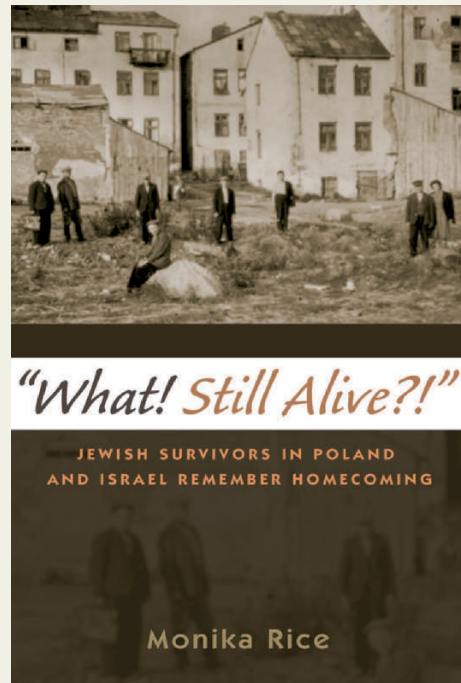
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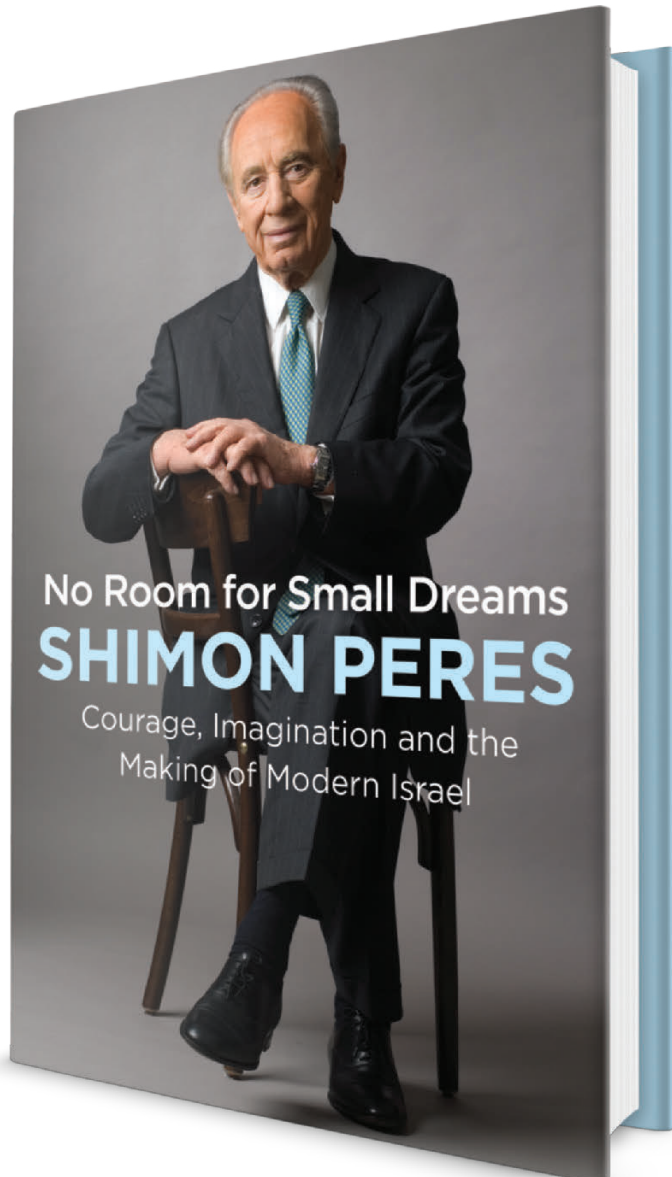
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For questions or further information regarding this program, please contact Professor Jonathan Sarna: [sarna@brandeis.edu](mailto:sarna@brandeis.edu).

# RETHINKING ALIYAH

## Jewish Immigration to Palestine in the Early Twentieth Century

Gur Alroey

In a single decade, from the end of 1903 to the outbreak of World War I, about two million Jews migrated from eastern Europe and the Austro-Hungarian Empire to lands overseas in search of a refuge from pogroms and persecutions and in search of a livelihood and the chance of a better life. The chief wave of this migration reached the shores of the United States, and the rest went to England, Argentina, South Africa, Australia, and Palestine. In those years, about thirty-five thousand immigrants came to Palestine and were one of the main elements in the creation of a new period in the history of the Yishuv (the Jewish community) in the country, a period known as the Second Aliyah.

Most of the studies dealing with the Second Aliyah see it from the point of view of the Yishuv and the Zionist movement and stress the select idealistic groups who came to the country with a fully formed Zionist attitude. It is not surprising that historical memory has enshrined precisely these groups as a pillar of fire that went before the camp. But does this image of young pioneers draining marshes and building settlements, conquering labor and guarding, faithfully reflect the totality of the immigrants who reached the country in those years?

As in the case of Jewish immigrants to the United States, families also immigrated to Palestine. The head of the family came first, examined the conditions in the country and the chances of succeeding there, and only after he had settled down did he bring over his wife and children. A quarter of those who came to Palestine were children up to the age of fourteen, half were fifteen to fifty years old (mainly young tradesmen and artisans), and the rest were fifty and over. These immigrants settled mainly in the large towns—Jaffa, Jerusalem, and Hebron—and a few also went to Haifa. Part of this aliyah were also a large number of people who ended up returning from where they came (*yordim*). At the beginning of the twentieth century, about 75 to 80 percent of immigrants ended up leaving the country,



Jewish colonies and settlements: the wine factory interior, c. 1920–1930. G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

and between 1912 and 1914, the number of those who left dropped to about 50 percent.

### “Run-down, patched up, tattered and torn”

Contemporary testimonies confirm the conclusions provided by the statistics. Many of the immigrants were not people who came because of Zionist ideology, but ordinary Jews who arrived in the country by chance or as a last resort. In those years many Jews in Europe experienced difficult economic circumstances and suffered persecution by the authorities. The decision to immigrate to Palestine was generally not motivated by a longing for the land but by other considerations, such as its proximity to the country of origin and the low cost of a sailing ticket, or by false rumors about conditions in Palestine and the possibilities of buying land there.

In 1905, an information bureau of the Odessa Committee, a Russian Jewish

charitable organization promoting emigration, opened in Jaffa. The Jaffa branch of the Odessa Committee was headed by Menachem Sheinkin, who, owing to his position, became one of the key figures dealing with immigration and the reception of immigrants. In a letter he sent in 1908 to Otto Warburg, a member of the executive committee of the Zionist Organization, Sheinkin depicted the human material that came to the country in the darkest colors:

As long as you, the directors, don't attempt to attract capital by the million to Palestine, we are not worth a thing. Our position will not be strengthened by the poor people coming to Palestine on their own initiative. I say, quite the opposite, for our reputation is getting worse from day to day in the eyes of the officials and the general public because of this

immigration. What they see is people who are down and out, downtrodden, patched up, with bundles of tattered clothes, the poorest of the poor, who cannot possibly be a blessing to the country, and it gives us a bad name. And if wealthy, respected people, well groomed and well regarded, don't come ashore, in the language of the port the term "Jew" will be synonymous with weak and poor, of little value, the dregs of society, and from there the idea will spread to the other sections of the people. This is the naked truth I have to convey to you as the representative of the information bureau, and every week I could say the same. Everything is static, nothing changes, and nothing is going to change until Palestine receives an injection of capital.

Many of those coming to the country were a far cry from the image of the young pioneer who came to "build and be built." It was a population that made a living mainly from crafts and petty trade. In 1907 artisans in Jaffa came together to found the Artisans' Centre. At first it was a professional association concerned with the welfare of artisans, but it gradually became an organization with national aspirations, which saw the petty bourgeoisie—the artisans—as an important element in the development of the Yishuv in Palestine: "It is undoubtedly a sin where immigration is concerned to give preference to party workers and to give the highly productive and economically well set-up Jewish artisan a lower or neglected status," said Sheinkin, who was the spokesman of a group of artisans of the Second Aliyah and defended their interests.

### Shoes of the best kind

The settlement of artisans in the large towns gradually led to the creation of an economic infrastructure that began to provide new places of employment. Many immigrants were employed in Leon Stein's pioneering metal-casting enterprise in Jaffa. The factory produced corn-grinding machines, railings, iron gates, water pumps and ice-making machines. In 1905 a cork factory opened in Jaffa. The business was managed by two brothers who brought over machines and tools from the Pale of Settlement to make corks "not inferior in quality to the best corks in Europe." This small enterprise employed four workers who were paid two

*bishliks* a day. In that same year, a Jewish couple from Gomel in White Russia opened a sweets factory. A year later they were joined by a partner, the business expanded and, according to them, made "sweets of a better kind than was made previously and the products are not inferior to the best products overseas and sold in shops in Jaffa."

In addition to small factories, there were dozens of little workshops that employed assistants and apprentices. Thus, in 1906–7, for example, a workshop was founded to produce

carpets, and there was another that made furniture and wooden toys of various kinds, another that made barrels, and a shoemaking enterprise that employed twenty workers who made "shoes of the best kind." The Kadima workshop for frames made metal bed frames, ovens, iceboxes and English locks, and there were workshops that produced cigarette cases, optical appliances, and goldsmiths' work.

The wave of immigration to Palestine led to the opening of hotels, restaurants, and other amenities. Before the great wave



Jewish factory, c.1898–1946. G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

of immigration in 1905, there were three restaurants in Jaffa, but “in the last two years their number increased little by little, until in the summer of 1905 there were six restaurants, and there is another café belonging to two Ashkenazi partners—the first café for Ashkenazis.” The hairdressers also prospered: “A few years ago, there was not a single Jewish barber in Jaffa, and only two years ago, in 1905, a Jewish barber came from Russia and rented a hairdresser’s shop, and in a short time he attracted quite a number of others.” Because of the competition, a few of them had to close.

The artisans fared better than the merchants. Artisans who brought with them the tools of their trade from overseas could easily open a workshop. Merchants, on the other hand, needed initial capital and credit, a knowledge of languages, and an understanding of the laws of currency and commerce. Lacking these requirements, and with the competition of Christian and Muslim merchants, it was difficult for them to succeed.

### Jewish girls bathing in the sea

The new geographical location of the immigrants provided stimuli that did not exist in the Pale of Settlement or in America. Businesses run by the local inhabitants in Jaffa closed at a relatively early hour, giving their occupants time to sit in cafés, bathe in the sea, or take an evening stroll along the shore. The pleasant climate and the Mediterranean mentality, so different from the European, led immigrants to wish to imitate local customs. The difference in the make-up of the population in Jaffa created a new situation:

They bathe naked in the sea in Jaffa under the heavens ...In the evening, the Arabs flock to the seashore from all parts of the town to gaze at the Jewish girls bathing half-naked in the sea. Each year, the rabbi protests at this act of desecration ... but the world carries on in its own way. The Arab girls bathe only at night, in a more modest fashion.

### The myth

As noted above, out of all the early waves of immigration to Palestine, the Second Aliyah is said to be the most ideological. Already at the end of the period, its image



The administration of The Hebrew Gymnasium (HaGimnasia Halvrit) in Tel Aviv, 1910. Pictured from right to left: Chaim Chissin, Haim Bugrashov, Ben-Zion Mosinson, Menachem Sheinkin, Eliyahu Berligné. The David B. Keidan Collection of Digital Images from the Central Zionist Archives via Wikimedia Commons.

was formed as a special phenomenon with its own human, social, and cultural character. It is this image that distinguished the immigration to Palestine from immigration to the United States. Thus, the workers of the Second Aliyah became the representatives of the aliyah as a whole.

I have no intention of belittling the importance of the work of the pioneers of the Second Aliyah or questioning their contributions. At the same time, the impact of this group and their influence on the thousands of immigrants who came with them to the country was not seen in the period of the Second Aliyah but only in later years, after World War I. To a great extent, the story of the pioneers of the Second Aliyah resembles that of the Bilu-movement of the First Aliyah, whose image was mainly formed in succeeding generations. It is very doubtful if among the peddlers, petty tradesmen, and artisans there were any that had an opinion about attempts to settle in the distant periphery of the Galilee, Degania, or the Sea of Galilee, an area that was completely unknown to many of the immigrants to the country, and hardly visited by most of them. It is doubtful if they knew about the Shomer organization and its activities, or heard about A. D. Gordon

and his teachings. How many of them bought and read the newspapers *Ha-po'el ha-za'ir* or *Ha-'ahdut* each week and took an interest in what was happening in the country? Many of them spoke Yiddish and were preoccupied with their material problems and their attempts to survive in the new land.

Palestine, like every destination for many immigrants, was founded by a population of ordinary people who contended with problems of earning a living, an unfamiliar language, and adjusting to the way of life and customs of a new country. In time, they too, in their way, contributed to the development of the Jewish Yishuv.

*Gur Alroey is dean of humanities at the University of Haifa. He is a scholar of modern Jewish history and the director of the Ruderman Program for American Jewish Studies. His most recent monograph is An Unpromising Land: Jewish Immigration to Palestine in the Early Twentieth Century (Stanford University Press, 2014).*



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# Rethinking Aliyah from Arab and Muslim Countries: The Case of Tangier

Aviad Moreno

I have just read a fantastic book, *Quand Israël rentre chez soi* [When Israel comes home]. ... Thanks to this book, I know where I should apply my efforts. ... Above all I must learn Hebrew. ... Maybe a Jewish nation will rise, a country.

This account of the discovery of the Jewish nationalist awakening was written on August 4, 1943 in a personal diary by Alegria Bendelac, then a fifteen-year-old Jewish girl in the Moroccan city of Tangier, who had come across a few Zionist publications in her aunt's house. Alegria lived in Tangier until age thirty-five, when she immigrated to the United States, accompanied by her husband and young daughters. Her mother, however, joined her younger daughter in Israel, a few months before Alegria's immigration to the United States.

The years between Alegria's discovery of Zionism as a teenager in 1943 and her eventual emigration in 1963 witnessed dramatic political shifts that drove the mass emigration of Jews from Arab and Muslim countries. In Morocco, specifically, the main political events included the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 and Morocco's independence in 1956. This dramatic series of events was followed by Operation Yachin (November 1961 through December 1964), an Israeli-directed mission with the express goal of "evacuating" Moroccan Jews to Israel. Of the remaining Moroccan Jews, 55 percent moved to Israel as part of this effort.

According to records from the Jewish Agency, remarkably, Operation Yachin brought only 17.9 percent of the Jewish population of Tangier to Israel, the lowest percentage of any major city in Morocco during this period. Many Jews from Tangier chose to immigrate to other destinations in Europe and the Americas at that time.

Why would the vast majority (82.1 percent) of Jews from Tangier choose to remain in Morocco or immigrate elsewhere during the momentous Operation Yachin, at a moment when aliyah became accessible to them as it did to their fellow Jews elsewhere in Morocco? And why would the remaining 17.9 percent choose differently



Young Jewish women on a ship's deck, Tangier, c. 1905. Beth Hatefutsoth Photo Archive, courtesy of Dona Buzaglo, Tangier.

and immigrate to Israel at the earlier phase, occasionally even when family members remained in Tangier or migrated elsewhere? And what caused others to join the wave of aliyah at a later date, as Jewish Agency records further show?

Related questions regarding migration preferences arise among scholars who focus on Jewish migration and on global migration more generally. What makes this evolution of aliyah from Tangier so fascinating and distinct? The process of aliyah from Arab and Muslim lands is still explained as a direct consequence of a volatile political situation in the Middle East and North Africa that caused Israel to "rescue" Jews from the hostile Middle Eastern environment, in some cases, fulfilling the collective and deeply rooted "traditional" Zionist ambitions of these populations for aliyah. Critical of this popular Zionist explanation for immigration, some scholars and Israeli social activists describe the majority of Mizrahi populations as a powerless "pawn" of Israel's Ashkenazi-led immigration project designed to populate the young state.

In cases such as Tangier—as a range of scholars imply—this society represents the privileged, "Europeanized," economically better-off Mizrahi Jews who "escaped" Israel's maltreatment or who were indifferent

to aliyah for more practical reasons. The commonly held explanations of Jewish immigration to Israel from Muslim lands have not kept pace with the vast literature on global migration that tends to place greater emphasis on individuals' dynamic identities and the synergic power of social networks that shape the decision to emigrate, against the backdrop of broader political or economic shifts.

The focus on aliyah from Tangier helps to provide a broader perspective on Jewish migration from Muslim lands, including Morocco, that goes beyond the discussion of Israel's immigration policy and the supposedly rigid collective identities of the migrants. Fundamental for understanding this migratory process is the fact that emigration did not only begin with the establishment of Israel. Jewish migration has been a constant part of the history of Tangier and other Moroccan cities, including mostly neighboring Tetuan, since the eighteenth century. We can find Tangier natives and their descendants in the United Kingdom, the Canary Islands, Portugal, Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina, France, Spain, Canada, the United States, and in many more places, including prestate Palestine and of course, contemporary Israel.

The diversity of migration destinations and the early, ongoing process of migration underpin the power of human agency and dynamic social networks that helped shape aliyah from Tangier after 1948. After Israeli statehood, and even when Zionist emissaries were encouraging immigration to Israel, other destinations continued to attract Jewish inhabitants from Tangier and its surrounding cities in large numbers—as a result of long-standing, new, and resuming ethnic, kinship, and professional networks.

The effort by the Zionist leadership to encourage and recruit immigrants to Israel in the mid-twentieth century provided a relatively new alternative for migration for the Jews of Morocco. It was a route full of obstacles, controlled by a robust state agency that included a "selective aliyah" policy, notably between 1951 and 1954, by which families were separated according to age criteria, professional training, and their health; between 1956 (October 1957

in Tangier) and 1961 aliyah became strictly clandestine due to its ban by Moroccan authorities. Political incidents, both in Israel and in Morocco, including the volatile situation in Israel, caused a stir among those Jews in Morocco who had contemplated aliyah. Peer groups of younger immigrants shaped by Israel's restrictions became the pioneers of aliyah in its earlier years.

As time passed, however, we witness a fuller incorporation of aliyah into the global web of Jewish migration from Tangier. Unlike Alegría, the zealous Zionist teenager who would end up in the United States after her marriage, other Jews, in different biographical circumstances—even those with less connection to the Zionist venture before Operation Yachin—found themselves in Israel because of familial or professional links; there they could adopt new, but still highly flexible identities. This can be revealed by the words of Clarice, another woman from Tangier, who would become a prominent preserver of Tangier's Jewish heritage in Israel during the late 1970s and 1980s, only after spending a decade in France:

Only in Israel [did] I become interested in our traditions, while meeting people.... In Tangier [on the other hand], I used to feel much more French [referring to her connections with the large European community of Tangier in the 1950s]. The [Jewish] community was something I would come across only on special occasions.

Clarice's and Alegría's personal stories point toward the need for an alternative analytical approach of Jewish migration from Muslim lands, grounded in the assumption that migration preferences and identities are dynamic, embedded within evolving social contexts. From this perspective, through the case of Tangier, it becomes clear that various groups of immigrants from Muslim lands were far less passive in shaping their aliyah histories than is conventionally believed. My approach challenges a historiography that disaggregates aliyah history from other Jewish and non-Jewish migration histories. It also questions studies that focus on policy making as the sole mode of analyses of the mass Jewish exodus from Muslim countries and demonstrates that each Jewish community was diverse and cannot be treated as a single regional unit of analysis, especially when local factors of migration are taken into account.

*Aviad Moreno is a Kreitman Fellow at the Center for Israel Studies at Ben-Gurion University. He spent 2016–2017 as a Frankel Fellow at the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. Moreno's dissertation, "Ethnicity in Motion: Social Networks in the Emigration of Jews from Northern Morocco to Venezuela and Israel, 1860–2010," earned the 2016 Ben Halpern Prize for Best Dissertation in Israel Studies by the Association for Israel Studies. His book Europe from Morocco: The Minutes of the Leadership of Tangier's Jewish Community, 1860–1864 (Hebrew) was published in 2015 by the Ben Zvi Institute.*



Members of Bachad (the Alliance of Religious Friends). Tangier, Morocco, 1950. Members of the group made aliyah to Israel in 1953. Beth Hatefutsoth, Photo Archive, courtesy of Simon Ben Outiel, Holon.



Immigrants from Tangier, members of MABAT (Hebrew acronym for Mifgash Bnei Tangir, the Reunion of Tangier's Natives) during an exposition in the Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv, Israel, 1988. Reprinted from MABAT Revista 1, p. 92.

Reports on the Arab-Israeli conflict, alongside an advertisement for a ship sailing to the Americas, Tangier. Reprinted from *España*, October 2, 1956, p.2.

# Migrant Indigeneity: An Alternative Sound Experiment among the African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem

Diana A. Burnett



Dimona, Israel, November 2008. ChameleonsEye / Shutterstock.com.

**W**hzzzz . . . was the sound that I heard the machine make as it chugged through ice, protein powder, and fruit alongside the whirl of the juicer that ran through tufts of wheatgrass, hunks of beets, and mounds of carrots. Here, in the US South, against the rev of the motor's engine and in its silence, I sought to ask questions about community practice while conversing with Uryon, the juice bar operator at the Hebrew restaurant, as he served community members and patrons. The first time I heard the whzzzz . . . I was in Dimona, in the southern Negev. There, it was the sound of Chaviva using the blender to mix together a concoction made of spirulina, bananas, tahini, and peanut butter, which would be breakfast for her youngest child. Whzzzz . . . was the same sound that startled me from my sleep one early morning in South Africa as Ahuva, my host, noisily prepared food in her Vitamix and food processor, which was integral to producing just the right textures for vegan provisions slated to be served during that afternoon's festivities in a nearby park. As the wife of a community leader in that city, it was her job to stand

as a model for newer members, especially as it relates to cooking "Hebrew food" that met all the regulations and standards outlined in the community's manuals.

The African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem are a transnational community whose membership spans five continents. I utilize sound as a metaphor to analyze and theorize the connected processes of indigenous self-making across Hebrew diasporas. By listening to the sounds of machinery, I was able to understand how and what the Hebrews have to mix up, break down, blend, and process not only to hold together their commitment to a "global" health project of non-communicable disease prevention. This is demonstrated in the community's strict dietary practices, but also, most importantly, in their efforts to move them all closer to their goal of returning to what they believe to be the practices that would render them as legibly "indigenous" to the arbitrators of authenticity where they reside.

Like the uneven sounds of the machines that often grunted, growled, and occasionally howled, the process of working towards an indigenous identity was one of the

community's many perceptible challenges. I witnessed the Hebrews' numerous failed attempts to demonstrate a brand of cultural authenticity that would be believed and taken seriously by those outside of the community. For example, in the cases of Uryon, who came to the community as an adolescent, Chaviva, who was born into the community and its practices, and Ahuva, who was an adult when she came into what is referred to as "Hebrew knowledge and identity," their endeavors as cultural workers who produce this form of indigeneity was confusing to most audiences. To detractors, these were just Black people who were pretending to be something they were not. The complexity of the Hebrew argument for their existence as an indigenous community amid significant cycles of migration was difficult for many to believe, particularly given the lack of scholarly attention to and public knowledge about indigenous identities in Black communities, and the plausibility of an identity grounded in a theological belief that many Blacks in the Americas are descendants of ancient Hebrew Israelites. Nevertheless, the three aforementioned Hebrews engage in what I

refer to as an alternative sound experiment, producing the sounds of indigeneity that are counter to what others might believe is and can be authentically indigenous for this community. Through the sounds produced by their food preparation devices, they work tirelessly to illustrate their spiritual beliefs and shared practices through the vegan meals they prepare and the seemingly mundane commitment to uphold particular dietary standards for their families, the Hebrew community, and the wider public.

My framing of this alternative sound experiment is structured in and against the Hebrews' presentation of popularized depictions of the nutritionally bereft food cultures of the communities where the Hebrews emerged from their most recent place of exile and where some currently reside (i.e., Black American, Black British, Black Caribbean, Black South African, etc.). Therefore, I aim to attune the ears of this audience to the sounds of Hebrew indigeneity manufactured by Uryon, Chaviva, and Ahuva, who work to decimate old ways of constructing their identity in light of their desire to advance new yet, what Hebrews believe are, historic modes of being. Here, the sounds emitted from the machines are a compass for the direction of the community's goal of returning to what they believe to be their former indigenous selves through

adherence to a foundational cultural practice, a plant-based lifestyle. Their indigenous self-making project focuses on producing, articulating, and translating claims about the self and their community through a register that often affords certain indigenous communities institutionalized rights and subsequent protections. Moreover, this construction of an indigenous identity works to address the condemning and enduring legacies of Blackness as a framework that often denies communities like the Hebrews authority to determine who they are, culturally, in the world, how they would like to be understood, and what it takes to be respected by a larger doubting public.

The sounds of the Hebrew process of indigenous self-making are inaudible to some who are unaccustomed to listening in certain of the registers. For many, there is a comfort in the traditional melodies of indigeneity, which adhere to more normative definitions, emphasizing histories that predate colonial encounters, situated geographic residency, and the maintenance of cultural difference. Nevertheless, for the Hebrews, their avant-garde sound of indigeneity is produced in another key, one that is grounded in the harmony of shared belief and group belonging, that is sharply attuned to the distinction of a belief in the ancient historicity of their social and political institutions, and

that utilizes spiritual texts to harmonize these cultural productions across the diasporas created through the community's successive migrations over time. For Hebrews, their exile into these diasporas does not foreclose the possibility of indigeneity because of their multiple migrations but, in fact, it foregrounds their indigeneity by drawing from an argument about cultural memory being produced through the reconstruction and recommitment to indigenous practices (such as the plant-based diet outlined in Hebrew Scripture) and the assumption of a durable spiritual identity that cuts across multiple sites of migration. Uryon, Chaviva, and Ahuva, while residing in different locations within the Hebrew Diaspora, share an indigenous identity that is not connected to their residence in one space but rather to an indigenous mode of being in any space, which they demonstrate, in part, by producing the sounds of indigeneity wherever they reside.

*Diana A. Burnett is a PhD candidate in Medical Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania. Previously, she earned a master of Divinity from Yale Divinity School and a master of Public Health from the University of Pennsylvania. Her dissertation focuses on her ethnographic research with the African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem across three continents.*



Dimona, Israel, November 2008. ChameleonsEye / Shutterstock.com.



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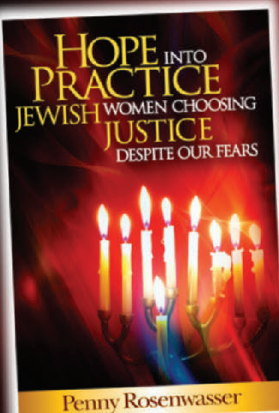
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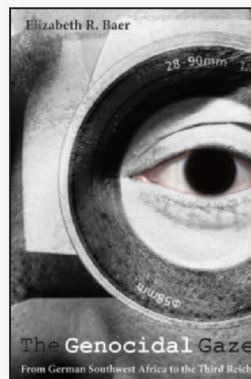




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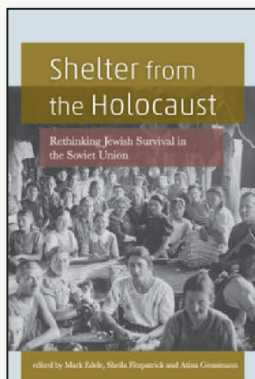
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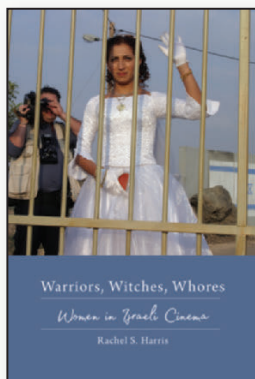
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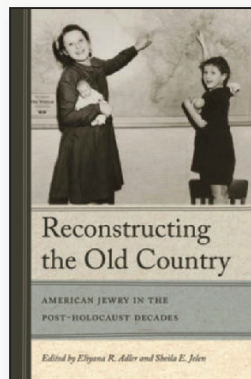
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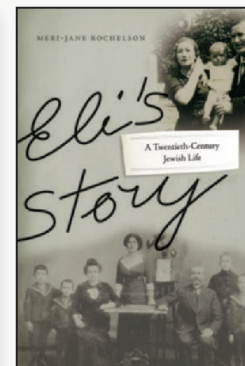
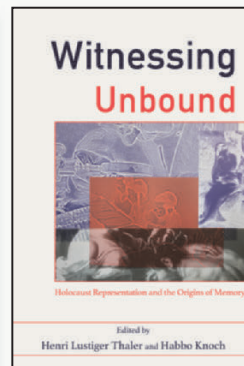
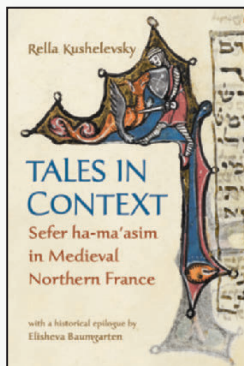
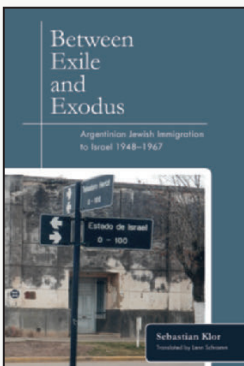
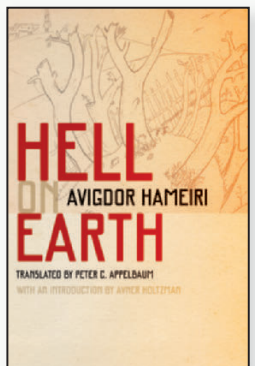
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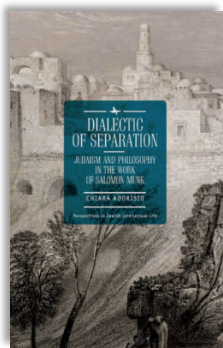
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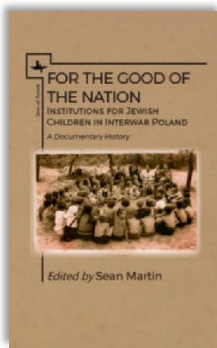
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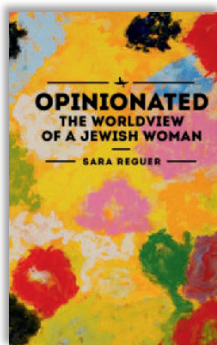
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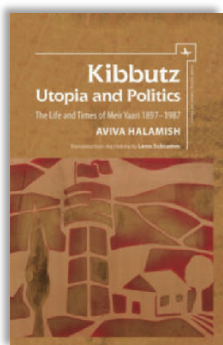
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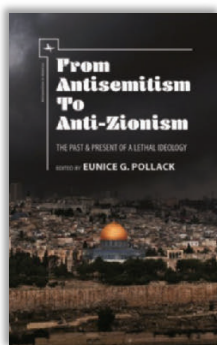
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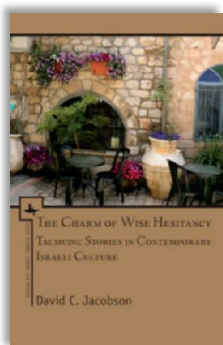
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BRUCHIM HABAIM  
 Hadod Hatov [Skulski, Shelomoh]; Miriam Nik (illustr)  
 1950, Tel Aviv: Bambi  
 Joyous children's story celebrating the vibrant life of a young family in Israel. Seven full-page color lithographs face rhyming stanzas in Hebrew. On the cover, a family is welcomed at the dock as they disembark a ship, making aliyah. We follow the two siblings from laundry day at the family's tent to gardening in the yard of their new home, feeding animals in the barn, dancing at a picnic, riding a flower cart, harvesting fruit and cheering Yom Haatzmaut. Albeit romanticized, the story is a charming depiction of postwar safety, freedom and abundance. Nik and Skulski were both Polish. Skulski entered Palestine illegally, was arrested as a Betar member, wrote and taught. Nik survived seven camps, at one point forced to counterfeit famous paintings along with her mother. In Israel she taught art, wrote and worked at the Eretz Israel Museum. Rare. (24552) \$950.

*Holiday in Israel (cropped slightly)*

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## In Transit: No End in Sight

Carol Zemel



Fig. 1 Alfred Steiglitz. *The Steerage*, 1907. Photogravure print, 10.4 x 13.1 in. Courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program, via Google Arts & Culture.

**W**hether human or animal, migration is provoked by two urgencies: a need for sustenance and escape from oppression. Bound as it is to a yearning for homeland, Jewish history begins and continues as a story of many migrations. After renouncing and breaking his father's idols, Abraham (then still Abram) is instructed by God to move "to a land that I will show you." With this first departure, the patriarch leads his extended family on a long

journey west and south, from Ur in Chaldea through the Haran mountains/valley to Beer Sheva in the Sinai desert. Though only briefly described in the biblical text, that settlement marks an origin for Jews, followed by a history of habitation, recurrent dispossession, dispersal, and return. Home is longed for and abandoned, elusive and occasionally achieved. The Exodus story, in contrast, describes a lengthy, forty-year migration from Egypt to Israel, marked by argument, disobedience,

internal struggle, as well as achievement.

Migration's success is the move from disruption to resettlement and continuity. With it comes collective memory and sagas, like those told in Genesis 12 and Exodus 1 and 12, and in the Passover seder narrative of disruption, flight from Egypt, and lengthy journey to a Promised Land.

At the same time, migrations produce near mythic accounts of national origins and social histories; they are also fundamental

to the multiculturalism of the modern nation-state. From the 1880s to the 1920s (another forty-year period of movement), thousands of Jews from eastern Europe and the Russian Empire escaped antisemitic oppression and migrated to North America. From approximately 200,000 in the 1880s, the Jewish population in the United States rose to 3,000,000 by the mid-1920s. Their arrival and entry was documented in many photographs, perhaps most famously, Alfred Steiglitz's *The Steerage* (1907) (fig. 1), which appears to show a shipload of new arrivals. The viewer's position tells the tale. From the safety of the shore, the camera looks down at the Jews in steerage, some in *taleysem*, waiting to disembark, as wealthier passengers peer in curiosity from an upper deck. The image declares the migrants' position: a crowd of newcomers, exotic and strange, still in transit, and not yet home. (The picture, in fact, depicts refugees denied entrance to the United States, and being taken back to Europe, as Lale Arikoglu pointed out in an article in *observer.com*.)

As a legacy of Ellis Island immigration procedures, photography came to be the documentary tool of displacement, migration, and resettlement. Today, the camera provides immediate international witness to war-torn Syria and North Africa and the exodus of Muslim people to quasi-refugee in Christian Europe and America. Stalled by immigrant quotas, adrift and drowning in rough seas, and packed into temporary camps, their desperation is caught by the camera's witness, and widely displayed as news. Who has not gasped at images of a dead children on a beach, refugees swimming to shore, (fig. 2) and an endless line of determined refugees marching through Slovenian fields. (fig 3) This is migration in devastating detail and incident, with little resolution or end in sight.

Unlike the immediacy of photographic capture, drawn and painted images of migration have a more symbolic impact. These are often migrations of the past, their histories foundational and iconic for people once in flight, and their representation is commemorative rather than documentary. Rather than news, they are reminders of human upheaval and focused perseverance. Unlike the photographic record, no specific site or incident marks migration's endless crowd. The peasants in Honoré Daumier's mid-nineteenth-century paintings, lithographs, and reliefs (fig. 4) move through an anonymous landscape that once supported their labor and livelihood, now displaced by machines and factories.



Fig. 2 Migrants swim from boat to shore, October 2015. Photo: Ben White/ CAFOD



Fig. 3 Migrants crossing field. Rigonce, Dobova, Brežice, October 2015. Republic of Slovenia Ministry of Defence via Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 4 Honoré Daumier. *Les émigrants*, c.1868. Oil on canvas, 15 x 26.75 in. The Ethel Morrison Van Derlip Fund, Minneapolis Institute of Art.



Fig. 5 Jacob Lawrence. *The migration gained in momentum*, 1941. Casein tempera on hardboard, 18 x 12 in. From Lawrence's *Migration Series*, panel 18. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy. © 2017 The Jacob and Gwendolyn Knight Lawrence Foundation, Seattle/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Fig. 6 Lenny Silverberg, *Migrants*, ink wash drawing. Published in *Crossing Borders*, 2010. Courtesy of the artist.

What history viewed as progress is represented as upheaval and uncertainty.

Jacob Lawrence's 1941 series of sixty paintings details the twentieth-century migration of black Americans from the rural South to industrial North. The picture sequence is not a linear narrative, but rather a kaleidoscopic depiction of neighbourhoods, housing, workplaces, and transport; they offer both history and a sense of promise to replace what is left behind. *The migration gained in momentum* (fig. 5) shows a procession of figures moving north on the canvas; they are joined by another group of emigrants moving east, their directions charted by the picture frame. Seen from an omniscient position above the crowd, the image describes both social phenomenon and spectacle.

With their directional design, such pictures invoke migration's urgency: the move from some abandoned origin toward an uncharted goal. And like the documented incidents of migration photographs, we see neither start nor finish; no beginning and no end. In *Crossing Borders*, Lenny Silverberg's ink wash drawings picture migrants moving east across pages shared with Steve Kowitz's poetry. The texts tell of remembered friendships, and strangers marching by.

Out there, in the dark, they could have been anyone: refugees from Rwanda, slaves pushing north.

Palestinians, Gypsies, Armenians, Jews . . .  
The lights of Tijuana, that yellow Haze to the west. Could have been Melos, Cracow, Quang Ngai . . .  
("Refugees, Late Summer Night," 42.)

Silverberg's images are pictorial company for these texts. (fig. 6) Grayish tonal variations lead across the silhouetted forms. Bent and burdened as they file past, these migrants are poorly dressed in baggy clothing, slightly exotic in toques and shawls. A bent old man staggers along with his bundles, a woman cradles a baby in her shawl. Further in the distance, misshapen silhouettes invite a lingering gaze that pauses the rhythm of the line, moving through these pages to somewhere unseen and unknown.

The current Syrian migration, though largely documented in photographs, has also produced its painted icons. Tunisian-born Slim Fejjari, whose adopted country Italy was a first haven for boatloads of migrants,

compressed the experience into a simple and chilling design. (fig. 7) Seen from above—an omniscient viewpoint that leaves no room for intervention—the crowded vessel is dwarfed by the surrounding sea, whose waves curl like ferocious eyes around the tiny boat. Less than halfway down the picture space—reinforcing a sense of slow movement—the boat plows on to an unseen shore.

We may compare the painting with a photograph, similar in design. (fig. 8) Here, the vessel fills the frame and moves laterally from east to west, like a great fish outlined in waves and foam. Countless figures pack the boat; staring up at us, they draw the airborne viewer into their midst. Unlike Fejjari's image of vulnerability, the photo focus brings a force to the crowd and suggests the magnitude of the migrant journey.

The separation of photographic and hand-made images is my own somewhat arbitrary division. They offer, I suggest, two

varieties of visual record and experience. The photographs document a specific disaster, human loss, and potential or partial rescue. They are irrefutable evidence of the pain of changing home. The drawings and paintings tell another more general human plight. We see no rushed departure, no arrival, no happy ending; the slow march continues, as from the depths of history. The pictures pause the journey, with neither certainty nor end in sight.

*Carol Zemel is professor emerita of Art History and Visual Culture at York University, Toronto. Her work focuses on Jewish and diasporic issues and on the ethics of visibility in modern and contemporary art. Her recent book is Looking Jewish: Visual Culture and Modern Diaspora (University of Indiana Press, 2015). Her critical essays have appeared in Images, C Magazine, Canadian Theatre Review, and the Jewish Daily Forward.*

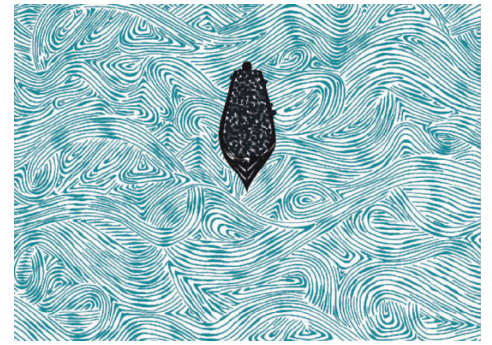


Fig. 7 Illustration by Slim Fejjari. First published in "Erano come due notti." © Else, Roma 2011



Fig. 8 Migrants in boat (aerial view). Rescue by Italian Navy, Mediterranean Sea, Italy, June 7, 2014. Photo by Massimo Sestani.

# Young Border Crossers: Jewish Youth during the Age of Migration

Daniella Doron



Jewish refugee children wave at the Statue of Liberty as the President Harding steams into New York harbor, June 3, 1939. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Anita Willens.

**A**t the height of the Nazi threat, two young German Jewish sisters fled Europe on the cusp of war to Newark, New Jersey, unaccompanied by adult kin. At their mother's behest, the daughters turned into prodigious letter writers. In their correspondence, the girls boasted of their seamless adjustment to American life and the tender care lavished on them by

their American foster parents. They also never failed to assure their mother of their constant longing for her, routinely including in their letters fantasies and poems about their eagerly anticipated family reunion. The younger Gaby would offer pencil drawings of the three of them together; the elder Yutta adopted an especially mature and protective tone in her letters towards her mother, her

"darling one." At one point she suggested returning to Europe if her mother felt too "lonesome," and elsewhere in their multiyear correspondence she remembered to keep her abreast of developments in securing her mother a visa. Their mother, in turn, insecure about her place in her daughters' hearts, constantly urged for details of their lives in America and their emotional inner worlds.



The letters bear witness to a trying few years in the life of a war-torn family. They uncover a seemingly topsy-turvy family hierarchy—children migrating ahead of adults and throwing themselves into the heady process of family migration and acculturation.

The experience of the Losser daughters was shared by other Jewish youth over the course of modern Jewish history. Between 1870 and 1924 two and a half million east European Jews—in proportional terms, one third of east European Jewry—bid farewell to friends and family and migrated to the United States. This is a familiar story. What is less familiar is that this mass of migrants was also a young body of migrants: one quarter had not yet reached the age of fourteen. In most cases, these youth made the monumental trek as part of a family unit. However, what remains inadequately documented is that from the 1870s through the 1950s waves of unaccompanied Jewish youth traversed continents and seas as they made their way abroad. In some cases, these young people pushed their way westward, largely independently, to join relatives who had migrated years earlier or to carve a brighter future for themselves on new shores. In other instances, these minors were assisted in their move by Jewish child migration programs that sought to spare them from violence and poverty or, in later years, a life of limbo in the European Jewish Displaced Persons camps. Like most immigrants, mobile youth were a self-selecting lot. Those with promising lives and positive affiliations with Europe presumably remained on the continent, whereas migrant youth had little to anchor them at home. Poverty, pogroms, the bloodshed caused by the Great War and the Russian Civil War, and the Holocaust all sparked Jewish youth flight. Their stories have fallen through the cracks of multiple scholarly fields.

The history of migration has enjoyed relatively fertile scholarly attention that has only mushroomed as of late. Most recently, scholars have questioned the narrative of a one-way trajectory from Russian oppression to American acculturation by showing how, be it by choice or circumstance, new Jewish communities fanned out across the globe. They have also muddled a historiography that has drawn an all-too-stark line between the sending and the host society. These scholars have revealed how bonds of belonging to the Old World were not irrevocably severed upon setting foot in the New World. But the fact that a staggering percentage of European Jewish

migrants had not yet reached adulthood has been noted in passing and yet never accorded sustained exploration. What happens if we look beyond the standard attention paid to migrating adults? What if, instead of writing migration history through the lens of class, men, women, or gender, we include age as a category of analysis to that list?

I would like to briefly introduce one conclusion. Primarily, integrating the perspectives and experiences of minors would underscore the role of youth as active agents in the act of migration. Several popular perceptions have obscured the agency of youth in the migration process: youth are generally regarded as passive and dependent, and the nuclear family unit as a hierarchical structure in which children languish at the bottom. These assumptions don't hold up to historical scrutiny, or even the images we currently see on the nightly news of mobile youth fleeing bombs in Syria or drug warfare in South and Central America. Youth could take the lead in migration, even when it led to generational conflict. If emigration confronted adults with deep potential loss, youth could face great gain. Emigration forced adults to bid farewell to assets and treasured kinship and friendship networks accumulated over a lifetime. For instance, even during 1930s Nazi Germany, adults anguished over whether the benefit of liberty outweighed the prospect of an uncertain life of toil abroad. Youth, who arguably had the most to lose from constricted socioeconomic horizons, could embrace starkly divergent positions from their elders. One Nazi-era teenage refugee reflected in the 1940s on the differing generational perspectives: "I was thrilled at the prospect of a trip abroad, even though I knew that I was leaving behind me several things that I would miss later. I was sad because of the influence and the state of mind of older people, more conscious of the difficulties that would confront them."

Migrant youth could urge reluctant parents to flee a perilous situation. For example, memoirs reveal that German Jewish youth were often most attuned to the disturbing rise of social antisemitism, and championed migration despite the initial reluctance of their parents. Or they could see migration as an exciting adventure, rather than a burden. Younger male refugees from Nazi Germany, for instance, envisioned a New World peopled by cowboys, Indians, and gangsters. They found themselves rather disappointed by the far more prosaic reality. In some cases, children and teenagers

made the heart-wrenching decision to leave family members behind as they attempted to chart their own futures. Thus, an image of determined and active children forcefully emerges that unsettles assumptions about the passivity of child migrants and their position at the bottom of the family hierarchy.

In spite of youths' efforts to assert their will, twentieth-century adults did not necessarily heed their preferences. Multiple factors could serve as obstacles toward children's self-determination: adults initiating and overseeing the migration of their young relatives; politicians and Jewish communal activists making decisions about the destination of young migrants; gendered expectations that limited the mobility of females; and common perceptions about the ability of youth at a certain age to know (or not) their own mind. An image of determined and independent youth emerges in this history of child migration, but so too does the growing power of international agencies that sought to aid children but that also inevitably came into friction with them.

Paying attention to the history of Jewish unaccompanied migrants helps remap our current understanding of Jewish migration history. Integrating this history sheds light on the multiple, and sometimes competing, causes and actors of migration. But it also can help address problems vexing our contemporary society. The matter of unaccompanied child migrants has currently dominated the front pages of the press and the concerns of politicians, families, social workers, and judges. As has been amply documented by scholars and journalists alike, minors are currently moving around the globe en masse to flee gang violence in Latin America, warfare in the Middle East, and poverty throughout the globe. Multiple parallels emerge between these two often woeful histories. Increased scholarly attention to the long history of Jewish migration, social responses to economic instability and persecution, the work of philanthropies and diasporic communities, and the critical role of children in these histories can inform contemporary national conversations.

*Daniella Doron is a senior lecturer in Jewish History at Monash University. She is the author of Jewish Youth and Identity in Postwar France: Rebuilding Family and Nation (Indiana University Press, 2015) and several articles on French Jewish history, postwar Europe, and the history of childhood, family, and gender.*

# Jewish “Bootlegged Aliens” in the Era of US Immigration Quotas

Libby Garland

This story will likely sound familiar: two young migrants, a man and a woman, find themselves in Tampico, on the Gulf Coast of Mexico. They are heading for the US border, but they don't have the right papers to get across. But they meet a man who tells them that—for a fee—he can help. They agree. They travel together to the Mexican border town of Piedras Negras, where the man arranges for a local guide to get the two migrants across the Rio Grande into Eagle Pass, Texas. In the middle of the river, the young woman panics. How will they make it? But they do. From here, it should be easy. As per the arrangement with the man in Tampico, the two migrants meet up with the pilot of a small aircraft that takes them to San Antonio. From there, the young man hopes to get to Chicago, the young woman to Brooklyn.

This next part of the story will probably seem familiar, too: US immigration authorities in San Antonio, who have become particularly vigilant in the wake of recent reports of small aircraft smuggling aliens and drugs, intercept the migrants. They detain the young man and young woman. They also detain the pilot, the owner of the plane, the man from Tampico (who in the meantime has also materialized in San Antonio to deal with paying the pilot) and an associate of the Tampico man—a kind of fixer—who had helped orchestrate the whole plan.

This cat-and-mouse game of migrants and law enforcement in the southwestern US borderlands is a narrative we may think we know well from the news, from heated political debates, from television shows and movies. This particular story, however, took place in 1928. The man desperate to cross into the United States from Mexico was Girsz Silberman, a Polish Jew. The young woman with him was a Russian Jew, Feiga Akselrod.

Why did Akselrod and Silberman resort to paying a smuggler to sneak them into the United States? Because in 1921 and 1924, with the nation still riding a wave of World War I-era nationalism and nativism, the US Congress had passed drastically restrictive immigration legislation. These sweeping new laws decreed that most immigration would henceforth be strictly limited according to nation-based quotas. The legislation

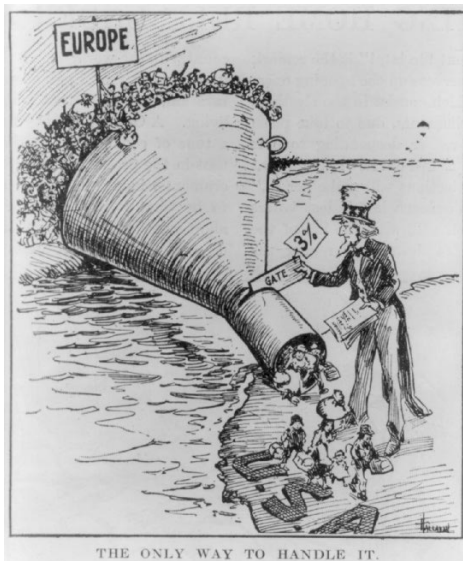


Illustration for article “An Alien Anti-dumping Bill” in *The Literary Digest*, May 7, 1921, p. 13, reprinting a cartoon by Hallhan for *Providence Evening Bulletin*. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

was designed to keep out immigrants that lawmakers considered racially, politically, and culturally undesirable: east European Jews, Italians, Slavs, and others who had been arriving in great numbers during the century's first decades. The 1924 law, known as the Johnson-Reed Act, also broadened an already-existing ban on the immigration of Asians, widely considered by many policy makers and much of the American public to be the least desirable immigrants of all.

The mysterious man in Tampico to whom the migrants Akselrod and Silberman entrusted their fate represents one channel by which some Jews were able to enter the United States in violation of the new laws. This gentleman was no good-hearted traveler, moved by the young people's predicament. Rather, he was one Samuel Weisstein, a Jewish immigrant from Poland and a naturalized US citizen who had been in the business of smuggling east European Jews to the United States for years. Though Weisstein denied everything when the San Antonio authorities questioned him, the US government already had a thick file on his smuggling activities, which extended to both sides of the Atlantic.

Weisstein was just one of many such “alien bootleggers” who proved a thorn in the side of US immigration authorities in the years after the quota laws. Just as Prohibition produced a lucrative business in contraband liquor, so the new immigration restrictions fueled an extensive underground of unlawful immigration from Europe. Indeed, the human smuggling industry employed some of the same networks and routes used by those in the business of transporting liquor into the nation. The alien smuggling business also drew on strategies established in earlier decades to move Chinese migrants—since 1882 banned almost entirely from entering the United States—surreptitiously into the country.

Just as it is impossible today to know the precise number of people in the United States in violation of US immigration law, so it is impossible to know exactly how many people entered or remained in the nation illegally during the quota years, or exactly who they all were or where they came from. But it is clear from the archival record that European Jews were well represented in this new underworld of illicit migration, both as smugglers and migrants. European Jews still had powerful reasons to come to the United States, despite the new laws. Many had family and friends already here. And in the chaotic years after World War I, many Jews found themselves in dire straits indeed—struggling in war-devastated economies, threatened by new nationalist regimes, or rendered stateless refugees. The desperate and determined, then, often decided to attempt to reach the United States in any way they could. They came by ship, by car, by train, by airplane, and by foot. They paid smugglers to get them across the Canadian border and the Mexican border. They bought fake identity papers in the brisk market for such documents that thrived in Berlin and Warsaw. They stowed away on ships bound for Miami from Havana.

The stories about these Jewish “illegal aliens” and people smugglers challenge some of the classic ways that scholars have understood Jewish migration in the modern age. Historians have tended to describe the time after the quota laws as a time in which “the gates of America were closed” to most Jews. They have observed that the nation's

“gates” didn’t really open in any significant way until the quotas were abolished by the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. It is true that the quota laws were effective, putting a halt to the mass immigration of the pre–World War I years. But the laws did not stop that immigration altogether. The nation’s gates never entirely closed to those the laws meant to exclude.

That fact has political implications for our current moment. For starters, it helps undermine the notion that our immigration system ever worked smoothly. Politicians from across the partisan spectrum like to opine that the nation’s immigration system is broken. The truth, though, is that there was no golden age of US immigration law, no earlier moment when the system fully achieved its stated goals. The history of real people during those years after the nation implemented its first

sweeping immigration restrictions shows that it was clear from the get-go that the American project of controlling borders was never entirely practicable. As soon as there were laws intended to control immigration and national borders, there were people who, just by trying to get where they needed to go, challenged the nation’s power to exert that control.

The history of Jewish illegal immigration also challenges the nativist claim that immigrants these days, especially those who come to or remain in the country in violation of US law, are inferior to the good, law-abiding immigrants of yesteryear. This narrative fits neatly with a version of American Jewish immigration history that is firmly established in communal memory—the narrative of the heroic immigrant ancestor who did it “right,” coming to this country by ship, seeking

freedom and opportunity, working hard and becoming American. But the stories of people like Akselrod, Silberman, and others suggest that immigrants living “back then” went about navigating, or rather circumnavigating, the law much like immigrants any time since, including the present. If they could come legally, they did. But many had powerful reasons to come and no means of obtaining the documents they needed to do it legally. They looked for other ways, despite the risks.

*Libby Garland is associate professor of History at Kingsborough Community College, the City University of New York, where she teaches US urban history and immigration history. She is the author of After They Closed the Gates: Jewish Illegal Immigration to the United States, 1921–1965 (University of Chicago Press, 2014).*

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# The Mellahs of Los Angeles: A Moroccan Jewish Community in an American Urban Space

Aomar Boum



A picture of Rabbi Louk leading a children's choir in traditional Moroccan melodies at a banquet in 1998 in Los Angeles with a band who flew in from Morocco. Photo by Rabbi Joshua Bittan. Courtesy of the author.

**M**oshe (I use a pseudonym) came to the United States in the late 1990s after a long life in Montreal, Canada. In 2016, we met in a café in the Fairfax district, where he introduced me to the history of the Moroccan Jewish community of Los Angeles. Before we said our goodbyes, we stopped at the neighboring synagogue of Baba Sale, one of the main Moroccan houses of worship on Los Angeles's Westside. While we talked about his life growing up in the *mellah* (Jewish neighborhood) of Marrakesh, he began to reflect on spatial restrictions and how they influence national and religious identities. "For many Moroccan Jews, including the ones who live in Los Angeles, there is a strong belief that the *mellah* is a discriminatory space that restricted Jewish movement in Islamic cities," he noted. After a moment of silence, he added: "Yet, while I believe that there is some truth in this statement, I also think that the *mellah* as a Jewish space helped Moroccan Jews throughout centuries nurture and maintain a distinct and independent Jewish identity around their synagogues and rabbis. In Los Angeles, we were able to create our cultural *mellahs* in the Valley and on the

Westside, making sure that our multicultural and linguistic identities are not erased and that our Moroccan Jewish values are transmitted to our children."

This ethnographic anecdote points to a number of themes at the center of a growing fluid and global Moroccan Judaism. It was surprising to me, given the negative and ahistorical views about the *mellah* as a "closed and walled space," to hear a Moroccan Jew who lives in Beverly Hills talk about pockets of Moroccan Jewish communities as modern *mellahs* of Los Angeles. Despite the negative aspects of the term, Moshe takes an iconic local term that in many ways stands as a synecdoche for what it means to be a Moroccan Jew, and gives it a positive meaning in a new context where he feels that Moroccan Judaism is (un)consciously stigmatized by other ritual expressions of Judaism. This is a Judaism that defines itself as unique and aspires to maintain its Moroccan indigeneity even in the context of global metropolitan centers where it is naturally dwarfed by dominant Ashkenazic Jewry and engulfed by Sephardic Jewish traditions from Iraq, Greece, Turkey,

Tunisia, Syria, and Rhodes, as well as Persian traditions from the large Iranian Jewish community. For Moshe and many others, Moroccan tradition becomes a refuge and a safeguard from other religious influences.

Since the late 1980s, Moroccan Jewish immigrants continue to arrive in Los Angeles mostly from Israel, France, and Canada. Locally viewed as part of the larger Sephardic Jewish community of Greater Los Angeles by other Jewish communities, Moroccan Jews constitute a group estimated to be about 10,000; a large part of the community is represented by Moroccan-born Israelis. Therefore, while many Moroccan Jews settled in Los Angeles directly from their native towns and cities in Morocco, other immigrants came after one or many short and/or long stops in Europe, Canada, and Latin America.

I became interested in the global circulation of Moroccan Jewish identity as part of a larger historical ethnography of Moroccan Jewish migration from Canada, France, and Israel to the United States; from Venezuela to Miami and Panama; and from France to Israel. While this trend of circulation is influenced by economic and political factors that have attracted scholarly attention, little research has been done on how Moroccan Jews have adapted to American society and interacted with other forms of Judaism and Jewish communities in the United States.

Although we know a lot about the Moroccan Jewish presence in Europe and Canada, little research has been done on the dynamics, characteristics, and settlements of Moroccan Jews in Latin America and the United States. Based on ethnographic research among Moroccan Jews in Los Angeles, I argue that despite centuries of Moroccan emigration and settlement in the Americas and forces of assimilation to local cultures, Moroccan Jewish immigrants have been able to preserve different aspects of Moroccan cultural identities even as they moved around Buenos Aires (Argentina), Caracas (Venezuela), São Paulo (Brazil), and Los Angeles (USA) by maintaining closed social, religious, indigenous Moroccan institutions— notwithstanding personal conflicts between their members. In their mobility between American urban centers, Moroccan Jews

continue to embody affective and sensual memories of Moroccan spaces and cultural heritage. At the center of their social memory is the maintenance of Moroccan Jewish Orthodox traditions and a deep connection to their holy men. At the same time, their construction of a Moroccan American Jewish identity has been nurtured by a perpetual, atemporal, and sensuous collective relationship with a timeless “imagined” Moroccan space that exists in opposition to other Sephardic Jewish identities that exist in Los Angeles, including identities built on group migration from Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Persia, and Lebanon.

A number of Moroccan Jews arrived in Los Angeles after their exposure to American soldiers in the aftermath of the American landing in Casablanca during the denouement of the Second World War. At that time, Moroccan Jews worked for the American army as translators and civilian workers. One of the early immigrants was Sydney Chriqui, who made it to Los Angeles after serving in the American army in Morocco and France. In his personal biography *As Time Goes By: A Life Journey from Casablanca*, Chriqui describes how he first got his job with the US Army and settled in Los Angeles. During a personal interview, he noted how he was inspired to build an independent Moroccan Jewish center of worship in Los Angeles.

In the early stages of settlement in the city, the Moroccan Jewish community was largely scattered in the Westside district of the city and far from the San Fernando Valley; members of the community attended services mostly in Sephardic synagogues such as the Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel and the Sephardic Hebrew Center, despite the fact that these communities did not adhere to many Moroccan Jewish Orthodox rites of worship. After many years without a Moroccan house of worship, the community managed to establish its first Orthodox synagogue, known as Em Habanim (Mother of the Children). The synagogue facilitated the creation of the first Moroccan Jewish community in Los Angeles.

Religious music and melodies are at the center of the birth and revival of Moroccan Jewish communities in Los Angeles since the 1970s. During a Shabbat dinner at the house of one member of the community, a Moroccan Jew noted that “the prayer melodies in Ashkenazi synagogues in Pico-Robertson [a Jewish neighborhood] are foreign to my ears. I feel closer to the melodies in a mosque than to those of an Ashkenazi



This picture was taken in 2014 at the 40th anniversary banquet of Em Habanim synagogue. Pictured from left to right Aime Oiknine, Rabbi Joshua Bittan, Sidney Chriqui, Andre Chriqui, and Los Angeles County Commissioner Howard Winkler. Photo by Rabbi Joshua Bittan. Courtesy of the author.

synagogue.” This vignette highlights the importance of lyrics and songs of praises of God (*bakkashot*) that are similar to Muslim prayers, which many Moroccan Jews used to hear in Morocco. Born and raised in Morocco, Rabbi Haim Louk embodied for years this spirit of the performance and preservation of Moroccan Jewish tradition of singing piyyutim in Hebrew and Arabic in Los Angeles. Even though he lived in Israel and England for years, Louk became a key figure at Em Habanim Synagogue, where he performed traditional religious songs and music. At the same time Louk encouraged the community to expose the younger generation to liturgical melodies and Andalusian music. By the 1990s, Haim Louk, who served as a rabbi of Em Habanim for about fourteen years, became a symbol of Jewish-Muslim relations by singing for Jewish audiences in Los Angeles and Moroccan fans in Fez and Essaouira in the years before he settled in Israel. Nowadays, Em Habanim Sephardic Congregation, under the spiritual leadership of Rabbi Joshua Bittan, is intent on preserving its typical Moroccan heritage in liturgy and customs. The synagogue boasts an active Sephardic Community Center with youth activities, a resource library of religious books authored by Moroccan rabbis, and

a weekly meeting of cantors and amateurs from the community at large who gather with Hazzan Shimon Sibony to practice and sing the old tradition of *bakkashot*.

The Moroccan Jewish community of Los Angeles is split in three ways—French, Israeli, and, especially among the young, American. First, there are those who never moved to Israel, but went to France and Montreal. They speak French in synagogues; their Hebrew accent when they pray is more French. Second, there are those who came directly from Israel. They have altered some Sephardic-Moroccan melodies to the point that their prayer style is known as Yerushalmi. During the high holidays, when local rabbis bring in singers from out of town to lead the prayer services, there is a little tension between these groups over the classic vs. Yerushalmi style. Finally, the third group consists of the younger generation that speaks neither French nor Hebrew in synagogues, but American English. They generally do not distinguish between classic and Yerushalmi. The bigger question for this group is to what extent they will continue the rituals of the *mellahs*, and, for that matter, the very rituals of Moroccan Judaism.

Since the middle of the twentieth century, Morocco has witnessed a process of Jewish emigration from its cities and villages. Today the majority of Moroccan Jews are dispersed throughout the world. While the largest number of Moroccan Jews continue to live in Israel, about 100,000 Moroccan Jews live in the Americas. These populations have not only thrived in their respective communities. They have managed to retain their own cultural and religious identities without losing their linguistic and religious complexities. They speak French, Spanish, Berber, Darija, and English. They eat couscous, *matbuha*, *harira*, tajines during Shabbat. Their prayers are incomplete without *maqams* in Hebrew and Moroccan Arabic. Their homes are full of Moroccan cultural artifacts and memorabilia. Aware of the secular and Ashkenazic influence of Los Angeles, many Moroccan Jewish interviewees underlined their confidence in bringing up a new generation of Moroccan-American Jews in Los Angeles.

*Aomar Boum is an associate professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is interested in the place of religious minorities such as Jews, Baha'is, Shias, and Christians in post-independence nation-states. He is the author of Memories of Absence: How Muslims Remember Jews in Morocco (Stanford University Press, 2013).*

# Migrating Memory: Art and Politics

Amy Kaminsky

Not so long ago Riv-Ellen Prell wrote in these pages about the thrilling yet limiting call to young anthropologists in the 1960s and 70s to leave mere people behind as the focus of their scholarship. Instead, they were exhorted, they should concentrate on ideas. Prell goes on to reflect on her own scholarly journey that both embraced the promise of theory and acknowledged the necessity of groundedness. I sit here now struggling with a challenge that echoes hers: to consider the abstract theme of migration as it bumps up against the lived experience of people who leave their homelands. The conundrum is made compelling right now by our own government's stunning decision to slam its doors in the face of real people desperate to find a place of refuge.

## II

I have never wanted to be personally entwined in my own research. Instead, I have addressed the US insularity that has always troubled me by studying the world beyond our borders. The migration whose roots were political exile from Latin America during times of dictatorship and repression has always been compelling to me; I have left to others any discussion of our own country's spotty history as a place of refuge. I eventually came to realize that my research interests have always somehow emerged from the events of my own life, albeit in the most tenuous of ways. I was once a migrant, leaving the United States to live elsewhere, a forever that lasted a mere two years, and not under duress. I have been irritated by bureaucratic roadblocks set in place as a rejoinder to US restrictions on potential migrants from the countries I wished to live in temporarily. But I have never been an exile or a refugee. The few irritations I have endured have served me well; they have concentrated my mind on the lives of others, most specifically political activists exiled from Latin America's Southern Cone. Those interests eventually led me to the stories of Jews whose migration routes included refuge in Argentina and, too often, refuge from that country when it was held in thrall by dictatorship in the 1970s and 80s.

The Argentine junta did not single out Jews as its enemies, but it arrested,

tortured, killed, and sent them into exile in disproportionate numbers. Two Jewish survivors of the Argentine torture centers, Alicia Partnoy and Sara Strejilevich, left Argentina for the United States, where they wrote compelling accounts of their experiences that include their captors' grim references to the most ghoulish of Nazi practices. Artists and writers like them have the capacity of transforming even the most dreadful of realities into paintings, art installations, films, music, and literary texts, inviting us into a world that we might otherwise be reluctant to intrude upon. Their work attests to the necessity of artistic expression in the face of brutality. Partnoy and

Strejilevich were among the artists and writers who fled from their home country, bearing witness to the abuses of power that sent them into exile. Ironically, Argentina had been a place of refuge for earlier generations of Jews.

## III

The artist Mirta Kupferminc, Argentine daughter of survivors of Auschwitz, often returns to the memory of loss, uprooting, and wandering that characterized her parents' lives. Now that the United States, which has not been particularly warm to the actual migrants who come across its borders, is exhibiting an overt hostility to them, I return to Kupferminc's art. Her



Fig. 1 Mirta Kupferminc. *My Doll, the Only One*, 2004. Etching aquatint, 38.98 X 27.56 in. Courtesy of the artist.

work offers us a profound understanding of the complexity of migration, reaching us through the senses as they meet the intellect. Kupferminc's images cross borders with startling immediacy. In an exuberant body of work that includes paintings, prints, sculpture, video, and performance she captures one of the central paradoxes of migration: that of being simultaneously unburdened, free almost of the gravity that holds us to a place and a history, but also laden with memories and those material possessions we need in order to survive.

Kupferminc's migrants are unmoored; the ties that held them had to be cut when they left home behind. But how to survive without connection, to each other, to a history, and to a place? Those of us enmeshed in the safety and order of home have the luxury of being unconcerned that the common objects we all need to get through our days, and the objects of ritual and of memory that connect us to our history and beliefs, will still be in place as we come and go. Migrants need to guess: What can be left behind? How much can they carry with them? What, of the many things that will be missed, can they leave? Everything that comes along adds to the weight of the migrants' load, even as they are borne along in their lightness.

A considerable portion of Kupferminc's work is populated by whimsical figures who wander over a landscape that is sometimes as vast as the planet and sometimes as intimate as a woman's body. In one canvas, that landscape is the back of a tiger, in another it the outline of the artist's own hand. Kupferminc's migrants almost always travel along a clearly defined edge, not enmeshed in a landscape but, rather, forever on its perimeter. They walk, mostly in single file, headed away from a somewhere and toward another-where, but neither their place of origin nor their destination is in sight. In one image, they walk in a never-ending circle around a doll dressed in the richly embroidered garb of a Hungarian peasant (fig. 1). The doll, a gift from her uncle when she first met him, represents a tenuous survival in Kupferminc's symbolic universe: many years after the war her mother discovered that her brother had also survived the Holocaust.

Sometimes one of Kupferminc's figures is upside down or turned backwards. Her migrants may be fanciful, some dressed like carnival performers and others in the garb of Old-World Jews, but all seem radically alone. Some carry nothing with them, while others are burdened by trees complete with their root systems. Some are only part human,

with plant-like appendages, or fishtails, or the spiky backs of lizards, as if to remind us that migration is about liminality.

Other canvases affirm what we sense in these images of wanderers: that they originate in the specific history of displacement and loss of Kupferminc's parents. The figures that populate *Ghosts at the Lodz Ghetto: In Memory of Daniel Kupferminc* (fig. 2) are overtly linked to her family history. Some are draped in tallit, and almost all are marked with the Star of David. They are, overwhelmingly, bereft; some stumble or float off into space. One child reaches toward a tallit borne aloft like a kite; nearby, a Moses-like figure balances on a peaked roof. The periphery along which the figures walk is a devastated landscape that is both the rooftops of Lodz and a forest at night. Unlike Kupferminc's other wanderers, caught in the middle of their roving over a symbolic space, these figures are captured at the moment of the destruction of their home, at a real time and in a real place.

Similarly, the piece entitled, simply, *1944* (fig. 3) unmistakably refers to the devastation of the Holocaust. In it Kupferminc's Hungarian doll occupies the upper plane of the canvas, while below a group of refugees who have more in common with the figures in *Ghosts at the Lodz Ghetto* than with



Fig 2. Mirta Kupferminc. *Ghosts at the Lodz Ghetto (in Daniel Kupferminc's memory)*, 2000. Etching intaglio 23.62 x 35.43 in. Courtesy of the artist.



Fig. 3 Mirta Kupferminc. 1944, 2004. Mixed media, 39.37 x 39.37 in. Courtesy of the artist.



Fig. 4 Mirta Kupferminc. *In Another Land*, 2009. Digital photo with digital intervention on paper, 31.5 x 78.74 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Kupferminc's whimsical wanderers, appear as if reflected in a mirror. We see them upside down, their abjection visible in their faces and posture, and echoed in their placement at the bottom of the canvas. The doll's outsize figure, brightly colored dress, and sweetly impassive face contrast starkly with the huddled men and women, drained of color, who trudge along the lower half of the canvas. Like the Lodz ghosts, they seem unreal, disembodied, the reflection of people who are no longer there.

Not all of Kupferminc's migration-themed pieces include her diminutive wanderers. In one group of canvases and a video installation the artist painfully stitches memory into her own hand. One of these, *Heartline*, traces her parents' journey from Lodz and Sarosd to Buenos Aires. *In Another Land* (fig. 4) is a self-portrait that seems to have materialized out of a wild hail of red swirls and slashes. A red-clad, blue-skinned Mirta Kupferminc sits casually on wispy cloud-like forms, between two of her iconic winged chairs, looking with mild curiosity out off the canvas—the other land as a not-uncomfortable nowhere.

#### IV

Art can cross borders faster even than people; and the deep emotions, sensations, and thoughts that it invokes are inseparable from the lives of its makers and of those of us who are nourished by it. Art matters; Kupferminc and others like her give shape to jagged and chaotic raw experience so that those of us who have not lived it may come to have our own experience in relation to it. It is no coincidence that the current US administration's hostility to migration is matched by its hostility to the arts. Cutting off migration and starving the arts by eliminating funding are of a piece. People will, however, continue to move across borders to save their own lives, and artists will not cease to make art that expresses the human desire for survival and that addresses our need for beauty and our need to represent ourselves for our own sake and so that others may know our stories.

*Amy Kaminsky is professor emerita of Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Minnesota. Her most recent books are After Exile: Writing the Latin American Diaspora and Argentina: Stories for a Nation, both published by the University of Minnesota Press. She is currently working on a book about the meaning of Jewishness in Argentina. Its working title is Planting Wheat and Reaping Doctors.*



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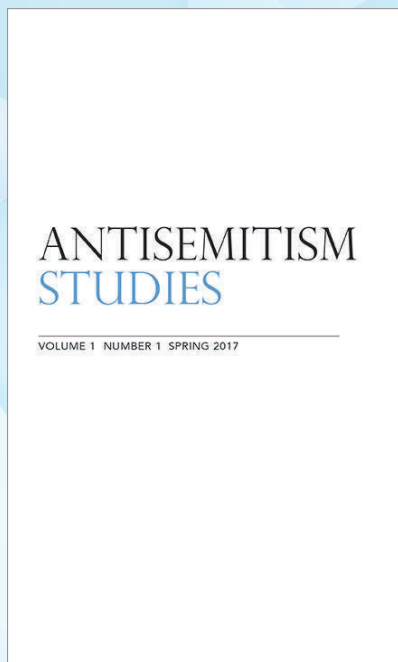
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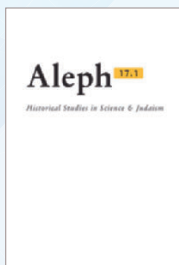
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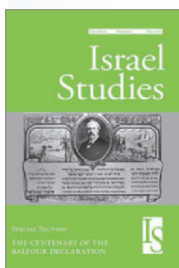


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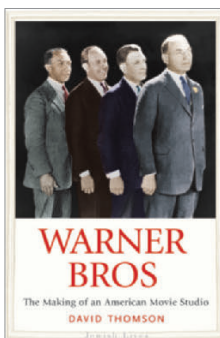
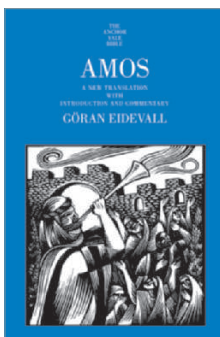
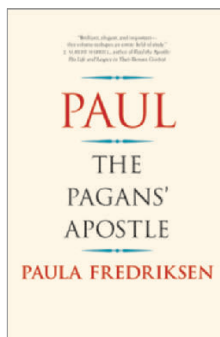
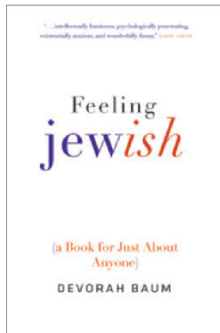
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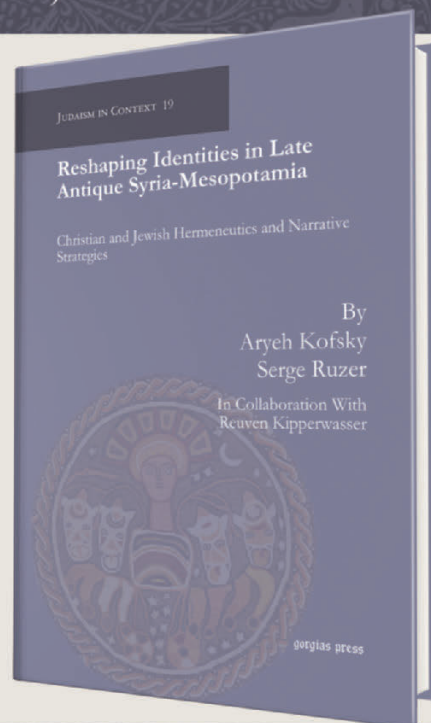
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# STATELESSNESS

## An Aliyah to Iraq: Transgressive Migrations between Israel and the Arab World

Bryan K. Roby

Jewish migration to Israel is imbued with a sense that the physical act of relocation marks a historic moment for the individual and the collective, as if each Jewish migrant brings the collective closer to redemption. Politically, it is assumed to be an explicit realization of the Zionist ideal. Spiritually, it is an *aliyah*, a finite ascension to the Holy Land; the logical culmination of millennia-long Jewish desire to return to the Land. The Hebrew term for the opposite of *aliyah*, *yeridah*, in contrast, is fluid; it designates a temporary peregrination, an existential Jewish spiritual descent from Zion into the nebulous realm of the Diaspora. As a rule, immigrants do not know in advance the extent to which they will shape, and be shaped by, their new society. Similarly, emigrants are unaware of the implications of their absence from their abandoned residences. Scholars have diligently chronicled the history of the various waves of *aliyah*. Yet curiously, we overlook the significance of *yeridah* and the role it plays in shaping Israel's history and relationship to the Jewish Diaspora. Does all Jewish migration to Israel constitute a spiritual ascent? Are they always finite "immigrations"? Should we speak more precisely about the "migration" of Jews to Israel?

Recently, Naor Narkis, a young Israeli in Berlin, challenged the oppositional distinctions of *aliyah/yeridah* via the Facebook group '*Olim le-Berlin* (Let's ascend [i.e., immigrate] to Berlin). Known as the "Milki protest," named after the disproportionate cost of Milki pudding in Israel and Germany, Narkis protested the high cost of living and economic stagnation plaguing Israelis. His relocation to Germany was a "transgressive migration," a protest tactic meant to spark social change by eliciting outrage. This protest pointed to something deeper: the power of migration as a political statement. In equating immigration to Germany with immigration to the Promised Land, the group's name enraged some Israeli politicians who denounced the call for emigration as a threat to Zionism. How could a migration create such an existential



King Faisal I with Baghdadi Jewish notables including Senator Menahem Salih Daniel, and Rabbis Ezra Dangoor and Sasson Kadurie, 1925. Photo via Wikimedia Commons.

threat to a nation-state? To answer this, it is worthwhile to turn back to Israel in the 1970s.

In 1976, Israel announced its annual theme for Independence Day: Israel and the Diaspora. The events following the announcement would prove it to be a topical choice. As a part of the festivities, Israel released its annual demographic report on Israeli Jewish migration. But, with an unprecedented higher rate of emigration out of Israel than immigration to it, the report was no cause for celebration. During an interview on the subject, then prime minister Yitzhak Rabin famously derided *yordim* (emigrants) as "the fallouts of the wimps." A week later, rumors spread that waves of Mizrahi Jews, particularly immigrants from Morocco and Iraq, would undertake—as state officials put it—"large-scale defections" from Israel. The newspaper *Davar* reported on hundreds of Moroccan families selling their possessions and packing their suitcases in anticipation of an organized mass migration back to Africa. Iraqi Jewish Israelis could be heard on Baghdad National Radio encouraging Iraqi Jews to follow suit and similarly "return to the homeland." Politicians from Mapai, a center-left party, formed emergency committees, while mayors of predominately Mizrahi towns scrambled to uncover who or what was behind this. Some thought that Dani

Sa'il, a well-known activist in the Israeli Black Panthers, was working with Palestinian militants to fund and encourage repatriation. But a range of Mizrahi public figures, from Mapai politician Asher Hassin to labor union champion Yehoshua Peretz, pointed to another catalyst: anti-Mizrahi prejudice and social inequality. Mizrahi Israelis, facing ethnic prejudice, felt unwelcome in Israel and were prepared to vote with their feet. Dawud Mordukh, an Iraqi Israeli repatriate to Iraq, hit at the core of the issue in an interview: "If the Zionists claim that all Jews that immigrate to Israel are Israeli, then why and how can they logically call this Jew an Iraqi Jew? . . . They should say that this Jew is an Israeli Jew." It was the feeling of alienation, being treated as an Arab foreigner among brethren that caused them to repatriate. These were not opportunistic migrations or attempts at social mobility; they were protests to raise consciousness about social inequality.

The case of Iraqi Israelis repatriating to Iraq in 1976 provides one of the more fascinating examples of this protest. In 1975, the Iraqi government took out a half-page ad in the *New York Times* inviting all Iraqi Jews to return to their homeland. Iraqi Jews in North America publicly scoffed at the idea. Yet Yosef Salah Nawi and Ya'akov Oved (both Iraqi immigrants to Israel) joyfully accepted the invitation and embarked on separate journeys to Iraq. What was the allure of migration that provoked them to uproot their lives and return to an Arab Jewish homeland?

Yosef Nawi, for one, was drawn to the possibility of returning to an idyllic past and escaping the deprivation of development towns. The Nawi family, twenty-year residents of Israel, journeyed to Baghdad. There, Yosef held a press conference explaining his decision: "I did not feel that I belonged—not to the government, not to the people, not to the land." Iraq, not Israel, was his Jewish homeland. His migration was an *aliyah* to Iraq; an escape from an Israeli society he thought to be full of "enough hate [to fill] all the earth." Yosef expressed indignation that Baghdad's remaining Jewish community were



acting “like inmates in a sanitarium ... living at the end of their lives dreaming of Israel and hating the Iraqi government.” Yosef’s wife, Sa’ida, waxed nostalgic over the Hashemite era of Iraq. She explained to reporters in Hebrew that, “Here [in Iraq], people loved the regime and not like in Israel where everyone waits for [its] downfall.” With her Arabic-accented Hebrew, Sa’ida’s curious usage of the past tense (“loved the [Iraqi] regime”) betrayed her waning affection for Iraq. The cosmopolitan, diverse Iraq that she languished after in the desert town of Kiryat Gat was no more.

Jewish life under Saddam Hussein told quite a different story than the Nawi family. Some years prior to their return, the Ba’ath government executed nine Jews—purported spies for Israel—in a grotesque public hanging celebrated by a crowd of thousands. In response to international condemnation, Ba’ath party spokesmen argued that it was Israel, not Iraq, who oppressed Mizrahi Jews. Nevertheless, flight from Hussein’s brutality had reduced the once-thriving Jewish quarter of al-Bataween to a few synagogues and schools. After a year in Baghdad, Yosef Nawi’s voice grew increasingly weary during radio broadcasts. Eventually, the family returned to Israel, where Yosef was promptly arrested for treason.

Ya’akov Oved, an Israeli army veteran from Ramat Gan, sheds some light on Nawi’s oscillations. Like Nawi, he repatriated to Iraq in 1976 and broadcast appeals to Iraqi Israelis to escape persecution and return to their Iraqi homeland. Yet two years later, Oved left Baghdad for Israel. With stalwart resolve, he used his story of migration to decry discrimination in Israel. His return allowed his transgressive migration to be more politically effective. He explained that he was forced to return after several unsuccessful attempts to obtain asylum-seeker status in Europe and the United States. Faced with treason charges and little options, Oved denied being an Israeli and declared himself a “stateless citizen” worthy of the protections accorded under international law.

Perhaps Nawi’s and Oved’s repatriation—from Israel to Iraq and back—encourages us to look towards the multiplicity of Jewish belonging beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. These transgressive migrations, however small, threatened the *raison d’être* of the Jewish state: providing a homeland for the Jewish people. In a sense, Mordukh, Nawi, and Oved reworked and subverted the concept of *yeridah* by flipping its meaning to an emotional descent *into*



Keystone View Company; Underwood & Underwood, “Picturesque homes of wealthy Jews along the Tigris in North Bagdad, Iraq, Mesopotamia,” c. 1890s–1900s Courtesy of the DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University, Banks McLaurin, Jr. Stereograph Collection.

The New York Times  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1975

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## IRAQI JEWS INVITED TO RETURN TO IRAQ

The Revolution Command Council (RCC) adopted on November 26, 1975, an important resolution which entitles all Iraqi Jews who left Iraq since 1948 to return home and enjoy equal rights with all Iraqi citizens. The resolution also stipulates that the Iraqi Government shall guarantee to the returning Jews full constitutional rights, equality and secure living without any discrimination.

This decision by the Revolution Command Council (RCC) stems from the adherence, by the Iraqi Government, to the principles of the UN Charter and to the universal declaration of rights.

This decision of the Revolution Command Council (RCC) constitutes concrete evidence that Iraqis and Arabs never harbored malice or vindictiveness against Jews. In fact Jews have lived among Arabs since medieval ages and throughout the ages there was mutual trust, respect and happy co-existence between them. History is full of examples of Arab-Jewish cooperation.

Judaism, Christianity and Islam do not preach hate and the concept of enmity. On the contrary, they preach love and brotherhood. As long as these three fundamental tenets were adhered to, there blossomed understanding, mutual respect and cooperation. But as soon as these principles were abandoned, cooperation was replaced by confrontation.

The Jews, as long as they adhered to the true principles of Judaism, lived in peace among Christians and Muslims everywhere. But when the Zionist Jews began to propagate the myth of “A Chosen People,” when they converted Judaism into Zionism—which is a racist movement and when they began to turn religion into a nationality and when all led to the expulsion of Arab Palestinians from their homeland, the Zionists committed a sin against the very tenets of Judaism. They excluded themselves by erroneously regarding themselves as belonging to some mythical “superior race.” The racist claim therefore, rightly earned the Zionist, condemnation universally.

It should be noted that the Arabs have always distinguished between Zionists and Jews. The former is a religion which the Arabs, like all others, respect. The latter, however, is a racist movement directed periodically against Palestinian Arabs and, consequently, vehemently opposed by all Arabs and just-minded people the world over.

The Arabs, have no quarrel with Jews—provided that they are not Zionists. And in keeping with this, Iraq now calls upon all Iraqi Jews who left the country since 1948 to return and enjoy all rights accorded to Iraqi citizens.

It should be known that the Iraqi Jews who left the country after 1948 left on their own. No one was expelled. In addition to that Iraqi Jews enjoyed a prosperous life in Iraq because they unilaterally decided—under Zionist instigation and terror—to leave the country.

Given the economic crisis gripping the Jews in the Zionist entity, it goes without saying that Iraqi Jews returning home are assured of a much better standard of life.

The resolution, agreed by President Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr in his capacity as the Revolution Command Council Chairman, is as follows:

“Pursuant to the provisions of para A, Article 42 of the interim constitution, in keeping with the Iraqi Government’s belief in human rights, and in view of Iraqi adherence to the principles and rights provided for in the UN Charter and in the declaration of human rights.

The Revolutionary Command Council acting on November 26, 1975, resolved as follows:

1. Iraqi Jews who left Iraq since 1948 are hereby entitled to return home.
2. All Iraqi Jews returning to Iraq under this resolution shall enjoy all fundamental rights of Iraqi citizens under law.
3. The Iraqi Government shall guarantee to the returning Jews full constitutional rights enjoyed by Iraqi citizens. This will include equality and secure living without any discrimination.
4. This resolution shall be published in the official Gazette and shall be enforced by the Ministers concerned.”

The Government of the Republic  
of Iraq  
Embassy of Iraq  
1801 P Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20036

“Advertisement – Iraqi Jews Invited to Return to Iraq,” *New York Times*, December 11, 1975, p. 51.

Israel. Their *yeridah* tells us just as much about the nature of the Jewish relationship to Israel and the Diaspora as an *aliyah* does. It complicates the notion of the “negation of the Diaspora” and forces us to reimagine Israel as a transnational Jewish homeland made up of a wealth of diasporic communities.

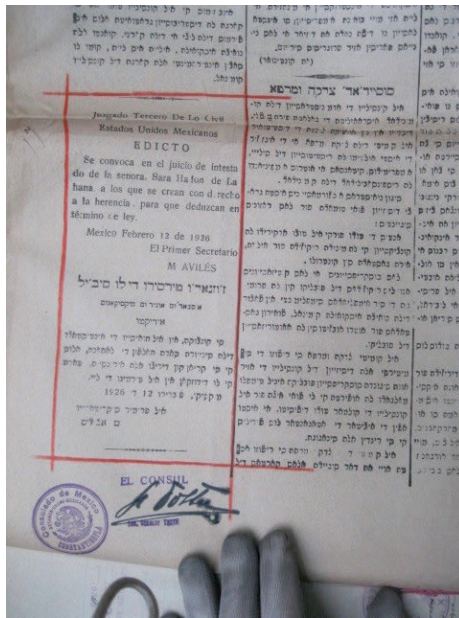
Bryan K. Roby is assistant professor of Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. He is the author of *The Mizrahi Era of Rebellion: Israel’s Forgotten Civil Rights Struggle 1948–1966* (Syracuse University Press, 2015).

# Inherited Expedience

Devi Mays

It was early November 2010. The marigolds of the Day of the Dead altar in the entrance hall of the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City had begun to shrivel and the air's coolness penetrated the galleries of the erstwhile Panopticon-style Lecumberri Penitentiary, whose cells now held documents. My hands trembled inside cotton gloves as I eased open the brittle pages of *El Tiempo*, the Ladino newspaper published in Istanbul from 1872 to 1930, a paper I was deeply familiar with, but from microfilm alone. In the April 16, 1926 edition, in Spanish and Spanish transliterated into Rashi characters in an approximation of Ladino, was an announcement from Mexico. Mexico's Third Civil Court was convoking a trial in the intestate case of Sara Halfon Fiss de Lahana. Those in Turkey who believed they had a legitimate claim to her estate should come forward. In the physical copy of *El Tiempo* in my hands, the notice was outlined in red pencil. It bore the signature of Scarlatt Tottu, Mexico's honorary consul to Istanbul. He would soon be stripped of his position due to allegations that he had made a private agreement with one of Halfon's cousins in Istanbul to receive 30 percent of whatever might be gleaned from the deceased's estate and that he was selling false Mexican passports.

Yet the circumstances surrounding the life, death, and afterlife echoes of the fifty-year-old married mother of four reveal far more than salacious consular scandal. Sara Halfon Fiss de Lahana was born in Rodosto (Tekirdağ) in Ottoman Thrace as an Ottoman national; but she was interred in 1925 in the Monte Sinaí Jewish cemetery in Mexico City as an American national—despite never having lived in the United States. Her husband, Simon Lahana, born in Constantinople, was likewise an American national at the time of his wife's death, as were their four children. Or at least they were as he explained it. The American consul in Mexico City disagreed. Several years later, Simon Lahana was stateless, not because of any policy enacted on account of his religious affiliation, but because the United States rescinded national status acquired through the Philippines. His statelessness came to the fore because he had relocated to Guatemala, and then sought to



Advertisement of Sara de Lahana's death in *El Tiempo*. April 16, 1926. Courtesy of the Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico.

immigrate across Mexico's southern border, sponsored by his four children who lived in Mexico City, ostensibly Americans. Borders and ports—and increasingly consulates and ship agencies—were sites where nationalities were proven or contested, but after arrival in a given place, Sephardic migrants often attempted to perform the national identity most expedient, whether or not it matched the documentation they carried.

Indeed, the Lahana family's trajectory from Thrace to Constantinople, then Athens, the Philippines for the duration of the Balkan Wars and World War I, to Mexico in 1924, then the United States, Guatemala, and back to Mexico, was not the linear pattern that migration is often assumed to take. Nor did it follow the worn path of Jewish immigrants leaving poverty in the East for the golden land of United States. Rather, their movements reveal a circuitous path that crossed many borders over decades. Roughly one third of the Ottoman Jewish population emigrated in the waning years of the empire, and followed equally winding routes. The interwar years saw similar movements of Jews now living in nationalizing states. Relocating to entirely new lands was

sometimes less fraught than adapting to life in a country suddenly familiar and foreign.

Migration is intimately connected to nation building. The nation-states that arose after the tumultuous 1910s, whether, like Turkey, out of the ashes of the defeated Ottoman Empire, or like Mexico, out of the conflagration of a decade of revolution, viewed migration as crucial to shaping their national bodies to match a reimagined vision. Mexican intellectuals of the 1920s aspired to create *la raza cosmica*, a mixed “fifth race” that would draw from the best biological and cultural characteristics of other populations. In this spirit, the Mexican consul general to Vienna charged Tottu in Istanbul with attracting potential Jewish migrants from Turkey to Mexico. These “Spanish Jews” were, he explained, “not of the same abysmal moral condition of those of the north of Europe, given that these do assimilate and they are entirely equal to the Spanish.” The Ladino press in New York, meanwhile, highlighted similarities between Ladino and Mexican Spanish and pointed to the near-simultaneous creation of the Sephardic and Mexican people. Sephardic Jews would do well in Mexico, articles posited, a viable alternative to the United States after the immigration quotas imposed in 1921 and 1924. In fact, a number of Sephardic Jews who lived in or even naturalized as Americans relocated across the southern border, at least for a time. They were drawn by ease of communication, an economic structure that was less rigid, and well-trodden commercial networks of Sephardic Jews linking Mexico, the United States, and France, sometimes extending to the poppy fields of western Anatolia.

While Mexico of the early 1920s looked to Sephardic Jews as assimilable and even desirable, Turkish parliamentary discussions on migration emphasized that Jews, though not subject to “exchange” like Greek Orthodox residents and not as blatantly undesirable as Armenians, might be encouraged tacitly to leave. After the Turkish ambassador to the United States made an official visit to Mexico in 1934, he wrote back to Ankara that he encountered no Turks in Mexico. Rather, those “Syrians, Arabs, Armenians, and Jews,” commonly called *turcos*, were from “portions of the old Ottoman Empire”

and “have no connections to Turkishness.” Exclusion from Turkishness had starkly different consequences for those Jews who lived in the republic and those who had emigrated. Nonetheless, Sephardic diaspora publications debated Turkification policies with a freeness foreign to the Turkish Ladino press, and the Turkish government sought to track down Jewish nationals in Mexico and elsewhere who had acquired a second nationality, one of a number of practices that entailed the stripping of Turkish citizenship and which would have dire consequences for Jews during World War II.

The movements of Sephardic Jews both contended with and shaped a growing global preoccupation with migratory regulation. Yet individuals managed to squeeze through cracks in a system whose enforcers often proved both to be overconfident in their abilities to control movement and unsure of how to proceed. Simon Lahana was at first unable to claim his wife’s estate because he lacked the requisite marriage certificate. Further, their four children’s birth certificates had been lost “due to the great quantity of travels we have made.” But he succeeded in removing the intestate case from Mexico’s jurisdiction after arguing that none of his deceased wife’s assets was in Mexico, a country to which the family had moved only months before her death. A *New York Times* announcement from May 1927 noted that her \$6,000 estate would be divided between her four children, who were listed as residents of East 113th Street in Spanish Harlem. Simon and their eldest son had relocated here for a short time only after the intestate proceedings had begun. States required documents to travel, to stay, to marry, and to inherit. But papers were lost or stolen, purchased or falsified. The same individual could acquire and discard many identities over the course of a lifetime.

*Devi Mays is assistant professor of Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. She received her PhD from Indiana University and was a postdoctoral fellow at the Jewish Theological Seminary. She is currently revising a book manuscript tentatively entitled Forging Ties, Forging Passports: Migration and the Modern Sephardi Diaspora.*

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 FOLIO # 50612  
 MEDIA FILIACION DEL INTERESADO  
 SE EXPIRE EL 16 DE Mayo DE 1933  
 A LAHANA, ISAAC  
 CUYA LEGAL ESTANCIA EN MEXICO QUEDA COMPROBADA CON ESTA TARJETA  
 ESTADURA 1.66 Mts. COMPLESION mediana  
 PIEL rubia CEJAS blancas  
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 BARBA afeitada SEÑAS PARTICULARES No tiene  
 DATOS COMPLEMENTARIOS  
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 OCUPACION Comerciante  
 IDIOMA NATIVO hebreo OTROS IDIOMAS griego y español  
 QUE HABLA griego y español  
 LUGAR Y PAIS EN QUE NACIO Constantinopla-TURQUIA  
 NACIONALIDAD ACTUAL Americana por Naturalis.  
 RELIGION israelita RAZA blanca  
 LUGAR DE RESIDENCIA Bucarestina 95, México, D.F.  
 NOMBRE Y DOMICILIO EN MEXICO DE PERSONAS QUE PUEDAN DAR REFERENCIAS DEL INTERESADO Isaac Canón, Av. Vera-  
 CRUZ 52, México, D.F.  
 EL JEFE DEL DEPARTAMENTO DE MIGRACION  
 DR. RAFAEL GARCIA  
 QUIEN ENTRÓ EN MEXICO POR Veracruz, Ver.  
 EL 13 DE febrero de 1929.  
 INMIGRANTE. Se expide la presente el 19 de abril de 1941, como DUPLICADO de la # 1775 --

Registration document from Mexico’s Registry of Foreigners for Sara de Lahana’s son. Courtesy of the Archivo General de la Nacion, Mexico.

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 A Sr. SIMON LAHANA  
 CUYO RETRATO Y FIRMA CONSTAN EN SEGUIDA  
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Registration document from Mexico’s Registry of Foreigners for Sara de Lahana’s husband. Courtesy of the Archivo General de la Nacion, Mexico.

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 CRUZ 52, México, D.F.  
 QUIEN ENTRÓ EN MEXICO POR Veracruz, Ver.  
 Febr. EL 15 DE 1925  
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Registration document from Mexico’s Registry of Foreigners for Sara de Lahana’s daughter. Courtesy of the Archivo General de la Nacion, Mexico.



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# Migration as Cosmopolitanism

Sander L. Gilman

**O**n May 25, 1948, the Jewish citizen of the world Garry Davis turned in his American passport at the US embassy in Paris and declared himself a "citizen of the world." He then created his own passport, rarely recognized at national borders, and found that the more nation-states harassed him about his status as a true cosmopolitan, the more publicity his One World Movement received. Six months after renouncing his citizenship, he stormed a session of the United Nations General Assembly in Paris: "We, the people, want the peace which only a world government can give," he proclaimed in *My Country Is the World: The Adventures of a World Citizen*. "The sovereign states you represent divide us and lead us to the abyss of total war." Davis recreated himself in public as the good cosmopolitan, to no little extent because of the impact that he felt nationalism had had in the world. Viewing the cosmopolitan, the world citizen, and the citizen without borders as corrosive had been a pillar of Nazi ideology against which Davis fought as a pilot. His father, as some remember, was Meyer Davis, the renowned society orchestra leader known as the "millionaire maestro," whose multiple ensembles played at high-end Jewish weddings and bar mitzvahs. In 1935, the Nazi ideologist Alfred Rosenberg had railed against the "international swarm of Jewish orators and literati from the cosmopolitan centers of increasingly racially degenerate cities. . . ." He could have added Jewish bandleaders and their offspring to his list.

Since the Enlightenment, radical nationalism claimed to be rooted in the land or a people, as a concrete expression of a homogenous society against the rootless nomad. In 1784, the German theologian J. G. Herder defined the nation-state as "a group of people having a common origin and common institutions, including language." For Herder, as for most Europeans after him, the Jews personified the rootless nomad. Jews "in the land of their fathers, and in the midst of other nations, . . . remain as they were; and even when mixed with other people they may be distinguished for some generations downward." In fact, Herder suggested that, ideally, "if every one of these nations had remained in its place, the Earth might have been considered as a garden, where in one

spot one human national plant, in another, another, bloomed in its proper figure and nature." Cosmopolitanism goes against the "nature" of human beings who are rooted and should be unchangeable. Davis was of Jewish descent, and as he explained in *A World Citizen in the Holy Land*, his call for the elimination of borders simply rejected the fascist idea that borders and peoples were uniform and static. The reality is that the cosmopolitan is simply another way of speaking about the potential for movement, for movement across borders, class boundaries, and cultural norms. All of recorded human history speaks of such movement all over the world, from ancient Greek city-states to the expansion of the Han at the same period into what is now considered to be China. But must one be opposed to the nation-state if one sees oneself, as Davis did, as a citizen of the world? Recently, the philosopher Anthony Kwame Appiah argued in *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (W. W. Norton, 2007) that "whatever obligation I might have to another, especially a foreign other, that obligation does not supersede the obligations I have to those people most familiar to me." Being cosmopolitan does not cancel being national, regional, or ethnic in the twenty-first century, as it did for Davis after World War II. Being cosmopolitan simply means that you have the potential for movement, transformation, and change, not that this must take place, but that it can take place.

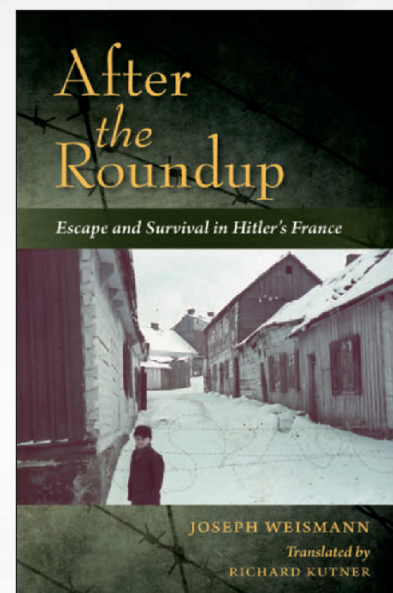
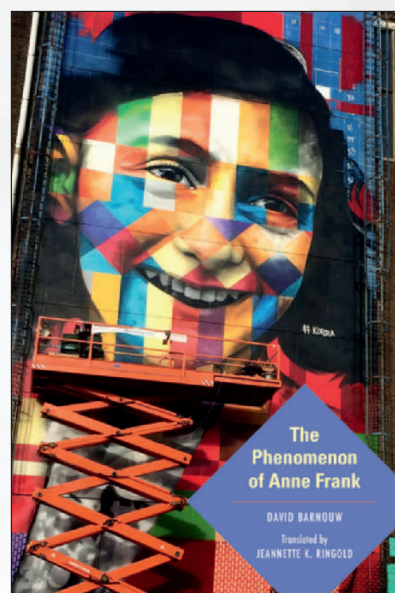
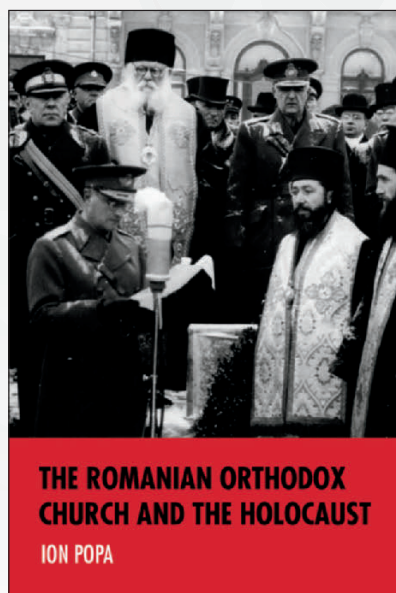
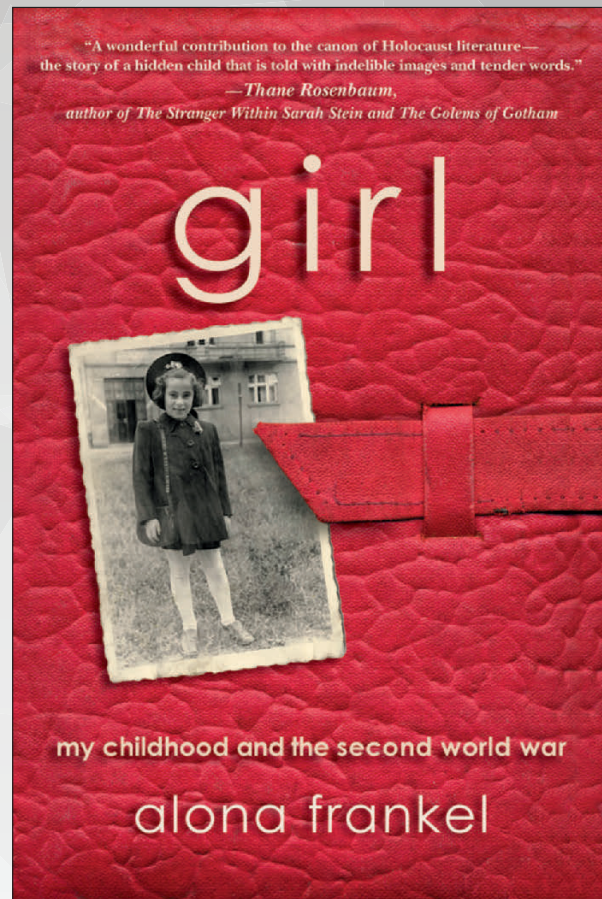
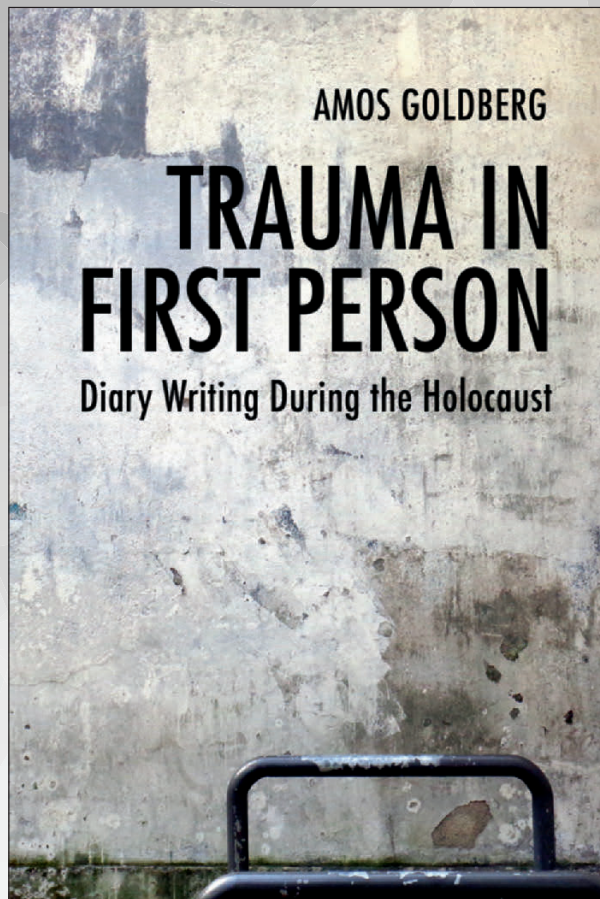
We often think of cosmopolitanism as a form of multiculturalism. But there is a model that sees the nation-state as groups of peoples from throughout the world living, functioning, competing, and collaborating with one another. These groups may shift and transform, and may come to speak the language of the nation-state (and then in the third generation rediscover the language that their grandparents spoke, and learn it). What cosmopolitanism promises us today is the potential for change and movement, not to spite the claims of the nation-state, but to ever renew them, to make them flexible. Garry Davis died in the summer of 2013, still a citizen of the world. But he died in Burlington, Vermont, not terribly far from his birthplace in Bar Harbor, Maine, a citizen of the world but very much a Jewish New Englander.

*Sander L. Gilman is a distinguished professor of the Liberal Arts and Sciences as well as professor of Psychiatry at Emory University. A cultural and literary historian, he is the author or editor of over ninety books. His Are Racists Crazy? How Prejudice, Racism, and Antisemitism Became Markers of Insanity appeared with NYU Press in 2016; his most recent edited volume is a double issue of the European Review of History / Revue européenne d'histoire entitled Jews on the Move: Particularist Universality in Modern Cosmopolitanist Thought published in the same year.*



World Citizen Badge by World Service Authority. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

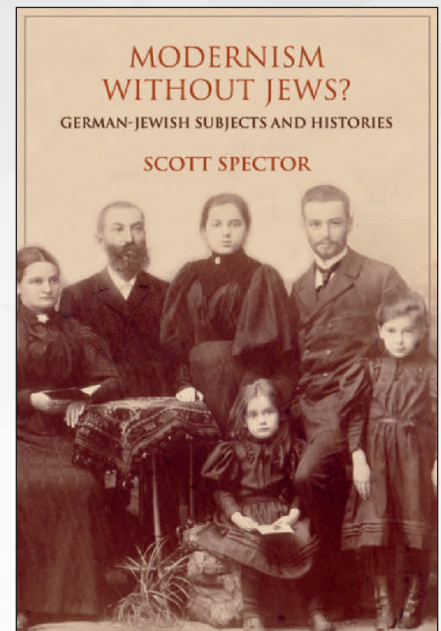
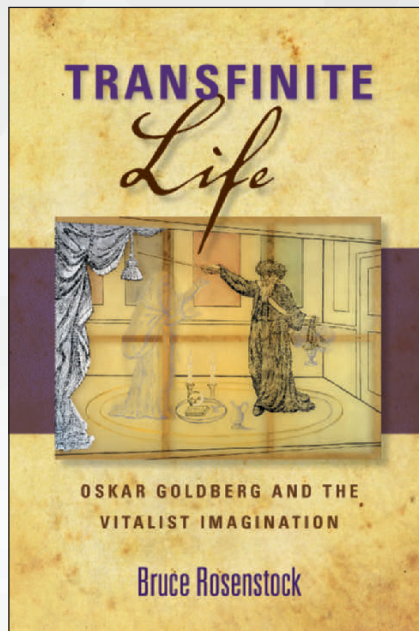
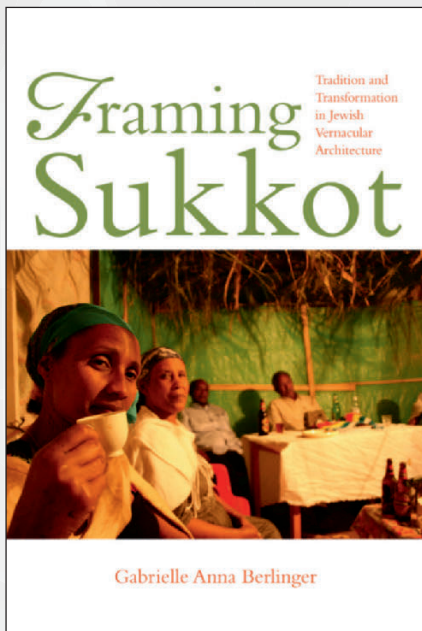
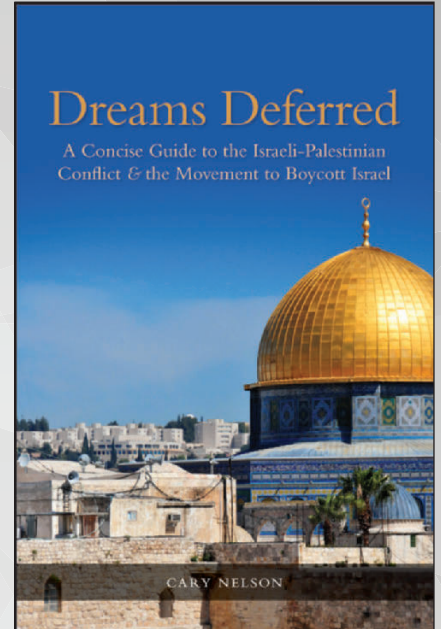
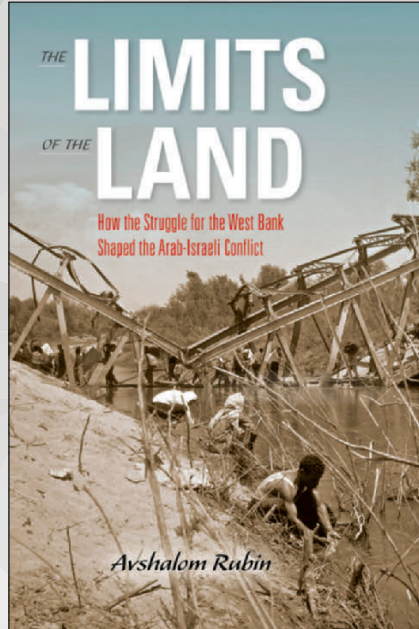
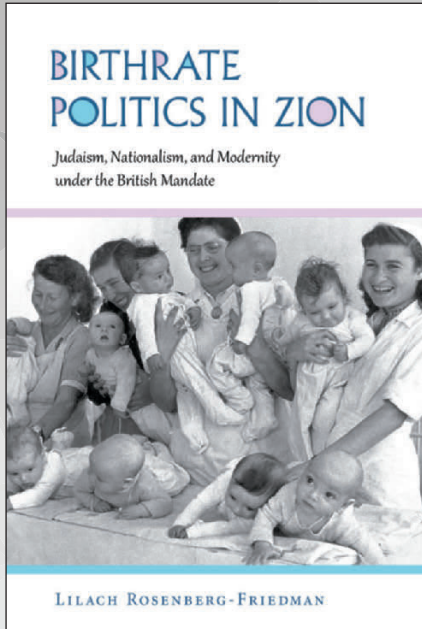
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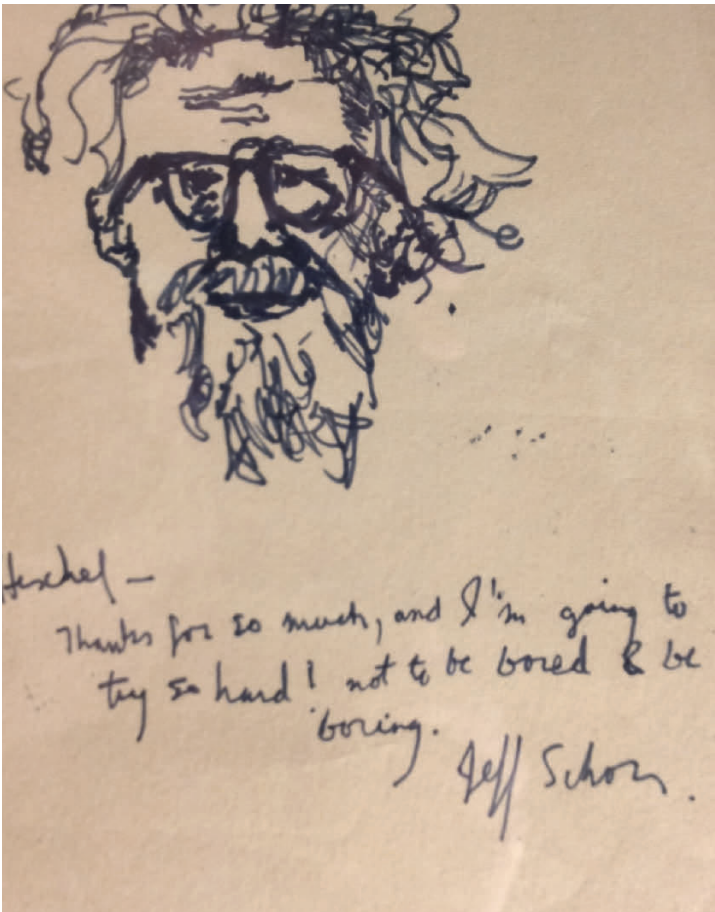
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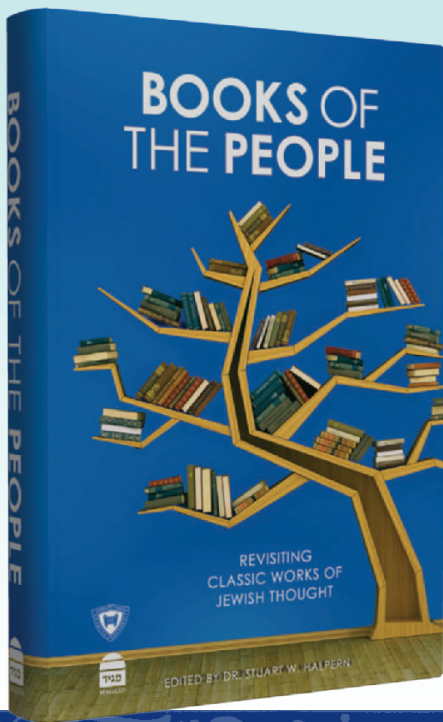
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# Forum on Pedagogy

## Views from beyond Jewish Studies

For this section of the Migration Issue, we approached scholars who do not identify primarily with the field of Jewish Studies, but whose teaching and research engages with issues of Diaspora, displacement, and identities in motion in crucial ways. We asked these colleagues to reflect on how Jews, Jewish migration, and the Jewish experience of Diaspora typically figure into their teaching.

### Donna Gabaccia

University of Toronto

Although I am by no definition a specialist in Jewish history, my undergraduate teaching has always incorporated the work of scholars researching Jewish migration. Beginning in the 1990s, my undergraduate teaching shifted from US history toward world history and thus away from courses with titles like “Immigration and American Diversity” and toward courses with titles like “Migration and Mobility in Global History.” This shift required me to draw from changing corners of Jewish Studies.

In the fairly conventional course on “Immigration and American Diversity” that I taught under varying titles in Europe and the United States in the 1980s and early 1990s, I selected two groups’ migrations to exemplify each of three main waves of immigration into the United States. For the second wave of “new immigrants,” arriving in the United States between 1880 and 1930, I usually encouraged students to explore and contrast the homeland experiences, migration patterns, and urban adjustment challenges of Jewish and Italian immigrants. Often enough, New York City provided a concrete focal point. As Nancy Green noted in her study of comparative methods in immigration history, this “converging comparison” tended to result in rather sharp contrasts of the groups compared, and students almost always imagined it was culture that drove the differences. The best students recognized other influences—for example, how the temporary and heavily male Italian labor migrations led to different family and work patterns than those found in Jewish family and refugee migrations. Comparison of Jewish and Italian migrants also revealed antisemitism and antiradicalism as differing and overlapping dimensions of American racism and xenophobia. Especially in the 1990s students pondered the origins of the very different gendering of Jewish socialist and Italian anarchist activists. At the same time, the comparison of two groups

in one city meant that commonalities—in the form of clustering of Yiddish-, German-, and Italian-dialect speaking groups, and forms of institution building, such as newspapers—also came into focus.

Once I began teaching world history and undertook the writing and editing of a series of books on the world-wide migrations of people originating in the Italian peninsula, I found myself turning instead to the rich, interdisciplinary, and at times more theoretical work on Diasporas within Jewish Studies. Here, what Green called “diverging comparisons” became more salient, as did opportunities to explore the changing typologies and much longer temporality of the Jewish Diaspora, from early, biblical notions of exiles and to Zionism, Diaspora nationalism, and state building. Case studies of the Jewish Diaspora provided both an opportunity to explore critically Diaspora historiography (with graduate students) and a unique series of provocative comparisons (to Greeks, Africans, and Armenians) with undergraduate students.

*Donna Gabaccia is professor of History at the University of Toronto. Her most recent book, Gender and International Migration: From the Slavery Era to the Global Age (co-authored with Katharine Donato, Russel Sage, 2015), received an honorable mention from the American Sociological Association’s Section on International Migration’s Thomas and Znaniecki Award.*

### Fatma Müge Göçek

University of Michigan

As a scholar, I do not identify with the interdisciplinary field of Jewish Studies, but employ two particular Jewish experiences in history, namely the Shoah and the Jews of the Ottoman Empire. I do so as follows:

First, understanding and making sense of the Shoah has led to a very significant ontological shift in the social sciences and the humanities, a shift that was initially

spearheaded by the Frankfurt School of critical theory. That shift formed the foundation of the current poststructural approaches to society, ones that specifically focus on the prejudice and discrimination experienced by the marginalized. Hence, I would argue that gender, race, queer, and postcolonial theories are all informed by and originate in the analysis of this fundamental violence in modern European history, namely the Shoah. As such, the Shoah informs my theoretical stand.

Second, my particular expertise is the Armenian Genocide, a collective violence that preceded the Shoah. I recently finished a book on the denial by Turkish state and society of the collective violence they committed against the Armenians from the late eighteenth century to the present. In order to understand the origins, development, execution, and aftermath of this collective violence, I drew extensively on the large literature on the Shoah, its public acknowledgement, and contemporary denialism. Studying multiple instances of collective violence side by side enabled me to better see the dark violent underbelly of modernity. Hence the Shoah also contributed to my empirical work.

Third, I have myself written a couple of articles on the Jews of the Ottoman Empire. I did so because I was interested earlier in my career on how the *millet* system, namely the system regulating the non-Muslim communities in the Ottoman Empire, operated. I specifically studied the eighteenth-century probate records of Ottoman Jews living in the imperial capital Istanbul to understand when, in settling their legal affairs, they went to a Muslim court rather than their own communal one. It turned out that their geographical proximity to a Muslim court did not make a difference. Rather, how content they were with the rulings of the rabbi heading the Jewish community at that particular time was a much better measure: their use of Muslim courts increased when they were unhappy with their rabbi and decreased when they were content. Hence the

Jewish experience in the Ottoman Empire contributed to my historical archival work.

In summary then, the Jewish experience in the Ottoman Empire and contemporary Turkey informs my empirical work while the Shoah impacts my theoretical stand in the social sciences.

*Born and raised in Istanbul, Turkey, Fatma Müge Göçek is professor of Sociology and Women's Studies at the University of Michigan. In her work Göçek is interested in issues of social change in non-Western states and societies in general and as it impacts minority communities in particular. After finishing a book on the denial by Turkish state and society of the collective violence committed against Armenians, she is now working on the continuity of that violence and denial onto the Kurds of Turkey.*

### **Timothy J. Meagher** Catholic University

I teach general graduate and undergraduate courses in American immigration and ethnic history as well as more specific graduate and undergraduate courses in Irish American history, my specialty. In all my graduate and undergraduate courses I use the article "The Invention of Ethnicity" by Kathleen Conzen et al., in the *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 1992, as well as Charles Tilly's "Transplanted Networks," in Virginia Yans-McLaughlin's *Immigration Reconsidered* (Oxford, 1990). They establish two of the most important theoretical frameworks for the courses: first, that assimilation is a poor, not very helpful, way to talk about the history of ethnic groups in America and that it is better to understand that ethnic groups and communities are shaped in the historical contingencies of space and time; second, that immigration is a social process, that networks are critical to who leaves one country and why, and how those people adapt in a new one. In my graduate course, I have used Deborah Dash Moore's fine books, *At Home in America* (Columbia UP, 1981) and *To the Golden Cities* (Harvard UP, 1996), to illustrate both this kind of change over time and variation over space, and books by Chris McNickle, *To Be Mayor of New York* (Columbia UP, 1993), and Joshua Zeitz, *White Ethnic New York* (UNC Press, 2007), on Jewish and other ethnic politics in New York City. In my undergraduate course, I have used the example of Jewish emigration in a discussion of the causes of emigration, and lectured on the history of interactions between German Jews and east European Jews as a case study in the

evolution of ethnic groups. That lecture comes in the first half of the course, when I draw on the history of several groups to establish the general principles and themes of the course.

In that part of the course, I have also given the students copies of two pages of passenger lists from ships carrying Irish, Italian, and Jewish immigrants from European ports to New York in the early twentieth century, and asked them to pick out and quantify the most important differences among the three groups of immigrants. Those differences are dramatic (perhaps even exaggerated in these small samples, though I chose the pages randomly), and the exercise in studying them powerfully illustrates the variety among immigrants in who came and how they came to America: single Irish women often migrating in migration chains made up largely of other Irish women; single and married Italian men traveling in small bands without their families, many of them returning to America after previous visits; and Jewish families, led by wives and mothers, traveling with their children to meet husbands in America. They illustrate not only the diversity of migration experience, but also the critical significance and variety of networks in the migration process.

Finally, in my undergraduate Irish American course, I have devoted a class to the antisemitic Father Charles Coughlin. I have a joint appointment as both a tenured member of the history faculty and director of Catholic University's Archives and Manuscript Collections. Some years ago we discovered two cryptically and confusingly labeled recordings in our holdings. We were able to have them digitized. One was a recording of Monsignor John Ryan's broadcast in 1936, organized by the Democratic Party, defending Franklin Roosevelt against attacks by Coughlin. The other turned out to be a national broadcast, sponsored by Catholic University, of talks by five bishops and Al Smith in 1938, condemning Kristallnacht, four days after that Nazi atrocity. For the class session in my Irish American history course I invited Dr. Maria Mazzenga, the education archivist at our archives and an expert on Catholic antisemitism, to speak on the Ryan-Coughlin controversy. We have teaching websites focusing on each of the broadcasts with contextualizing historical background and documents. They can be found at the Catholic University Archives, American Catholic History Classroom website: <http://cuomeka.wrlc.org/exhibits>.

*Timothy J. Meagher is associate professor of History and curator of American Catholic History Collections at Catholic University. He co-edited with Ronald Bayor a collection of essays, The New York Irish (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), and is the author of Inventing Irish America (University of Notre Dame Press, 2001) and The Columbia Guide to Irish American History (Columbia University Press, 2005).*

### **James B. Rives** University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

What has Athens to do with Jerusalem? The early Christian writer Tertullian's question came to my mind when I was asked to contribute to this discussion. My first reaction was that the Jewish experience of Diaspora doesn't figure in my teaching at all. My field is Classics, and Jews tend not to figure prominently in most of the standard courses that I teach (classical mythology, Latin prose authors, Roman law). Although this absence is so well established that it seems natural, it is actually somewhat surprising, since Jews did figure prominently in the Greco-Roman world, at least from the time of Alexander the Great. Their artificial absence from the typical Classics curriculum results in large part from the disciplinary divides between Classics on the one hand and Religious Studies or Jewish Studies on the other. Indeed, the one course I teach in which Jews do figure prominently is one in which I cross into territory normally allotted to Religious Studies, that is, Greek New Testament. I have just finished teaching the Gospel of Mark in our fourth-semester undergraduate Greek course, and although the focus was on issues of grammar and syntax and textual transmission, there was naturally much discussion of the way that the text constructs the Jewish leaders of the day as opponents of Jesus. Yet even in that context the Jewish experience of Diaspora does not play much of a part. I can see possibilities for change, however. The Greco-Roman world was one replete with groups who were displaced, voluntarily or involuntarily, from their original homelands, of which the Jews are by far the best documented. Although the experiences of these groups have left relatively little trace in the elite texts that are the focus of most courses in Greek and Latin, the way that they negotiated their identities in complex multicultural situations has become a major focus of research and is gradually filtering down into the undergraduate curriculum.

Since many of our students are themselves members of Diaspora communities and are in their own lives engaged in similarly complex cultural negotiations, I can see courses built around these themes as a way to diversify the undergraduate audience for Classics, something that we in the field need urgently to do. In this respect, the Jewish experience of Diaspora may well become increasingly relevant.

*James B. Rives is Kenan Eminent Professor and Chair of the Department of Classics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His research focuses on religion in the first few centuries CE, especially the interconnections between religion and sociopolitical authority and the transformation of religion as a cultural category.*

## Jack Tchen

*New York University*

As a New York City–based historian, curator, and cultural organizer, Jewish history, intellectuals, organizers, and activists have been influential at every turn. This impact began in a Levittown-like suburb and continues in my teaching today.

All Diaspora and migratory experiences have been touchstones in my efforts to understand Chinese and Asians in the Americas histories and now New York Anglo-American political culture in a global frame. Yet none has been as deeply affecting and informative as the Jewish experience for my reflections as part of a refugee family moving to Park Forest, Illinois at age four. I'll briefly touch on three intersected research "knots," then get to my teaching approach. Not linear, questions return in cycles, renewed and made more complex each time.

First, when we started the New York Chinatown History Project I gained an appreciation of the deeply rooted Jewish historical and organizational presence infused in the Chinatown/Lower East Side area. I wanted to establish an Asian American parallel to Yiddishkeit culture rooted in both neighborhood and deep translocal histories. Stories of the Garden Cafeteria (now Wu's Wonton King), a place where local writers, organizers, and community folks would gather, intrigued me. I imagined Isaac Bashevis Singer and Emma Goldman sitting across time over American coffee. (It soon became a Cantonese eatery in 1983.) Why hadn't the

Chinese New York community developed in similar ways? A good part of the difference: the Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882–1943, but effectively lasting till 1965/68, when Emanuel Celler helped author the Hart-Celler Immigration Reform Act. There simply had not been a critical number of Chinese New York families to create comparable networks and inroads. Or had this in fact happened yet that history was not documented?

Second, just as Chinese Exclusion was "forgotten," eugenics-driven policies and laws also devastated the communities of Little Italy and the Lower East Side. Redlining was preceded by Robert Moses and "slum clearance," which was preceded by Anglo-Protestant Progressives "planning" and rezoning away immigrant and migrant "dirtiness." While the nation today is well coached in remembering the immigrant history of Little Italy and the Jewish Lower East Side, the eugenics history remains hidden (in plain sight). The 1924 National Origins Quota effectively ended the migration streams and the racialized exclusion of "inferior" "unfit" Europeans now largely un-told and un-noted—another parallel to the public ignorance of Chinese Exclusion. What could I glean from this systemic public erasure?

And more intersected yet, a nod to a third knot, Park Forest, Illinois, was one of those post-Korean War GI suburbs where excluded European whites could "become white." Philip Klutznick—part of the FDR administration that continued the exurbanizing policies of "slum clearance," builder of highways and Chicago region developer—wanted to build a suburb that Jews could move into. Racial covenants, for so many "others," kept my family from being able to move into Oak Park, but Klutznick allowed young Chinese American professionals to enter Park Forest, where I grew up amidst unresolved feelings of living in a placeless home.

Each of these three time/place stories, for me, constitutes a meaning-filled fragmented "artifact" theorizing my life experience. Many qualify as Marianne Hirsch's "postmemory" tidbits—conveyed unresolved traumas to descendants innocent of and dislodged from the lived knowledge yet filled with unresolved, inchoate feelings. Conceptualizing such artifacts together enables me to link my refugee, Diaspora family with a larger set of Jewish, Italian, Puerto Rican, and African American Lower East Side stories that challenge foundational paradigms of what it means to be an American, retrospectively and today.

This knotting of simultaneous, interrelated time/spaces, what Bakhtin formulated as chronotopes, never ceases to excite and intrigue me—especially because it helps connect with my students' passionate, generative unresolved questions. These key questions, for my pedagogy, unlock the creative energies of the historical imagination. Students, I've learned, love discovering these knotted intersected structured experiences at the core of their chosen "artifacts." And, I believe this core excitement is vital to the revival in the felt necessity of research and the pursuit of knowledge in our cynical age, dictated by short-term gain.

*Jack Tchen, historian, curator, and teacher, has just been appointed as the Clement A Price Chair of Public History and Humanities at Rutgers University - Newark. He is the founding director of the Program in Asian/Pacific/American Studies at New York University. He cofounded the Museum of Chinese in America. He is currently completing work on a PBS documentary with Ric Burns and Li-shin Yu on the Chinese Exclusion Act and curating a visual study on New York City–based eugenics Progressives.*

## Reuben Zahler

*University of Oregon*

I am a historian of Latin America, and my research focuses on honor, gender, law, and political culture in Venezuela during the eighteenth-nineteenth century. The subject of Jews arises in a number of the courses I teach, which include world history, European history, and various courses on Latin America. As an active, vibrant minority, Jews help to illuminate for my students numerous crucial aspects of history, including identity, hegemony, prejudice, oppression, as well as efforts at tolerance and inclusion.

In ancient world history, we study the book of Genesis and the Mosaic laws to demonstrate the Babylonian roots of the Hebrew Bible and introduce students to fundamental features of the Abrahamic religions.

In early modern and modern world history, Diaspora Jews show how their host society treated a vulnerable minority, and how the host society pursued racist, nationalist, or imperialist ends. The story of Castilian antisemitism in the fifteenth century arises in several courses. This case illustrates how religious politics and ethnic cleansing helped to unify Iberia. This story

also illuminates the creation of racism, which became so potent in Europe, the Americas, and eventually across the globe. In courses that include postindependence Latin America (1820s–80s), in order to explore the difficulty of the region's first attempts at religious freedom and pluralism, we consider the first community of Jews in Venezuela, who arrived in 1823 but then suffered pogroms in 1830 and 1858. In modern world history, we cover nineteenth-century antisemitism to explore modern racism and nationalism,

and also consider the Holocaust as an example of a contemporary genocide.

While the above examples look at Jews largely in the role of a minority group victimized by its dominant society, in modern world history we also study Arab-Israeli relations, in which Jews demonstrate far more control of their destiny. We study Arab-Israeli relations as a case study of postcolonialism, nationalism, the rise of violent religious fundamentalism, and complications in the Middle East generally.

*Reuben Zahler is associate professor of History at the University of Oregon. His research considers how Latin America transformed from colonies to independent, liberal republics during the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries. Specifically, he explores the evolution of honor, law, and gender as Venezuelans adopted civil rights, capitalism, and elections into their institutions and daily lives.*

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