Paths to Americanization

Jewish Voices from Pittsburgh

Pamela J. Abels

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Adviser: Carsten Wilke

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Abstract

This paper considers the various claims made in well-known literature on American Jewry regarding the struggle of American Jews of varying backgrounds to assimilate to American life. Furthermore this paper is an effort to explore and highlight the various paths differing groups of Jews took as a means to "become American" while maintaining a connection to Judaism, or Jewishness. In particular and largely due to the complex and diverse nature of American Jewish communities, a specific case study of American Jewish communities in the city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania is contributed as a means to thoroughly scrutinize the complexity of Jewish problems within Americanization. The first chapter deals with the topic of Americanization. The thorough discussion of the diverse understandings of Americanization is presented followed by a consideration of newspaper discourses largely from the Anglo-Jewish press in Pittsburgh. The second chapter introduces the concept of the Jewish subculture in the American scene as a whole and also the local Jewish subculture in Pittsburgh. Spatial analysis of the different groups of Jews in the city is also provided in this chapter. In the third chapter institutions are the focus. By observing the various Jewish institutions established by Jews in Pittsburgh, we gain a deeper understanding of subculture and also Americanization. In concluding the study, I evaluate the notion of Jewishness over Judaism, which allegedly manifests in the American setting around the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries.

Introduction—American Jewish Identity in Question

"As long as I can remember, I have heard, in Yiddish and English, talk of Jewishness--of the misery of the Old Country, the struggle to survive in the new, and the yearning to succeed, but always the need, the demand to maintain Jewish identity, heritage, and tradition." [1]
–Leonard Irvin Kurtz, Pittsburgh resident

On November 16-17, 1885, Rodef Shalom, Pittsburgh's largest Reform Congregation played host to nineteen of the country's most esteemed rabbis; they congregated together to construct a decree which declared that Judaism was a religion not a nation. Designed to keep only the most essential aspects of Judaism as a core, the members of the council decided that it was no longer necessary to keep a kosher diet, among other Orthodox customs, as they were "foreign to our present mental and spiritual state." Five years later, in Cleveland, the Pittsburgh Platform was declared the official guidebook of Reformed Judaism.[2] Recalling his time spent at Rodef Shalom and with the Jewish community in Pittsburgh, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise who presided over the Pittsburgh Platform Conference wrote in the American Israelite, "Pittsburgh as usual did justice to herself and her well founded reputation for hospitality on a grand scale."[3] Nevertheless one might easily overlook the industrial city of Pittsburgh in the context of American Jewish history. Indeed it is the famous Pittsburgh Platform which typically wins Pittsburgh any mention in the scholarship. The present research seeks to reveal the unique character and significant role of the Pittsburgh Jewish community, thus outlining at the same

[1] *Kuntz, Leonard Irvin. The Changing Pattern of the Distribution of the Jewish Population of Pittsburgh from Earliest Settlement to 1963. Dissertation, 228 Pages. A Bell & Howell Company, Ann Arbor. Printed in 1996*, n.d., 11.
[2] Jacob Feldman, *The Jewish Experience in Western Pennsylvania* (Pittsburgh: The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, 1986), 51–53.
[3] Ibid., 53.

time an alternative approach to studying American Jewish history on a more local, rather than national level.

Pittsburgh's Jewish Community

Pittsburgh during the 19th and early 20th century can be understood as an industrial powerhouse with steel and iron being two of the city's primary products. Pittsburgh was effectively part of a chain of the industrial Ohio Valley industries which expanded and flourished during the mid-19th and into the 20th centuries. As the industry developed, so did the region and the city's immigrant population. Pittsburgh's Jewish population grew from 5,000 in 1890 to 53,000 by 1927, roughly a ten-fold increase. "Now at the turn of the twentieth century, new Jewish residents, following the traditional Jewish commercial path, re-created the economic pattern of the mid-nineteenth-century German Jewish immigrants in a more thoroughly industrialized and ethnically diverse context."[4]

In this research there are several important concepts which will be observed and analyzed as a means to ascertain Pittsburgh Jewry's distinctiveness and commonalities with American Jewry on a national level. Americanization, the concept of assimilation in the American context will be studied largely by way of newspaper discourse from the Anglo-Jewish press in Pittsburgh. This will also be compared to national-level understandings of Americanization. A vital approach in this light is looking at the path of American Reform Judaism and the leaders' efforts to Americanize Russian Jewish immigrants from 1880-1924. Spatial distribution patterns, educational, charitable and cultural institutions from both Reformed and Orthodox communities in Pittsburgh will be looked at as a means to understand the level of polarization of

[4] Amy Hill Shevitz, *Jewish Communities on the Ohio River* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2007), 146–47.

the different Jewries. More importantly, spatial distribution is studied here as a means to understand how former polarized communities overcome cultural, spiritual and geographic barriers over time. Finally, the notion of Jewishness of place as a means to unite diverse communities of Jews is in the final section.

Literature Review

State of Research

Initially, the scholar who sparked my interest in American Jewish history was Charles Liebman[5], who pointed out the apparent struggle of Jews to integrate into the larger American society whilst maintaining a distinctive group identity.[6] While his implications that Jewish authenticity is somehow challenged by modernity and in danger of losing part of the traditional culture and society were very striking and helped provoke my thoughts on the matter, his overall treatment of "Jewish identity" is problematic because it is essentialist; it assumes the existence of a common underlying Jewish culture, history, set of values, practices. In the case of the Jews in America, as Liebman points out, maintaining ones Jewish identity became an increasingly matter of personal choice. Conversely to Liebman's pessimistic interpretation of Jewish identity today, he argued that with regards of ideas, symbols, and institutions which aroused the deepest loyalties and passions of American Jews, that the "cult of synthesis"[7] has the following underlying values, "there is nothing incompatible between being a good Jew and a good American, or between Jewish and American standards of behavior. In fact, for a Jew, the better an American one is, the better Jew one is."[8]

Similar to this concept of Judaism and Americanism reinforcing one another, an earlier scholar, Horace Kallen also found a "singleness of purpose" with Americanism and Hebraism.

[5] Liebman is considered a modern pre-eminent social scientist of Jews and Judaism.
[6] Charles Liebman, *The Ambivalent American Jew: Politics, Religion, and Family in American Jewish Life*, 1st ed. (Jewish Pulication Society of America, 1973).
[7] This "cult of Synthesis" refers to a central theme in American Jewish culture that Judaism and Americanism reinforce one another.
[8] Jonathan Sarna, "The Cult of Synthesis in American Jewish Culture," *Indiana University Press* 5, no. 1/2 (Autumn, - Winter, 1999 1998): 3.

Jonathan Sarna explains, for Kallen, his "Americaness" made in "a nobler Jew" and his "Jewishness" in turn made him a more "enlightened American."[9]

Arthur Goren[10] deals with essays about Jewish communal life in America and how Jews as a minority dealt with what is essentially group survival. There are ten case studies that examine various strategies for maintaining a collective identity while being active in American social life. Goren's main question he grapples with is how to assure Jewish group survival within American freedom. I think this will be fundamental in my argument which I will be obliged to include in my thesis—that there was an effort on the part of Jews to maintain a Jewish identity[11], but also Americanize and become integrated in American social, economic and political life. Furthermore I will be considering this text when dealing with German-Jewish and Russian-Jewish tensions in America and whether or not religion as a commonality was or was not enough to become allies in the struggle for group survival. I will effectively be considering the question—were their two Jewish American identity: German and East European, or did the brethren overcome their differing national backgrounds and fight a common struggle?

Jack Glazier's book *Dispersing the Ghetto*[12] reveals programs with the relocation of Jewish immigrants in America during the great wave of immigration of the late 19th and early 20th centuries reveals; he reveals some insightful accounts of the difficulties—economic,

[9] Jonathan Sarna, "The Cult of Synthesis in American Jewish Culture," *Indiana University Press* 5, no. 1/2 (Autumn, - Winter, 1999 1998): 8.
[10] Arthur Goren, *The Politics and Public Culture of American Jews* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).
[11] The term "identity" here refers to a basic understanding of identification as Jews and also as Americans. Due to very goal of this thesis, to understand varying understandings of Americaness and Jewishness in given locales, the reader may choose to refer to "Beyond Identity," to ascertain "identity" on a more complex level. Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper. "Beyond Identity," in *Ethnicity without Groups*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004, ch. 2.
[12] Jack Glazier, *Dispersing the Ghetto: The Relocation of Jewish Immigrants Across America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

political and social problems—that arose from the clustering of Jewish immigrants in the urban center and the attempts made by Jewish organizations to relocate them such that they are less concentrated—particularly the Jews of Lower East side in New York City in the 1880s. Also important in this book, Glazier includes personal accounts of emigrant Jews and settled Jews and their reactions to the new waves of immigrants (flowing largely from Eastern Europe). Glazier also holds a optimistic standpoint which important as it reflects the theme of Judaism to Jewishness, "individuals and ethnic groups to which they belong are the best arbiters of what it worthy of preservation and practice within the framework of American life."[13]

While full rejection of Jewishness as a means to completely accomplish American integration was never a popular or even acceptable proposition, Jewish communal leaders constantly sought ways to balance these two goals: integration and development as a true America citizen, and maintenance of a member of a Jewish belonging. The Reform Judaism movement was by and large an effort to recreate the American Jewish community as an entity more accepting to all Jews, less exclusive and less demanding. In a seminal work on *American Judaism, N*athan Glazer notes the impact of the Reform movement on Judaism in America, "By the turn of the century, Reform Judaism was the dominant current of American Jewry and had recreated Jewish identity in congruence with American liberal Protestantism."[14][15] The controversy of the reform of Judaism was indicative of an effort to promote Jewish survival within American freedom.

[13] Ibid.
[14] Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism,* second. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 15.
[15] Glazer, *American Judaism*.

In *Sacred Survival (1986)*[16], Jonathan Woocher points out smartly that, "Any satisfactory Jewish ideological response to the Emancipation and the Enlightenment had to tell the Jew not only how to be Jewish under the radically new conditions of modernity, but why to be Jewish as well."[17] In the case study of the Jewish community in Pittsburgh the discourse constantly reiterates this phenomenon—on instructing the community how to be Jewish and how to teach the youth why it is still desirable to be Jewish in modern times. Despite the wishes of their parents, second generation Jews possessed little intention on carry on the traditions and practices.

Naomi Cohen's work on German Jews in the United States (1830-1914) contributes a thorough discussion of the Americanization of Judaism. Focusing on the development of American Reform Judaism, she reports, "In language, forms and ideology, Reform embodied the American spirit of the nineteenth century."[18] Cohen explains the steadfastness in which Reformers acted out their statements by making America their "new Zion."

Avoiding Essentialist Pit-falls

In the first stage I will explore Judaism as a subculture in America. This concept has been presented by David Sorkin and employed by various succeeding scholars in the understanding of modern Judaism. I will investigate the components of the Jewish subculture which develop. The various components include: philanthropy, Jewish clubs and organizations, hotels, resorts, and neighborhoods. I will highlight important themes found in the literature of American Judaism, which is quite expansive and thorough. In a second pursuit, I will draw connections from the national to the local level. My case study of the Jewish communities in

[16] Jonathan Woocher, *Sacred Survival: The Civil Religion of American Jews* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).
[17] Ibid., 4.
[18] Naomi Cohen, *Encounter with Emancipation: The German Jews in the United States 1830-1914*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1984), 171.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania will help to how accurate or plausible previous conceptions of the relations between German Jews and Russian Jews in America are; it will be useful in understanding the complexities of the evolution from Judaism to Jewishness in America. It is problematic to apply generalizations about the significance of certain events, movements and beliefs to all of American Jewry. It will be more prudent to hold the knowledge we have about American Jews and American Judaism against the conditions of individual communities. After analyzing the subculture on a national and local level by way of looking at philanthropic, political and cultural developments, I thirdly focus my attention to the subject of immigration. I will not exclusively focus on the era of mass immigration which begins in the early 1880s, but include American Jews of earlier arrivals who often attempted to help and assimilate their incoming Russian brethren. This part will largely focus on philanthropy and charity once again, but I will contribute more focus to conflicts that arise between the established American Jews and the newcomers from Russia and reveal different understandings of the concept of Americanization. Effectively there are many interpretations and paths to Americanization—I am interested here in how these varying understandings are a reflection of different national origins which are connected with religion, social class and education. In this assessment I will be looking at discourses, mainly from Jewish newspapers, on a local level from Pittsburgh's German-Reform Jewish community. The immigrant-Russian sides of the conflict is mainly documented in the Yiddish and Hebrew newspapers from this community, which cannot be examined here; but a number of available English-language materials fortunately allows us to arrive at an adequate appraisal of this perspective as well.. Furthermore I will also pay attention to the spatial lay-out of the Jewish communities and Pittsburgh—by doing this I will illustrate how the changing shape of Jewish neighborhoods reflects the migrations of immigrant Jews as

they climb the economic ladder. When these migrations from the slums to middle class neighborhoods occur, we see a mixing of German and Russian immigrant Jews.
However, as Lawrence Silberstein points out be referencing sociologist Stewart Hall, scholars who operate on identity, including historians and social scientists seek to "discover, excavate, bring to light and express" that which is essential and unchanging in a group's identity.[19] The problem is that discourse that analyzes how Jewish identity changes or how it differs assumes the existence of a core, authentic, essential "Jewish self" that is in hiding among other selves or identities as if core Jewish identity existed by default. As a response to this essentialist treatment of Jewish identity, scholars lately have been focusing on identity as a process, rather than one of given existence. We can see how identity is produced through discourses through which people are identified and categorized by ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, race, nationality, socioeconomic status, etc.

Identities simply are not fixed in some recoverable past; they are constantly changing and evolving. Hall suggests that we should think of identities as ways we are positioned by and where we position ourselves in relation to narratives of the past. Because identities are constructed through memory, myth, narrative, fantasy, and in my opinion largely by discourse, "identities are inherently unstable."[20][21]

Moshe Rosman has explained the importance of differentiation between cultural and social history, and also cultural psychological history. Collective memory plays a huge role in the creation of cultural and social history. It is prudent for me in my research to approach the cultural history of the society of American Jewry with an understanding that the alleged

[19] Laurence J. Silberstein, *Mapping Jewish identities*, first. (New York: NYU Press, 2000), 2.
[20] Ibid., 3.
[21] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and the Diaspora," in *Identity: Community, Culture and Difference*, 2nd ed. (Lawrence and Wishart Ltd, 2003), 225.

members of the given society or community and how they interact with their own collective memory. "Research can focus on how historical traditions are 'converted into human meanings' and 'find their way into the minds of men and women' on the collective/societal—as opposed to the individual/psychological—level."[22] Therefore, the end goal in sight is to observe and interpret how society shapes and interprets heritage of the past as a means to "facilitate meaningful life into the future."[23] Rosman explains, as a keen researcher, one should assume that even people who assume that they are upholding a community tradition, are in reality always contending with other elements that effectively challenge and change the tradition. Whether tradition is forgotten or sometimes it is upheld diligently, it is always a dialectic interaction with present conditions.[24]

Riv-Ellen Prells'[25] intensive social study on American Jews offers an interesting observation concerning American Jewish children and their immigrant parents. Jewish children, Prell argues in her book, moved away from Jewishness and Jewish ideals of their immigrant parents, they in fact "loathed" their parents, which is one of Americanization's lingering legacies to the American Jewish community. Offering more explanation to her argument, she explains that some Jews may have internalized the feelings held by non-Jews towards Jews, thus creating an image of Judaism that was less desirable to maintain to hold on to. I find her overarching argument is congruent with my assessment of American Jewish communities in my own research: that, "the tightly woven patterns linking class, gender, and ethnicity demonstrate that

[22] Moshe Rosman, *How Jewish is Jewish History?* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007), 133.
[23] Ibid., 132.
[24] Ibid., 133.
[25] Riv-Ellen Prell is a professor at University of Minnesota who teaches both religious and American studies; she has specialized in research on cultural studies of American Jews and Judaism—particularly she has focused on gender, class and particularly Jewish women.

American Jews projected onto one another what frightened them most as they found their way into the Promised Land."[26] Prell explains that children of immigrant Jews had to confront their parents, and in that same respect Jewishness, in a "battleground of middle-class hopes."[27]

David Hollinger[28] has described the unfortunate, dominant approach to American Jewish history as "communalist," insofar as historians of the field tend to frame their research by the concept of "the Jewish people." Such historians have focused too narrowly on the internal world of Jews and not enough on Jews as a part of wider American society and culture. Tony Michels[29] has elaborated further on Hollinger's implications and explained that there are effectively two tracts in the study of American Jewish history: the "outspoken communalists" who seek to bolster Jewish identity and continuity and the other side which aims to incorporate Jewish history into the general trends of American history. While Hollinger notes that communalist approaches to history are beneficial and therefore important, his overarching point is that a "dispersionist" history is more explanatory it is "a more expanded compass that takes fuller account of the lives in any and all domains of persons with an ancestry in the Jewish Diaspora, regardless of their degree of involvement with communal Jewry and no matter what their extent of declared or ascribed Jewishness."[30] Hollinger is very open in expressing how influential Amos Funkenstein was to his intellectual career. He argues effectively for how accurate Funkenstein when he explained that it is futile to try search for a romantic answer for "what is original and therefore

[26] Riv-Ellen Prell, *Fighting to Become Americans: Assimilation and the Trouble between Jewish Women and Jewish Men* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), 14.
[27] Ibid., 103.
[28] Preston Hotchkis Professor of intellectual history at UC Berkley. His critique of American Jewish historiography comes mainly from his book S*cience, Jews, and Secular Culture (1996).*
[29] George L Mosse Associate Professor of American Jewish History at University of Madison-Wisconsin
[30] Tony Michels, "Communalist History and Beyond: What is the Potential of American Jewish History?," *Project Muse* 95, no. 1 (March 2009), http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_jewish_history/v095/95.1.michels.html.

autochthonous in Jewish culture, as against what is borrowed, assimilated, and alien."

Funkenstein's concept of Jewish culture is very much related to the debate in nationalism studies between primordialists and modernists. Jewish culture does not have an "original" which is recoverable from some distant past, as primordialists would argue. In the light of Funkenstein and now his adherent follower Hollinger, Jewish identity does not have a primordial base and therefore there is no threat posed by modernity—furthermore Hollinger seems to imply that to accept Jewishness as primordial is to simply borrow from well known historical romantics such as Herder; instead we should understand that Jewishness is historically contingent.[31]

[31] Ibid.

Chapter 1
Discourses on Americanization

There were two primary waves of immigration to the United States, the first wave, the pre-Civil War era, witnessed immigration primarily from Western and Central European nations. Upon the initial landing, immigrants established traditions and institutions which mirrored those of their previous home; however, in doing so they were already in the process of recreating ethnic identities and institutions.[32] Hasia Diner explains, the greatest difference between the first wave and the second wave of immigrants who hailed from the Russian Empire and South East Europe was the magnitude. From 1820 through 1890 approximately fifteen million Europeans landed in America, compared with 1890 through the 1920s (a much smaller timeframe) where twenty million arrived. The Dillingham Commission of the U.S. Senate sheds light on the difference in which the two waves of immigrants were thought of as opposites. Whereas the old-immigration had brought peoples who gladly and easily shed their "Old World" loyalties, the new immigrants were characterized by their inassimilable nature—their lack of interest in American values and ideals of freedom.[33]

The two hundred and fifty thousand Jews who came from 1820-1880 were from areas of Austria, Germany, Bohemia, and Moravia. However, the vast majority of the two and a half million Jews came during the years 1881-1924 from Eastern and Southern Europe marked a tenfold increase of the former immigration in the previous six decades. Diner's book which recounts a thorough history of American Jews importantly warns against dichotomizing

[32] Hasia R. Diner, *The Jews of the United States, 1654 to 2000* (University of California Press, 2004), 77.
[33] Ibid., 77–78.

American Jewish immigration into purely Russian and German categories, as this, while it is not necessarily wrong, is over simplistic. Instead Diner beckons us to think of Jewish immigration less on what the histories have dictated it to be and instead search for a more accurate, less rigid, understanding of the history of American Jewries. This is what we will aim to do here in this study.

During 1820-1950, Jewish immigrants were faced with the demand of Americanization—but this was an inherently ambiguous term and process. But knowing that America had/has a predominately Anglo-Saxon culture, the paradigm of Anglo-Conformity is one of the main assimilating features to American society at the time of immigration. We can understand assimilation to be "a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life."[34] Furthermore, it is "the complete loss of original ethnic identity in an individual or group of individuals leading to absorption into the dominant culture."[35]

Americanization from this point of view was a movement aimed at eliminating the original character, that is, any distinctiveness of part of the minority culture. Whatever distinguished immigrants from the core American society was to be denounced. Generally this understanding of Americanization was used for the absorption of the new wave of immigrants

[34] Susan J. Dicker, "US Immigrants and the Dilemma of Anglo-Conformity," *Journal of the Research Group on Socialism and Democracy* 47,(vol. 22, no. 3) (November, 2008) http://sdonline.org/48/us-immigrants-and-the-dilemma-of-anglo-conformity/.
[35] Ibid.
Weinstock, S.A**.** 1969. Acculturation and occupation: A study of the 1956 Hungarian refugees in the United States. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

during the 1880s to the 1920s hailing primarily, but no exclusively, from Eastern Europe.[36] Because the focus of this paper pays special attention to the established American Jewish community and its relationship with incoming Jewish immigrants during that time period, we must delve into the debate over perception of *what does America mean when it comes to diversity*? We can highlight different views of the Jewish community on what it means to be American. Is there room for diversity? How much distinctiveness can a group or individual retain before he/she is considered to be un-American? Ultimately, when does adhesion become cohesion and when does coercion become necessary?

The problematic nature of understanding the meaning of Americanization is also the most interesting feature of it. Americanization as it should be thought of here will not be strictly defined because it means different things to different communities and individuals. This is why it is necessary to observe the interpretations and understanding of the word. Americans and immigrants alike interpreted the concept differently and therefore they undertook varying paths to assimilation. These various paths and understandings however are something that can be observed and studied as they speak something curious about the members who interpreted and defined Americanization in a particular way. It is prudent now however to highlight a certain trend or theme which seems eminent in the Americanization of immigrants and the efforts to expedite the Americanization process on the part of established Americans.

[36] Gerald Meyer, "The Cultural Pluralist Response to Americanization: Horace Kallen, Randolph Bourne, Louis Adamic, and Leonard Covello | Socialism and Democracy" 22, no. 3 (n.d.), http://sdonline.org/48/the-cultural-pluralist-response-to-americanization-horace-kallen-randolph-bourne-louis-adamic-and-leonard-covello/.

1.1 Americanization—The Path of American Reform Judaism

The current which related Americanization directly to the practice of Judaism was Reform Judaism, which had roots in the Enlightenment and the Jewish Haskalah movement which originated in Central Europe. By the 1870s, Reform Judaism became the dominant form of religious belief and practice among American Jews. It is sensible now to specify that, Reform Judaism in America, a product of German Jewish tradition is not to be confused as the German Jewish tradition itself. Leon Jick's seminal contribution to the history of American Judaism is a thoroughly significant at this point. *The Americanization of the Synagogue 1820-1870* is a marked break with previous misconceptions about the nature of American Reform Judaism. The core of his argument in fact rejects the premise that Reform Judaism in America was merely a product from Europe which German Jewish immigrants brought with them when. He corrects, "Few if any German-Jewish immigrants came to American with ideas for reform." On the contrary they had a tendency to reject reformist proposals. The Reform ideologues "denounced the religion of convenience which they found in American and which was not to be confused with the reformist principles they themselves espoused." Jick explains, when changes and reforms were eventually adopted, it was because of upward mobility and prosperity (in the 1850s).[37]

"As congregants prospered and built new and costly synagogues, questions of ritual change surfaced. Must the cantor still face the ark? Which prayers could be eliminated? Could services be shortened? Could worshipers face north, not towards Jerusalem as Jews all over the world traditionally do? At the heart of the questions lay the goal of "becoming an American while remaining a Jew." But the changes emerged piecemeal, in response to particular questions and circumstances. Virtually nowhere was there the "intellectually consistent reform" which Reform rabbis envisioned."[38][39]

[37] Leon A. Jick, *The Americanization of the Synagogue, 1820-1870*: an Historiographical Appreciation," American Jewish History 90 (2002), first. (Hannover: Brandeis, 1992), 79–81.
[38] Pamela S. Nadell, "The Americanization of the Synagogue, 1820-1870: an historiographical appreciation," (American Jewish Historical Society, March 1, 2002), pp. 51-62.

Americanization and union were central to the concern of Isaac Mayer Wise and his followers. It should not be overlooked that even the more forefront leaders of the Reform movement in America were not without opposition. Reform Judaism, as it was evolving on the American scene, had considerable opponents within its own camp—notably David Einhorn, a radical Reformer who opposed the Americanization goals of Wise. Meyer notes the significance of Reform Judaism for German-Jewish immigrants of the later immigration. "To the minds of many of the later immigrants Reform Judaism was an integral part of their German heritage."[40] Having been ordained by German liberal rabbis, they were familiar with the reformed liturgy, the German synagogue melodies, to the ideas of Reform propagated by the leaders. So while they learned English when they arrived, German language and culture was still very much, in a way, sacred to them. It is because of this reality that radical Reformers such as Einhorn had a considerable following of supporters. They believed that American Jewry was still dependent on Germany Jewry's religious values and therefore it could not yet be "Americanized" in the way in which Wise and his supporters urged.[41][42]

So when understanding American Reform Judaism, we should note that, while the tradition was initially brought by German-Jewish immigrants in the early nineteenth century, it is

[39] Jick, *The Americanization of the Synagogue, 1820-1870*, 152–53, 64.
[40] Michael Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 252.
[41] Ibid., 253.
[42] Notably there was a dispute between Isaac Mayer Wise and David Einhorn concerned the Reform prayerbook which should be used. Einhorn's book, Olat Tamid, contained both German and Hebrew language and also eliminated the holiday of Sukkot, as he deemed it unimportant. On the other hand Wise's book Minhag America, which proved to be more successful, was wholly Hebrew text and generally more user friendly ; both books abbreviated the service, and eliminated references to the messianic return to Zion.

not synonymous with German Reform Judaism. Though the religion in America witnessed both Americanizing and Germanizing influences, as Meyer points out in *Response to Modernity*.

Leaders of Reform Judaism understood and supported, for the most part, the efforts to discard any and all aspects of Jewish religion that were considered national, secular elements. To keep any secular Jewish elements would mean to avow allegiance to Jewish nationality, which was incongruent with the Jewish commitment to a European national allegiance. "Assimilation via Reform was the Jewish destiny, as the nineteenth century European, Jew and non-Jew, saw it."[43] Salo Baron argues that the entire Reform movement could essentially be seen as an effort to reduce the differences between Jews and Gentiles.

As the forefront figure of American Reform Judaism, Isaac Mayer Wise purported the notion that Reform Judaism in America would express and carry out the dual existence of Jewishness and Americaness. Therefore he found it essential that Reform Judaism be the "Minhag America," the religion of all American Jews. In his eyes, Reform was the solution to the problem of maintaining Jewish identity as an American citizen. From his base in Cincinnati, Ohio, Wise spread his message of Reform to the American Jewish communities. He was published daily in Jewish newspapers throughout the United States.[44]

Needless to say, Reform never became the "Minhag America." Orthodoxy carried on in the new world despite the desires and efforts of American Reform Rabbinical leadership to make Reform the Jewish religion of America. But Orthodoxy was never a majority religion among American Jews, and it too had to struggle to redefine itself in America. Following the effective failure of the Jewish Theological Seminary and the effort to unite Jews of diverse backgrounds,

[43] Salo W. Baron, "Ghetto and Emancipation: Shall We Revise the Traditional View?" *Menorah Journal* 14 (1928), pp. 515-526; reprinted in: Leo W. Schwarz (ed.), *The Menorah Treasury: Harvest of Half a Century*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973, 61.
[44] Shevitz, *Jewish Communities on the Ohio River,* 85–87.

Orthodox Jewish leaders struggled to redefine Orthodoxy in America. Meanwhile, the Reform movement had for the most part successfully consolidated itself. While Reform had failed to create itself as the "Minhag America" or the Jewish religion practiced by all American Jews, Reform turned to a policy of exclusivity. Reform Judaism in America was situated as to be representative of the American Jews of German descent, though certainly there were German Jew*s* who opposed Reform. Yet for the most part Reform Judaism was considered then—

> "The antithesis of the unruly Yiddish-speaking Orthodoxy to Reform Jews associated with their immigrant coreligionists from Eastern Europe. Socially, culturally, economically, religiously, and even geographically, Central European Reform Jews and Eastern European Orthodox Jews stood at a considerable remove from one another, as if in two separate Jewish worlds."[45]

This point works to exemplify the widely held belief that Reform Judaism was Americanized Judaism. From the foremost father of American Reform, Isaac Mayer Wise, the effort was made to create and shape Reform Judaism, which came out of the German Jewish tradition originally, into a religion which upheld the most central tenets of the religion while simultaneously upholding the most fundamental principles of America. To be Orthodox, to uphold the certain traditions which the Reform movement had deemed unsuitable for modern American life, was to be un-American. Simply, some beliefs and practices of the Russian Jewish immigrants were not compatible with the American way of life—therefore they were unwanted and unwelcome.

It is important to understand though, that American Reform Judaism was in and of itself an effort at Americanization. German Jews in America who championed Reform Judaism as congruent with American values and modernity would soon come into conflict with the mass wave of Russian Jewish immigrants who largely rejected this modernized American interpretation of Judaism. While this paper will take into account that path in which Reform

[45] Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), 194.

Judaism was both Americanized and Germanized, contribution will also be made to the phenomenon of the replacement of Judaism with Jewishness. This is an important development which I have found manifests largely in this particular time period.

1.2 Americanization of the Immigrant

For established American Jews, Americanization of the mass waves of Russian Jewish immigrants was of utmost importance. Jewish immigrants were expected to learn English, discard their mother tongue languages (at the very least limit them to the private home), dress like Americans (this means discarding any traditional European-Jewish garb), send their children to the public schools where they would learn how to become good Americans; but the last and perhaps most hazy criteria was to disregard any and all other old-world habits or practices which were deemed incompatible with American modernity. These "old-world habits and practices" are a vague category, but to lend some examples: the adherence to strict dietary laws (kashrut), not trimming ones beard, maintaining traditional side-locks or forbidding ones children to mingle with non-Jews or non-Orthodox Jews.

These are just a few examples, but just like the word "Americanization," what fell under the category of "old-world habits and practices" were also contestable. Not all American Reform Jews had an issue with keeping a strict kosher diet or keeping the traditional beard and side locks; no doubt there were members of the American Reform community who found the presence of dedicated religious Jews to be refreshing and they welcomed these remnants of the old-world. There were always exceptions to the dominant demand of assimilation.

Still I have found that the rhetoric and influence of leading American Jewish figures encouraged if not pushed the reconstruction of the Jewish communal order and the synagogue

while it created new practices (and even traditions) that were in-tune with American culture. The notion of Americanization alone is a part of a policy of conformity requiring the participation and dedication of American Jewry to the betterment of America.

1.3 Americanization of Orthodoxy

East European Jewish communities of New York responded first to the threat of the waning of traditional Judaism. "They concluded that a Judaism that stood in harmony with the middle-class values that they and their children espoused would be more likely to endure."[46] An effort began to make East European synagogues of New York into showpiece, model synagogues in the mid 1880s. This meant paying special attention to details of decoration and overall appearances. Beth Hamedrash Hagodol is the most remarkable and best example, Sarna explains. In 1885 the synagogue demonstrated the impressiveness and attention to traditionalist with the importation of choral music and vernacular addresses, which was considered tasteful. During this time other synagogues began the trend of strict rules order, assigned and permanent seating. Synagogues were made formal and awe-inspiring in effect. Even went as far as to hire, at an allegedly steep price, European-trained cantors for the traditional liturgies. The synagogues effectively competed with each other for impressiveness factors—hiring more and more expensive and famous cantors for their services—this caused more people to come to services. "Dressed in their flowing robes and professional caps, the cantors substituted for the organ music that shaped the rarefied atmosphere in formal churches and Reform temples." [47] Furthermore European cantors were symbolic of traditional Jewish music in the new world.

[46] Ibid., 175.
[47] Ibid., 176–77.

With the building of these elaborate and expensive synagogues, these orthodox congregations needed money to fund these projects. This beckoned them to open up to all members of the community to join the congregation; for to fund these projects money was needed, which therefore required membership dues and fees. In effect the creation of large intricate synagogues and making membership to such establishments fashionable and a thing of pride, Orthodoxy was becoming modern. It was Americanized Orthodox Judaism. This also entailed creating rabbis who were able to be modern, American and also Orthodox. It was a paradox—the new rabbis had to embody resistance and accommodation of Americanization. He had to be skilled to improve Orthodoxy as to be congruent with American culture but also not give in completely. It was a delicate balancing act. This balancing act is beautifully exemplified with synagogue life and rabbis, but it was existent throughout Jewish society as a whole really. We can look at the evolution of Jewishness in America as an effort to find common ground between Americanization and Jewishness—the result, what Jewishness is today at present, is merely a selection, a path, deemed most appropriate, whether consciously or consciously chosen, by American Jews. The Americanization of Orthodoxy in America ultimately influenced the Reform movement to change and adapt as well.

Reform Judaism too also metamorphisized as a response to criticisms from the likes of influential intellectuals and Jewish leaders such as Mordecai Kaplan. He in particular founded Reform Judaism to be devoid of spirituality and exclusive, "confined to one stratum of society—the so-called upper middle class."[48] On the other hand the continual flow of Russian Jews into American cities created Jewish population imbalance whereas Reform communities were greatly outnumbered by non-Reformed Russian Jews. As a response to the growing signs that Reform

[48] Ibid., 249.

was falling behind, withering slowly, during the interwar years Reform rabbis emphasized the restricting and revitalization of Reform. This meant a renewed focus on all facets of Jewish life—the incorporation of special programs and events such as sewing, music, dance, and drama for example were undertaken by Rockdale Temple in Cincinnati. Furthermore Reform congregations began to once again include rituals which were previously eliminated such as bar mitzvahs in an effort to attract Russian Jewish immigrants.[49]

1.4Americanization in Newspaper Discourse

While studying Pittsburgh's Jewish communities, I dedicated a considerable amount of my research to Pittsburgh's Anglo-Jewish newspaper, the *Jewish Criterion.* The long term editor Charles Joseph (1875-1956) was effectively part of the opinion-shaping apparatus. While Joseph did indeed get his messages across to his readers in his editorials and public lectures, he was also an advertising clerk of a department store. This is an interesting and unique feature in and of itself as Joseph was not the typical editor for Jewish newspaper at the time. Most editors were Rabbis, or at least learned Jews with some respectable educational prestige. Joseph was neither, yet his opinions were widely publicized and he was respected very much on a local level. The *Jewish Criterion* was an important feature for the Pittsburgh Jews, and while it was technically written with Reformed and middle-class biased, non-Jews were also known to subscribe to the newspaper. In fact the newspaper in a way catered to the non-Jewish element.

While I am employing the use of a local newspaper, Pittsburgh's Jewish Criterion, as a source of understanding the paths to Americanization, opinions towards immigrants and Orthodox believers, this paper also is useful in reflecting the world-wide events and opinions from various other newspapers in the United States. For instance, articles from the *Yiddish Daily*

[49] Ibid., 249–250.

Forward in New York are often republished in the *Criterion*. Sometimes the editor makes comments about the state of American Jewry as a whole, rather than just the Jews of Pittsburgh. This national level arena is something which is discussed in the next section as it brings an interesting perspective—a local level newspaper's coverage of national American and Jewish events.

1.5 Questioning Americanization

The following articles reflect the opinions of a diverse stratum of writers who divulge on the Jewish immigrant in America and provide us with varying views toward: why Americanization is necessary, what Americanization means, and also warnings against Americanization of the Jewish immigrant.

A fifth page article in the Criterion published September 25, 1903 by Rebecca Altman[50] "Assimilation—A Quack Remedy" points to the ridiculousness of the notion of assimilation, which is an "old skeleton" pulled out by the "leaders of Israel." Arguing that assimilation has been tried and tried for centuries by the Jews and still they were excluded by the Christians is not a tactic that should be employed in the United States. Lamenting about the state of the Jews in Germany who could not possibly be more assimilated, and also the Jews in the United States are all too willing to follow the non-Jewish American's footsteps to the door of the summer hotels, only to be rejected for his Jewish persuasion, she makes a clear point—surrendering to the gentile half will not end anti-Jewish feelings; what began as an article about assimilation because a warning against Jewish conversion to Christianity. To the author, the former seems to imply the road which leads to the latter. The overall message of Altman's piece—assimilation did not

[50] Rebecca Altman, was one of the best-known American Jewish writers at the time.

work for the Jews in Europe, it will not work for the Jews in America either. Here the reader is presented with a message which is in effect against the Reform push for Americanization.

As mentioned, the *Jewish Criterion* covered not just national but international perspectives. To bring this international perspective in, an article by Frenchman Anatole Leroy Beaul *Jewish Immigrants and Judaism in the United States*[51] appears in 1904, some twenty years after the beginning of the new wave of immigration.

"Most of the Jews, after their first intoxication of breathing the air of liberty in the United States perceive quickly that revolutionary tendencies and the Utopian spirit are not current in America. Without losing their warm interest in social problems, they become wiser, more moderate, and more practical, as they absorb the American Spirit."[52]

The author offers the perspective of the non-Jew and non-American for that matter and speaks for the Americanization of the immigrant Jews which, to him, has two apparent but divergent paths: regardless of national origin, one group stays attached to traditional customs and tries to maintain a Jewish life, while the progressive group of Jews, the majority, pursues a path of insight by becoming *real* American citizens. Leroy-Beaul beckons an answer as to what or how this so-called "Americanization" can go forth any further. The general defensive nature of the argument suggests that Jews in America have already adopted American culture and values swiftly. He strikes an important note when he explains, "Children that have been in America three, four or five years act already exactly like Americans. You can hardly get them to admit

[51] This article was translated from its original language, French, by Beaulah B. Amram. It was originally delivered as an address before the Societe des Etudes Juives. Anatole Leroy-Beaul was a French publicist and historian who specialized in Russian history. Much of the article deals with the situation of the Russian Jews and how to solve the problem. He believed that brining the Russian Jews to the United States was not the solution as their vast numbers made it completely impractical.

[52] Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, "Jewish Immigrants and Judaism in the United States," *Jewish Criterion* vol. 21, no. 3 (Pittsburgh, June 30, 1905), pp 3-5, 7-9; quote from p. 7. .

that they were not born in America."[53] As the reader understands, the willingness of Jewish parents to send their children to American public schools is indicative of the fact that in the public schools the children, both Jewish and non-Jewish, develop their national unity—a proud attachment to a common fatherland. Effectively, Jewish children are indoctrinated into the cult-like love and worship of the nation; they memorize the names of the Founding Fathers, the Declaration of Independence and can recite the Constitution by heart.[54] In doing so, they learn the spirit of America—liberty, equality, and justice. Just as later historians such as Leibman and Kallen would declare, Beaul too declares—the tenets of the American spirit are congruent with those of Israel.[55]

Oscar S. Straus, former United States Secretary of Commerce and Labor under President Roosevelt and also of German-Jewish origin, delivered an address to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations urging, "American liberty demands of no man the abandonment of his conscientious convictions." Rather, it champions diversity and rejects uniformity in contrast to patriotism which would fuse diversity with uniformity in harmony. America, being a nation of many religions, let alone nationalities and ethnicities, is able to function and exist because it requires that all citizens, Jews, Christians and Protestants alike, believe in their religions and are allowed to do such so that they are fully capable of serving America to their greatest capacity. Furthermore, being patriotic makes the individual no less religious and being religious makes the

[53]Ibid.
[54] The case of Mary Antin as told in her autobiography *The Promised Land*, is indicative of this sort of this instilling of fanatical love for the American nation and the Founding Fathers. Antin recalls falling in love with George Washington and the patriots of the nation when she was in the thick of her schooling in America.
[55] Leroy-Beaulieu, "Jewish Immigrants and Judaism in the United States."

individual no less patriotic.[56] Staus's words are significant especially because of his important political position and being well-known to non-Jews in America. In effect his message champions diversity of religion—uniformity and conformity—and this can be understood as applicable directly towards the battle of Reform to unite all American Jews, is no way to honor the virtue of American liberty.

1.6 Urging the Americanization Effort

This section provides an array of articles, also published in the *Criterion,* which reflect support and urgency for the Americanization process. A second page article in the Jewish Criterion dated September 24, 1915, runs directly counter to the inspirational optimism displayed by Oscar Straus, but it also lends incite as to the causes of at least part of established American Jewry's sentiment toward Americanization. The article titled "An Attack upon the Jews" is an outcry against a certain publication made my Agnes Reppilier in the Atlantic Monthly titled "The Modern Immigrant." In her essay she decries the presence of the immigrant population in America, and most stridently the Jewish population. Effectively her accusations are that the Jews, out of all immigrants in America, owe thanks and respect to Americans because they (the Jews) have taken so much and given so little-- "[The Jews'] masterfulness affronts our sense of decency."[57]

"The strength of our country lies in its wonderful power of assimilation. Where it not for this, the hordes of immigrants coming every year to our shores from foreign lands would make national growth and greatness impossible. We are a great nation, not merely because various

[56]Oscar S. Straus, "America and the Spirit of American Judaism," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, January 20, 1911), Volume 31, Issue 24 edition,
[57] Agnes Repplier, "An Attack Upon the Jews," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, September 24, 1915), Volume XXXXVI, No 4 edition.

elements have entered into our national composition, but because we have managed so well to fuse all these elements."[58]

Though these words voiced by Repplier are harsh, and no doubt they carried a certain level of legitimacy among America Jews and non-Jews alike, there were more, less extreme assimilationists as well. Joseph discusses a debate from New York's *Yiddish Daily Forward*[59] in 1922 deals with the concept of language as a barrier between Americanizing and being un-American. The nature of the article is a response to questions being raised about whether or not it is acceptable or commendable to educate Jewish children in Yiddish. The response was a passionate and resounding *No*. This is a key theme in the Americanization of the Jewish communities. Their undermining of ideals is largely perpetrated by the established Jewish community in its self. Often these newspapers would scrutinize the Russian Jewish immigrants for maintaining their ridiculous, broken language—Yiddish, or even Russian, or Hebrew.[60] They were effectively chastising these members of the community who had trouble breaking ties with their old languages in effort to drive the whole towards assimilation. So this article which originates in the *Forward,* a Russian-Yiddish Newspaper, surprisingly condemned the teaching of Yiddish to American Jewish children, a generally desirable feature for Russian-Jewish immigrants. This being republished in the *Jewish Criterion* in Pittsburgh, a German-Reform paper, would have been very tell-tale to the readers that, "if the Russian Jews do not condone Yiddish, why should we?" In addition of condemning the instruction of Jewish children in Yiddish, Joseph laments "Do not congregate in Ghettos. That does not mean that you should hsun Jewish friends and Jewish associations. There is, however, a LIMIT to everything…Learn

[58] Repplier, "An Attack Upon the Jews."
[59] Charles H. Joseph, "Random Thoughts," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, November 3, 1922), Volume 60 Issue 8 edition.
[60] Reform Judaism, even its beginnings in Europe, was unique in that religious service was conducted in the language of the land, rather than the biblical language of Hebrew.

to know your Gentile neighbor."[61] He goes on to criticize the ghettoized ways of life of the million and a half Jews in New York City, living like animals in the stuffy tenements. Voicing no sympathy for their plight and extending no effort to understand their circumstances, Joseph accuses them for being clannish. This expression and this particular image is the one in which Joseph chose to present to his readers in Pittsburgh about the Jewish immigrants in New York.

The words, speeches, opinions, expressions, and encouragement of the influential members of American Jewry molded and in a sense coalesced the morphing of American Jewry into a specific character. All spheres of life were affected by influential intellectuals, politicians, writers, newspapers, and rabbis. These various influential figures were the voices of American conformity—they preached what was the norm, what was expected of the American Jews, what should be done in order to benefit the whole—furthermore, they took special care to make sure that Jewish stereotypes were not reinforced. They knew of the various Jewish stereotypes held towards Jews by the gentiles, and therefore encouraged the Jews to abandon anything that was supportive of such notions and preconceptions. For example, the Jews as being physically-lazy members of society unwilling to do laborious work, including military service was a common stereotype.[62] This has long been a stereotype and accusation of European Jewry.

We see efforts by the Americanized Jewish community to combat these stereotypes by initiating counter-behavior. For example, seeking to eliminate this as a considerable or justifiable stereotype, Leo Wolfson[63] the honorary president of the United Roumanian Jews of

[61] Ibid.
[62] After Emancipation, Jews were liable for military conscription and service. This is also considered a major factor for the Jews to be citizens of the nation they reside in. They should offer service to the state if they are truly citizens of the nation at heart.
[63] Leo Wolfson wrote this article for the *Jewish Criterion.* He was active in the American Jewish Congress, an expert on Romanian Jewry, active in the Romanian Jewish Society, and an author of *The Question of the Jews in Roumania (1919).*

America, defended American Jewry against this accusation. In this article *Jews and Pacifism (1918),* written specifically for the *Jewish Criterion*, he responds to the "Yankee" preconception that Jews as a people are generally reluctant to fight or to take up arms as they are inherently pacifistic. Wolfson defends by saying, "American liberty and freedom had long ago made the Jews to feel a perfect sympathy with America's aims and ideals and this time also we were with our country from the very beginning…we had no hesitation in giving our boys and in offering our services."[64]

Wolfon's article explicitly defends the American Jew, who as he points out, has participated in the war effort on the front line. But at the same time, the American Jewish communities were incredibly active in the war effort—in combat but also on the home front. Jewish women in Pittsburgh, for example, went as far as to sending Christmas packages to American soldiers in Europe.[65]

The Anglo-Jewish press adopted a paternalistic outlook towards the immigrants. They simultaneously condemned the maltreatment of Russian Jews under the Tsar and painted a negative image of the emigrants in America. It is evident that German Jews were in the midst of seemingly conflicting demands to the immigrants, their brethren, and having certain criteria for who would be acceptably in "our" country.[66] The following paragraph epitomizes the overarching main concern of the established Jewish community towards the Russian Jewish newcomers. It is also indicative that this attitude favors elimination of the 'wretched element,' seemingly the suggestion would be acculturation.

[64] Leo Wolfson, "Jews and Pacifism," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, November 8, 1918), Volume 50, Issue 11 edition.
[65] Charles H. Joseph, "Sisterhood Appointed to Represent Jewish Women in Holiday Work for Soldiers," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, December 20, 1918), Volume 50, Issue 17 edition.
[66] Glazier, *Dispersing the Ghetto: The Relocation of Jewish Immigrants Across America*, 7–9.

"The mode of life of these people in Russia has stamped upon them the ineffaceable marks of permanent pauperism, only disgrace and a lowering of the opinion in which American Israelites are held by this community can result from the continued resident among us of such an addition to the Jewish population. Every crime against property or the person committed by one of these wretches will throw obloquy over our race through the land."[67]—Augustus Levey, secretary of the HEAS

1.7 Local Level—Pittsburgh and Americanization

There are some common themes regarding why the Russian Jewish immigrant must be Americanized: the use of Yiddish language, "disgraceful" appearance (which was reflected onto the "Americanized" Jews), strict adherence to "out-dated" traditional practices such as kashrus, reluctance or refusal to send children to public school, clustering in tenement houses, and ghettoized living standards. This section will reveal discourses from the *Jewish Criterion* which pertain to a local, rather than national level opinion towards the Russian-Jewish immigrant.

The Orthodox Russian element of the Jewish community was not infrequently described in the *Criterion* as "outmoded" and "superstitious." There are definitely some consensus reached on certain practices which were seen as outdated; the Bar Mitzvah ceremony, surprisingly, was denounced by Enoch Rauh, who considered it "an empty form, one which has outlived its usefulness and is disregarded and abolished in all reform congregations."[68] A very compelling article who wrote for the Jewish Criterion titled "Confirmation Among the Jews," considered the ceremony of confirmation which at the time was being rather broadly practiced by American Reform congregations. He explains, the custom "had its beginning in the old Bar Mitzvah ceremony; a ceremony which was a result of the demands of the times…"[69] This is interesting

[67] *Jewish Messenger*, 8 Sept. 1882, 2.
[68] Enoch Rauh, "Confirmation Among the Jews," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, May 10, 1901), Volume 12, Issue 41 edition.
[69] Ibid.

because it reveals the influences of Christianity, especially American Christianity (an Americanizing influence on Reform Judaism), the practice and adoption of the very word "confirmation," as well as the "Sunday school" as a method of helping the children reach their confirmation successfully.

It is completely transparent that part of this competition, or in this case, the fight of Reform to beat out Orthodoxy stems from genuine beliefs that the tenets of Reform are legitimate and Reform Judaism is the modern Jewish religion, there are also notes of resentment in the arguments. The very nature of the Orthodox believers' discontent with Reform was that, in their mind, it was divorced from spirituality. While it has been noted that *Criterion* editor Charles Joseph's opinions and inclinations certainly swing back and forth at times, a very important yet small editorial comment highly reflects this type of resentment on the part of the Reform believer towards the Orthodox Jew in America; undoubtedly some of Joseph's readers held such opinions toward the Russian Orthodox Jewish element. In this 1901 editorial, Joseph references some claims which were made in *the Nickerdown*[70], which presented and contested the notion that "there is more spiritual strength in the composition of the orthodox Russian Jew than in the whole school of the followers of either the Radical Reform or Ethical Culture." Noting the sarcastic tone of the *Nickerdown* coverage of the issue, Joseph replies "If the Russian Jew in America shows more spiritual strength than his Reform brother, we are willing to confess that he keeps it well hidden. The Friday night and Saturday morning attendance at the orthodox synagogue do not show very much "spiritual strength"…Eating kosher does not by any means

[70] *The Nickerdown* refers to a pen-name used by Dr. Julius Wise, who frequently wrote in the *Chicago Israelite,* a newspaper devoted to Jewish interests.

indicate spiritual strength." [71] This view also reinforces the tenets of American Reform—in effect that there are certain practices, such as kashrut, that are not substantial to the essence of Judaism and should therefore be discarded.

Joseph was adamant about covering the proceedings of the Conferences of American Rabbis, the issues being discussed—of which he always offered his own interpretation of. In light of this research, there is compelling coverage of the future of Judaism in America regarding the paths of Orthodoxy and Reform. In *Progress of the Church*,[72] Joseph introduces Rabbi Raphael Benjamin's take on "Reform and Orthodoxy." Joseph merely posted part of the Rabbi's speech at the Conference "A reformer fifty years ago would to-day be a very orthodox Jew, and even the reformer of ten years ago, would to-day be 'behind the times.' As immigrants land in this country they gradually are assimilated to the ranks of the reformers."[73] The orthodox element in his view only exists in America because of immigration—but these Orthodox immigrants eventually become reformers. The Rabbi reported that the chief difference between Orthodoxy and reform were the "Mosaic dietary laws." The final note was reached when he declared that Reform Judaism would simply "absorb" all forms of Judaism that exist, as converts are constantly made from the "Orthodox element."[74]

Strict adherence to Kashrut and the unyielding determination of the Orthodox Jew to follow the traditional Shabbat Haggadah may have certainly seemed foreign to the Americanized Jew. But so too did the traditional cheder Jewish school; for the German Jews in Pittsburgh,

[71] Charles H. Joseph, *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, July 12, 1901), Volume 13, Issue 5 edition, sec. Editorial.
[72] The very use of the word Church instead of "synagogue," or even "temple," is indicative of Christian influences.
[73] Charles H. Joseph, "Progress of the Church," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, July 12, 1901), Volume 13, Issue 5 edition.
[74] Ibid., 7.

these schools were a relic of the past, a pre-modern institution which should have been brought into the American setting. A head worker from the Columbian Council School, Sadie Levy, wrote in the Criterion in 1902, "Where Americanization is vigorously pushed, the cheder is a picturesque obstruction." The cheder was the source of "old Jewish lore that fanaticism and misunderstanding even in the young American born can be traced."[75] But the cheder had favor with the Orthodox Jews in Pittsburgh over the Settlement school with its threat of conversion. Out of curiosity a small group, from the fraternal German-Jewish organization B'nai Brith conducted a survey on the Hebrew cheders in the Hill district. The conclusion was made that out of the two-hundred fifty school children (ages 5-14) eighty percent received traditional Hebrew education in the cheder but the Hebrew teachers were ill-equipped to be successful educators. They were merely men who had failed in every other career pursuit which they had ventured and merely resorted to cheder instruction. They declared only one "minyanim" that of Rabbi Ashinsky at Beth Hamedresh Hagodol to be providing sufficient education in Judaism and history through the English language.[7677] Indeed the learning of the English language was the very first task in Americanizing the immigrant. The institutions created by the Reform community as means to assist the Jewish immigrant in adapting to American life always provided classes on English language, but also American history and culture.

In a following chapter, subculture will be discussed in depth. In effect, the surge of Jewish philanthropic organizations and charitable societies, many of which were created to help

[75] Sadie Levy, "Some Aspects of Social Settlement Work," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, February 7, 1902), Volume XIV, No 9 edition.
[76] "Charles Cooper, 'The Story of Jews in Pittsburgh,' Jewish Criterion (Pittsburgh, May 31, 1918)", n.d.
[77] See, Barbara Burstin, *Steel City Jews*, First. (Apollo, Pa: Barbara S. Burstin, 2008), 310–11. The original source is missing in the Jewish Criterion but Burstin provides incite as to what it said.

aid Jewish immigrants, were also forces for Americanization of the immigrant. An article (1918) written by Charles Joseph accurately exemplifies how these community institutions helped immigrants upon their arrival. The particular institution in this instance is the Jewish Welfare Board in Pittsburgh. Regarding a particular course being offered to the workers on Americanization and assimilation policies Joseph comments, "This course emphasizes the point of view of the immigrant, so that proper regard may be had for his mode of life and his culture…to help fuse the views of the immigrant with the view of the American." The workers are responsible then for helping teach the English language to the immigrant community so as to help them understand the rules "in connection with army life."[78] We can see from an editorial a month prior to this one, which an apparent issue arose with Jewish young men in the American military. "There is no occasion for Jewish young men who are able to speak the language of this country to continue to speak Yiddish while in the army service. We know that it tends to create unnecessary misunderstandings and to excite and unfriendly spirit."[79]

[78] Charles H. Joseph, "The Jewish Welfare Board Trains a Score of Welfare Workers Every Month. Here Is the Story That Tells How This Is Done.," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, August 30, 1918), Volume 50, No 1 edition.
[79] Charles H. Joseph, "Speak English," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, September 13, 1918), Volume 50, No. 3 edition, sec. Editorial.

Chapter 2
Spaces and Subcultures

2.1 Jewish Ethnic Subculture and Residential Separation

Jonathan Sarna and David Sorkin have pointed to the cooperation of different groups of Jews in America on the basis of philanthropy and charity, which I find evidence of in Pittsburgh. One characteristic of the Jewish subculture development in America is the tendency of Jews to still maintain a degree of spatial separateness from the non-Jewish members of their given local. In addition to cultural and material consumption practices, spatial separation also had a considerable impact on the polarization of the Jewish communities in the city of Pittsburgh.

The spatial element is an important feature of the Americanization concept because it leads into and helps to explain the evolution of the concept of Jewishness over Judaism, or at least Jewishness as an option instead of Judaism. This concept of Jewishness grew during the interwar years in America such that one could feel connectedness to being a Jew simply by living in close proximity to Jews. We will learn in the preceding subchapters that Jewish separateness in Pittsburgh existed in many forms. First Russian Jewish immigrants lived quite separately from Americanized Reform Jews in the city. Second, both communities were densely concentrated in certain locals which were in a sense separate from the non-Jewish Pittsburghers. It is interesting in that even to this day, the neighborhood which the Americanized Jews came to inhabit is still overwhelming composed of Jewish residents.

2.2 Leisure Subculture of German Jews in Pittsburgh

Jewish resorts in America erupted because of anti-Semitic actions on the part of America country clubs, clubs, and organizations, hotels and resorts denial of Jewish admission. As a response, Jews built Jewish counterparts to these establishments—"In so doing, Jewish resorts effectively reinforced patters of residential segregation that confined Jews across the country."[80] This was partially self-imposed and externally imposed, but it had the effect of creating separate distinctly Jewish neighborhoods all over the United States. "The result was a Jewish Population that gave every appearance of being "at home" in America but that actually inhabited a largely self-contained subculture, a parallel universe that shared many of the trappings of the large society while standing apart from it."[81] What is striking about this subculture theory which Sarna highlights is that it is the result of conflict and chaos. In short, American Jewry had many splits, sects and disagreements—Reform, Conservative, Orthodox; Zionist and non-Zionist; secularist conflicts and disagreements, etc. But it was during times of war and external threats from within America that these members of these affiliations were able to see eye to eye and unite in a common struggle.

The development of a Jewish subculture in Pittsburgh is evident and perhaps the best indicator which parallels Sarna's explanation is the founding of the Concordia Club on January 21, 1874. A group of German Reform Jews were the original founders of the club which came to be located on Stockton Avenue. The club was used as a venue for special events such as charity balls, weddings, dances and parties of all kinds. Also the Jews who attended the events at the Concordia partook in the celebration of American Jewish culture by way of Jewish talent enactments for example the plays of *Ein Americaner* in 1881. There were membership dues of

[80] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 221.
[81] Ibid., 222.

$25 dollars a year but were eventually raised to $50 in 1888. Perhaps the most tell tale sign of how important the Concordia club was for the Pittsburgh Jewish community is indicated by the 1892 reconstruction of the clubhouses at a cost of $125,000—a sum which was much more than the cost of any Pittsburgh synagogue at that time.[82] The Concordia Club may be the first massive project of the Jewish community of Pittsburgh with regards to the creation of the subculture by way of institutions which mimic those of the non-Jewish community. Just as Sarna explained as the reason for this development was by and large because Jews were at the time still discriminated against. At the 1903 Zionist convention, Pittsburgh attorney A. Leo Weil explained, "The same anti-Semitism which caused the massacres in Russia and Rumania is daily demonstrated...in Pittsburgh by the refusal to admit Jews to clubs."[83] Weil was referring specially to the Duquesne Club and various country clubs which admitted wealthy non-Jews but had denied membership to wealthy Jewish applicants. Jacob Feldman's interesting note concerning this segregation provokes much thought, "The orthodox element was unconcerned, but Reformed Jews groaned because certain Pittsburgh societies denied Jews membership."[84]

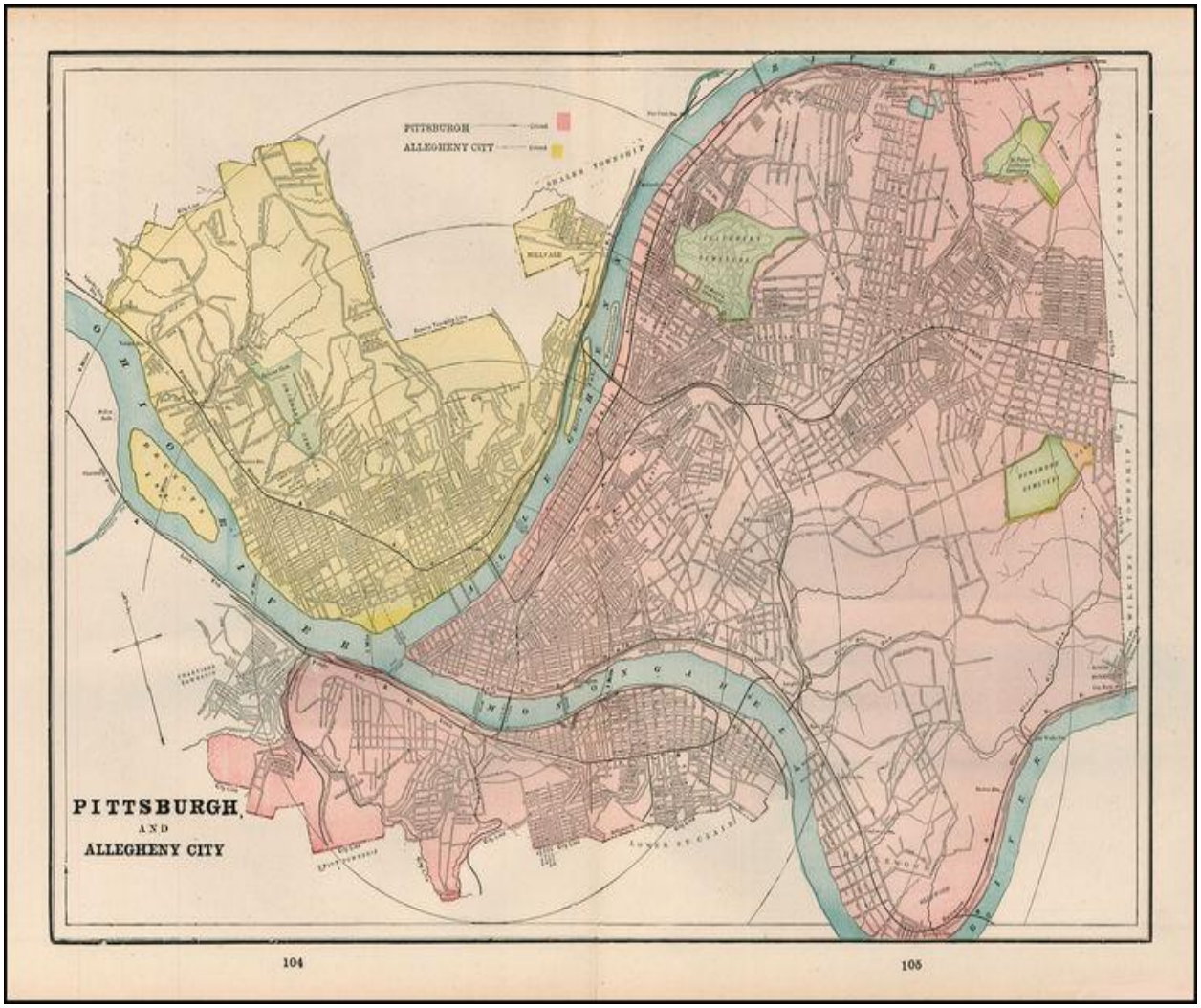
2.3 Two Cities

University of Pittsburgh Professor Barbara Burstin has described the nature of the polarization of the Pittsburgh's Jewish communities as "A Tale of Two Cities."[85] More accurately it denotes the nature in which Jews in Pittsburgh were separated ethnically, economically and in a sense religiously into two different cities; Allegheny city and Pittsburgh

[82] Feldman, *The Jewish Experience in Western Pennsylvania*, 123.
[83] Ibid., 245.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Burstin, *Steel City Jews*, 135.

were separated only by the Allegheny River but connected by various bridges. On the Allegheny Side lived the prosperous Central European Jews (along with many other nationalities of course), and in Pittsburgh's Hill district, the immigrant settled and had little contact with Pittsburgh's German Jewry in the middle-class neighborhoods (see figure 1 for illustration). The Hill Hebrews, so they were called, had many groups with their own beliefs, languages, traditions and foods. This is reflected by their varying dialects and traditions, different and separate synagogues—Polish, Hungarian, Lithuania, Russian, Slovak, etc all had their own synagogues. In 1920, twenty-five congregations existed on the Hill. The various dialectic differences and rituals prevented the Russian Jews as a whole from merging together. There was a heartfelt desire to be with those from ones motherland who shared the same folkways and language and the maintenance of *landmanschaften* was a means to help adjust to American life. In many ways, the separateness of the Russian Jews from the established German Jews of Pittsburgh is very much an economic outcome. In this respect we can de-ethnicize the separation from a "tale of two cities" based on different national origins into one of different cities because of different financial statuses. But to argue for this view would also be to ignore evident dissatisfactions evident in discourses from the two communities at the time.

Figure 1: Allegheny (yellow) and Pittsburgh (red) cities before they were united in 1907.



Source: "Darlington Digital Library Maps: DARMAP0089 DARMAP0089.TIF", n.d., http://images.library.pitt.edu/cgi-bin/i/image/image-idx?rgn1=ic_all;med=1;image_search%20btn=Go;q1=Pittsburgh;size=20;c=darlmaps;back=back1333108065;subview=detail;resnum=9;view=entry;lastview=thumbnail;cc=darlmaps;entryid=x-darmap0089;viewid=DARMAP0089.TIF.

2.4 Residential Clustering

Leonard Kuntz dedicated his doctoral dissertation to the study of the spatial development and emigrational patterns of Pittsburgh Jews. He discerned two key themes in his

study: first there is a thrust of movement eastward from downtown into adjoining neighborhoods of Oakland, East End and Squirrel Hill—"this movement reflects the rapid rise in affluence for Pittsburgh's Jews who were able to break from the squalid ghetto of the Hill."[86] The second theme was the continual "clustering" of the Jewish population, which never dispersed throughout the city but remained concentrated in a few given adjoining neighborhoods.

On the other hand, immigrant Jews and Jews who still had not acquired the necessary funds to relocate to more prosperous neighborhoods remained on the Hill. Kuntz recalls the nature of the Hill community to be that of a ghetto. "The Lower Hill acquired the look and feel, the noises, and odors of the ghetto…Kosher butcher shops, fish stores with barrels of herring and carp; kosher bakeries with "challah," the traditional twisted bread; dingy secondhand clothing stores; pawn shops; poultry shops; and delicatessens lined Centre Avenue, Logan Street, Lower Wylie, and Fifth Avenue."[87] The "ghetto" also had its own ritual bath house and Yiddish theaters.

As was the case in most American cities, in Pittsburgh the residential patterns of the Jewish community reflected different economic and social class; the Orthodox gravitated toward the downtown area while Reform Jews lived farther away from the city center, primarily in residential neighborhoods.[88] The maintenance of separate Jewish neighborhoods was effectively the ideal setting in which the concept of Jewishness by spatial location could manifest. By being present and part of a neighborhood where Jewish practices and events took place (i.e. kosher butcher, Hebrew bookstore, synagogue, Yiddish newspaper and theater, etc) one could feel

[86] *Kuntz, Leonard Irvin. The Changing Pattern of the Distribution of the Jewish Population of Pittsburgh from Earliest Settlement to 1963. Dissertation, 228 Pages. A Bell & Howell Company, Ann Arbor. Printed in 1996*, xi.
[87] Ibid., 41.
[88] Shevitz, *Jewish Communities on the Ohio River,* 139.

themselves connected "inescapably" to being Jewish. Also the nature of Jewish secularism helped create this understanding of the advantages of Jewishness over Judaism. "In place of religion, Jewish secularist advocated language and a shared civilization as the binding elements in Jewish life."[89] We see these manifestations in Pittsburgh with the growing number of societies and organization which teach and emphasize Jewish languages of Hebrew and Yiddish, shared history, Jewish literature and cultural practices. Many of the secularist groups wished to be known for their battles for social justices as part of their Judaism. There were many secularist groups and workers circles in Pittsburgh who supported the desire to perpetuate Judaism as a culture rather than Judaism as a religion. Socialists in particular did not urge Jews to fast on Yom Kippur or worship from the prayer book; rather they found it more important to emphasize Yiddish language by opening Yiddish schools run by volunteer teachers. Notably, in 1918 the Socialist Federation of Pittsburgh opened a large Yiddish school called the national Radical Volksscule in the Hill District where approximately seventy to ninety students took classes in Yiddish language, literature, and folk songs.[90]

2.5 Moving Together

The Jews of Pittsburgh demonstrate that we should not talk about American Jewry, but American Jewries, and not Americanization of Judaism, but different paths to Americanization of Judaism. The Germans continued to hope that the Russians would follow them and become "Americans of the Jewish religious persuasion."[91] They had found Americanization by creating a

[89] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 223.
[90] Feldman, *The Jewish Experience in Western Pennsylvania*, 239–241.
[91] Arthur Hertzberg, *The Jews in America: Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 182.

subculture[92] congruent with non-Jewish American culture and they also adapted their religion, Reform Judaism, to be congruent with American Protestantism; their brethren from Russia largely rejected this path of Americanization and found their own paths—for this they were largely resented for refusing their brethren's offered course in America. Residentially, the communities continued to live apart despite mutual concerns both at home and in Europe. The Russian immigrant element was largely confined to the ghettoized Hill District while the Americanized Reform members of the city resided in the upscale neighborhoods in the East corner of the city. But time and improved financial situations would eventually lead the former immigrant group from the Hill into the same neighborhoods of their well-to-do brethren.

The Hill because less and less Jewish as the Russian Jews acquired the necessary finances to move into more desirable middle class neighborhoods. Other minorities, notably African Americans, began inhabiting the former homes of Jews. The Jewish neighborhoods shifted eastward. Not only was the decreasing number of Orthodox synagogues and followers a result of changing migration patterns, but there was also an economic feature. Burying the dead is a function of the synagogues traditionally. Burial is not only a religious obligation but it is in a sense a business, and quite a lucrative one. Ten of the old Orthodox synagogues in the Hill district had their own cemeteries. These synagogues made more money, most of their money for that matter, from burial fees rather than membership and seat fees. At the time Kurt Pine wrote his dissertation in 1943, it seems as though some of these such synagogues still existed, as Pine predicted "it is therefore predictable that the life of some of the congregations is a very restricted

[92] David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780-1840*, New York und Oxford 1987, pp. 3-9.

one and that in the near future only financial help from other areas of the city will permit them to continue."[93]

Pittsburgh's Hill became increasingly impoverished as wealthy German Jews sought new homes in Squirrel Hill and immigrants from Eastern Europe gradually accumulated residency on the Hill. The more affluent German Jews in Pittsburgh took on the responsibility of providing social services and relief for the immigrants; the Hebrew Benevolent Society of 1883 opened the homeless shelter for Jews which was funded fully by Rodef Shalom and Tree of Life, the Reform congregations.[94] Despite economic factors which set the communities apart residentially, the other difficult problem which polarized the two communities was the foreign nature of American Reform Judaism to the Russian Jewish immigrants.

Nevertheless, what appears to be so striking is the fact that there existed seemingly so much tension and disagreement between Jewish communities in Pittsburgh during the entire immigration period, yet this conflict, be it religious, which by and large it was, or be it social and economic, which in many ways it was, largely died out as the immigrant group succeeded into the middle class. Despite their initial impoverishment when they first arrived in Pittsburgh the immigrant immediately strove for the middle class. The evidence of such remains in the fact that immigrant Jews lived in the ghetto on the Hill only until they had saved sufficient funds to move into more affluent neighborhoods—neighborhoods which were almost wholly occupied by the affluent Jews of German origin had resided long before.

[93] Kurt Pine, *The Jews in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, 1910-1940: a study of trends* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1943), 40, http://pittcat.pitt.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?BBRecID=1014533&v2=1&SEQ=20120427112620&PID=t5aZ_WilIGfSDfG1BaaQofGTdox.
[94] Shevitz, *Jewish Communities on the Ohio River,* 136.

Though my research does not cover the 1930s and 1940s, evidence from the scholarship[95] of the history of Pittsburgh's neighborhoods shows that the Hill was only sparsely populated by Jewish residents even by the mid 1930s. The Jews had almost completely abandoned the Hill and various other ethnic groups, primarily African Americans, began to populate the Hill. Furthermore, as the former Jewish Hill residents moved into the neighborhoods to reside alongside their German Reform brethren, the Orthodox synagogues gradually closed—their members had moved away. And the children of immigrants, and needless to say, the third generation immigrants, were largely a cause of the waning of the once heated conflict between the varying Jewish communities. The philanthropic and charitable societies which once contributed most of their work, funds and efforts to aiding the pauperized Jewish immigrants now turned to different goals: aiding war victims, raising funds for American soldiers and their families, caring for the sick and needy, and of course for the Zionist cause and aid to Israel. So effectively Jewish philanthropies and charities were no longer strictly raising funds for purely Jewish benefits—these new efforts were aimed to help all Americans regardless of religion, race, etc.

While old religious tensions waned (though never ceased entirely) Orthodoxy declined in the towns of western Pennsylvania, and in Pittsburgh. The "American-born element" adopted Reform and Conservatism. Perhaps one of the most tell-tale symbols of the way of life of the Orthodox Jewish immigrants was the strict kosher diet which most of them adhered to fervently. In Pittsburgh's outlying communities and smaller towns, many Orthodox families were patrons of the local kosher butchers. Though sometimes the small town patrons had to travel to neighboring larger towns or even Pittsburgh in order to attain their kosher meat supply. But as

[95] Feldman, *The Jewish Experience in Western Pennsylvania*; Burstin, *Steel City Jews*; Shevitz, *Jewish Communities on the Ohio River*.

Feldman notes in his research, after 1924, increasing numbers of Jews resorted to using un-kosher meat.[96] Though Feldman does not lend explanation as to why, the fact suggests that the answer lies in succeeding generations' found it more convenient to discard the dietary regulations. Although, it would have been easier for natives of the city of Pittsburgh to attain kosher meat, for those living outside the city it would have been an inconvenient chore to travel to and from for the kosher meat.

An interesting aspect in connection to the relationships and the nature of contact between the former-immigrant element when they move into more affluent neighborhoods to live alongside their German-Reform minded brethren is reflected in the creation of a new Orthodox Synagogue in the neighborhood of Squirrel Hill. The Beth Shalom Congregation was celebrated in an editorial in 1922—the article championed the importance of the Orthodox community and their traditional practices. The author, Norman Shoop, discussed the desire of the Pittsburgh Jewish Community to keep Orthodoxy alive in Western Pennsylvania, and in particular Pittsburgh. The new temple's design and location was discussed and it was emphasized that this synagogue would be the most beautiful in the area; in fact it would be the corner-stone of Jewish community in Pittsburgh. The author stresses how justified it is to create this masterpiece for the former Jewish immigrants who suffered yet survived and made it after coming to America. An interesting note is struck, "The fear, the painful apprehension that the Jew would forget his God in the midst of luxury and contentment found response in their hearts. They trembled. It must not be, they said, and they began the work of establishing the congregation, the root of the Jewishness in Squirrel Hill." Curiously, the author expresses the common concern held by European Rabbis who warned Jews against immigrating to the trefe land—for in this land one

[96] Feldman, *The Jewish Experience in Western Pennsylvania*, 213–14.

would sacrifice his spirituality at the altar of economic prosperity. So this concern is expressed and noted while dually declaring a common German-Jewish tradition, that the congregation, the synagogue is the core of Jewishness.

Chapter 3
Contested Institution-Building

Philanthropy is something Jews have become well known for in the United States. Indeed Jewish philanthropy plays a role in this alleged subculture which Sarna highlights. In Pittsburgh, as has been show, philanthropic societies and charitable organizations were being established and doing well decades before the turn of the century. However, for Pittsburgh, it was not until a particular shocking survey took place that really caused a turn of events. The Pittsburgh Survey of 1907 was conducted because it was believed that the city was effectively a microcosm of the entire United States. The findings of the survey were stark to say the least, revealing a heinous poverty gap and highlighting just how serious the pauperization of immigrants was. Once these results were made public the Jewish community took immediate action in efforts to try to combat the poverty crisis. It was well known that for the most part, that the impoverished persons were immigrants, most of which resided in the Hill district. For the Jewish community it was evident that there was a certain rift within the entire community centering on this uneven distribution of wealth. The poor, Russian Jews lived on the Hill while their co-religionists—the Central European Reformers, lived in wealthier neighborhoods such as Squirrel Hill, Oakland and East End.

3.1 Institutions of the Reform Community

While many Jews in Pittsburgh viewed the existence of a smorgasbord of synagogues, charitable societies, clubs and communal affairs as a main source of chaos and conflict within the Jewish community, the creation of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of Pittsburgh coupled

with the American Jewish Congress (national) provided a remedy for the situation. Both institutions were intended to manifest common goals and purpose among Jewish communities while also building and maintaining connections with the non-Jewish members of their societies.

In 1903 an anonymous member of the Pittsburgh Jewish community wrote the *Jewish Criterion* pointing out that Pittsburgh in the realm of charity organization and structure was rather disorganized in comparison to all major American cities' charity organizations. Pittsburgh's Rabbi Coffee urged the city to move to a Jewish Federation namely to bridge the existing separation between Eastern European Jews and German Jews. Yet he was upset when Pittsburgh Jews opposed the Federation. "This only serves to widen the gap between the Hill district and the East End (where wealthier German Jews were moving)."[97] He felt the federation would "weld the entire community into one united activity." But the fact remained that Pittsburgh was the only major city in the United States which lacked an organized Federation of Jewish philanthropies.[98]

Charities

A Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of Pittsburgh was formally established in 1912 with aims to "assure the community a fair and equitable distribution of the funds collected to the end that the greatest number may benefit in the largest measure possible."[99]

"As these examples indicate, Jews turned primarily to one another during the 1930s, relying on ties of faith and kinship to carry them through the hard times. As so often before, traditions of self-help and mutual aid overcame religious, ideological, and generational differences within the Jewish community."[100]

[97] Charles H. Joseph, "Rabbi Coffee Urges Federation," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, January 25, 1907), Volume 24, Issue 7 edition.
[98] Burstin, *Steel City Jews*, 263–65.
[99] Ibid., 266.
[100] Sarna, *American Judaism*, 257.

What happened with Jews in America on a national level is demonstrated equally on a local level in Pittsburgh. Looking at the evolution of the community structure, the locations of the community, and the concentration of Jews in particular areas of the city, it is evident that these certain subculture features which entailed a sort of segregation. Is it possible, however, that segregation can be seen in a more positive light in this case? The preservation of the rich, homogenous Jewish community in Pittsburgh today is due in part to this subculture development.

The Hebrew Benevolent Society, also known as the United Hebrew Charities was a crucial organization in Pittsburgh for the Jewish community. Until 1911, the organization had been largely directed singlehandedly by a wealthy benefactor Abraham Lippman. Lippman himself would discern who and which families deserved and who was more deserving and who was not. On the whole he was viewed in a positive light by the community for his kindhearted nature, generosity, and the fact that he neither received nor took any pay for his philanthropic feats. Upon his death in 1910 the organization became headed by Aaron Cohen; within a few years, the recommendations of patrons of the organization sought a change in the nature of how the society should be run. After investigation conducted by the Hebrew Benevolent Society, they found that some of the people receiving funding were in fact using the money for purposes unnecessary—for example one particular family was found to have excessive funds because they were receiving aid from multiple charities, including the Benevolent Society. Therefore as a notion to put a stop to the misuse of the charity organization, a call was made to unite the charities. A committee was appointed in October 1911, presided over by Aaron Cohen. The committee effectively united the charities into the Jewish Philanthropies of Pittsburgh in January 1912. Some societies were excluded or refused to join the united cause—such as the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) the Orthodox society known as the Hebrew Free Burial

Society (refused to join). But most importantly, the best successful and prominent societies of Pittsburgh united under one organization, though they did maintain separate and individual titles: the United Hebrew Charities, the Gusky Orphanage, the Montefiore Hospital, the Irene Kaufman settlement, the Jewish Home for the Aged, Camp Emma Farm, the House of Shelter and the Hebrew Free Loan Society. The Federation was a success and by 1913 had gathered one thousand members who worked to sustain it. President Aaron Cohen made a notion to create a Junior Federation, and in 1915, 364 students from the Rodef Shalom Reform Sunday school joined the Junior Federation—two branches of the Junior Federation were also established at Tree of Life and Washington Street synagogues.[101]

Education

The Irene Kaufman Settlement (IKS), originally known as the Columbian School and Settlement, opened in 1909 with the purchase of a new building in the center of the Hill District. The purpose of the institution was to help Jewish immigrants from the Hill community adjust to American life; the IKS assisted the newcomers with learning English and citizenship and finding jobs. Until 1906, the IKS was the only institution in the city providing free English classes for immigrants.[102] But the settlement did much more than that; it provided free baths, reading rooms, play schools during the summer, affordable milk at "Better Baby" healthcare clinic, and a place for Jewish youth to relax during the summer months, the Emma Farm or Emma Kaufman Camp. They IKS also created the Pittsburgh Visiting Nurses Association as a means to provide affordable medical care to immigrants at the Settlement. The IKS even had a small news pamphlet which was distributed weekly; it announced recreational activities being organized by

[101] Feldman, *The Jewish Experience in Western Pennsylvania*, 277–286.
[102] Ibid., 262.

the Settlement including gym classes, swimming activities, plays, performances, club activities, theater and art classes, and the like. The IKS provided all of these benefits not just to Jews, but to all other immigrants as well. The IKS was the most active and successful institution run by Reform Jews in Pittsburgh—the power and impact is demonstrated by the fact that, during World War I, with immigration slowed, the Pittsburgh Board of Education discontinued English night classes for immigrants; but in 1921 when immigration picked up once more, the IKS accommodated the needs of sixty-seven immigrants who joined the IKS classes immediately. By the end of 1921 there were over three-hundred immigrants taking night classes at the IKS. This received attention from the Pittsburgh Board of Education, which the IKS has tried unsuccessfully to convince to resume its classes in previous years; upon visiting the Settlement and seeing how many attendants were coming, the Board agreed to resume the English classes, this time funded by paid teachers rather than IKS volunteers.[103]

The Young Men and Women's Hebrew Association was created in 1912 with the purpose to promote Hebraic culture and Jewish ideals. This group became particularly popular among the young Jewish men and women with approximately two-thousand members by 1920. The institution was unique as it reached to the entire Pittsburgh community, offering membership to Jews and non-Jews alike.[104] For example, during World War I, the YMHA would hold dances and dinners for American soldiers from Pittsburgh who had returned home on furlough.[105]

[103] Ibid., 264–65.
[104] "Young Women's Hebrew Association," *Jewish Community Book* (Pittsburgh, 1921).
[105] Charles H. Joseph, "Y.M.H.A to Holda Dance for Soldiers," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, September 13, 1918), Volume 50, Issue 3 edition, sec. Social News.

The Montefiore Hospital

The Institution, in which Pittsburgh Jews, even to this day, take great pride in erecting, is the Montefiore Hospital. Plans began for the hospital in the 1890s when religious Jews had become distempered by the trefe food in the Pittsburgh hospitals. The initiative for the hospital was first taken up by a group of seventeen Eastern European Jewish women, who started the Hebrew Ladies Hospital Society; in 1902 they purchased land in the Hill District across from another hospital; the women began intense fundraising projects for the construction of the hospital. The leading Reform Rabbi of Rodef Shalom, Rabbi J Leonard Levy spoke against the initiative "a higher motive…than for kosher meat and attention" should be necessary in order to take on such an expensive project for the community. Rather he argued that the reason for such a project should be in the heartfelt wishes of the Jews to "contribute our share to the betterment and upliftment of the community...as a thank offering for the many rights and privileges we enjoy at the hands of our neighbors."[106] He became fully supportive though in 1906 when Rodef Shalom president Abraham Lippman donated $1,000 to the hospital effort. The hospital was dedicated to Anglo Jewish philanthropist Moses Montefiore, and opened in May 1908. This is considered a huge community accomplishment and especially as the hospital quickly had to expand and build more branches.[107] This is a very important event for Pittsburgh Jewry as today, the areas of Oakland, Squirrel Hill, and the Hill District are famous for their world-class hospitals operating under UPMC. The Jewish community effectively played a very important role in establishing this Pittsburgh tradition. Also this effort cut across ethnic and

[106] Charles H. Joseph, *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, March 10, 1905), Volume 20, No 13 edition.
[107] Charles H. Joseph, "$1,500,000 Montefiore Hospital Drive," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, October 3, 1924), Volume 64, Issue 21 edition; Feldman, *The Jewish Experience in Western Pennsylvania*, 252–59.

denominational lines—it was started by Eastern European women, yet funded and supported by all Jews, and created as an institution for all Pittsburgh residents regardless of creed.

3.2 Problems with Reform's Institutions

Students of American Jewry are offered a certain thematic interpretation on the evolution of the American Jewish community. Russian Jewish immigrants effectively are presented in the literature of American Jewry possessing in a way a sort of collective tendency to want to hold on to the past, to reenact their old lives on American soil. Naturally this cannot and simply is not true for every single Russian Jewish immigrant, and it certainly was not true for their children and grandchildren. However, there does seem to be some evidence of this thematic presentation of Russian Jews in Pittsburgh with regards to refusal to completely let go of the old and accept the new. This can be said for every other immigrant ethnic group in the United States. But what is particularly striking for the Jews is the way in which the cultural conflict, the clashing of two worlds, the conflict amongst brethren played out differently all throughout the United States.

Certainly there was desire to maintain Jewishness or some connections with Judaism. Jewish Philanthropic societies in America were certainly sensitive to this reality and in fact the existence of charitable societies specifically for Jewish immigrants is indicative of the recognition that Jews as a community, as a collective, needed support for both their practical obstacles to assimilation but also spiritual and cultural support as well. But the issue was, and the Orthodox immigrant community sensed the danger, that the largest and active charitable institutions in the city had intentions to push Americanization—Americanization in a sense that they wished to do away with practices, customs and behaviors which were not common in Reform practices.

In Pittsburgh the Colombian Council School and Settlement was an important institutions which assisted in the education and welfare of Jewish immigrants, particularly children. There evolved in the city, a competition between the Columbian School and Settlement and the Zionist Institute, which felt that the Columbian Council pushed too much for American consciousness among immigrants instead of raising a Jewish consciousness. The Zionist Institute, which offered classes, clubs and activities for immigrants just as the Columbian Council did, preferred to instill in the immigrants an understanding of Jewish history and nationalist spirit. Not only Zionists, but Orthodox parents were hesitant to send their children to dances, classes and meetings on the Sabbath (Friday).[108] They also suspected the Council women's underlying motives to effectively bring their children under the Reform influence. "They were aware of how the Reform Jews who ran the Settlement tended to use negative words like "oriental," "superstitious," and "outmoded" when referring to Orthodox practices."[109]

An earlier (1902) front page editorial reflects Joseph's opinion on the noble philanthropic efforts of the Reform community. Though he deals and refers to specific grievances voice from the Lower East Side Jews in New York City, he is undoubtedly using this example and extending it to Pittsburgh. Commenting specifically on Reform-run institutions, Settlements, which aim at providing English language classes and providing shelter and financial support to newly arrived immigrant families, he remarks "[The Settlement] is an agent which takes children who are being reared like animals and makes of them educated, well-mannered boys and girls. Only the man who is so puffed up over the position the foreign Jew has attained in the past few years and who believes everything he does is quite good enough without interference on the part of his American brother, is perhaps the one long individual who lifts his pen to protest against

[108] Pine, *The Jews in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, 1910-1940: a study of trends*, 69–70, 32.
[109] Burstin, *Steel City Jews*, 302.

Settlements." [110] This response was provoked by the *Jewish Gazette*, a Yiddish newspaper in the Lower East Side, which apparently reported that the Settlements "are the cause of the wide chasm that separates parents and children in so many Jewish homes." The writer of the *Jewish Gazette* was asking for the abolishment of the Settlement programs, and to this Joseph was astonished.

Though the aforementioned article is merely commentary on the New York Russian Jews, this sort of attitude is a reflection on the opinion of the *Criterion's* editor, Charles Joseph. Similarly, in April 1905, Joseph comments about the House of Shelter and the limitation of the number of days that Jewish newcomers were permitted to reside: "This limitation of time has a double reason for its existence. It inculcates the necessity of seeking employment, therefore acting as a spur to the phlegmatic or lazy inclined, and its acts as a preventive to an overcrowded condition of the house, which can accommodate only 19 persons at a time."[111] The great injustice which Joseph commits with this comment is that he effectively makes the previous statement out to be the words and opinions of the Women's society who ran and operated the House of Shelter program. Jacob Feldman commented on this as well in his coverage of Joseph. It is highly unlikely that a group of Yiddish women[112] would employ the words "phlegmatic" and "inculcates" in their everyday rhetoric.[113]

[110] Charles H. Joseph, "Random Thoughts," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, July 25, 1902), Volume 15, No. 7 edition.
[111] Charles H. Joseph, "House of Shelter," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, January 27, 1905), Volume XX, No 7 edition.
[112] "Yiddish women" because the House of Shelter was organized and run by some 250 Jewish women from the Hill District. These women were effectively part of the immigrant environment, which is in this case characterized by the dominance of Yiddish language and culture/practices.
[113] Feldman, *The Jewish Experience in Western Pennsylvania*, 144.

3.3 Institutions of the Russian/Orthodox Community

Education

Even by 1870 the majority of American Jews received public school education, this was the accepted norm especially of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise—but even some leading Orthodox rabbis were proponents of the notion that all Jews should learn the language of the land in the public school and receive supplementary education in the religious Sunday or Sabbath school.

In Pittsburgh the evidence for efforts to maintain Jewishness in the immigrant Hill District neighborhood is very well studied by Kurt Pine in a 1943 dissertation. The trends Pine highlights are important and should be mentioned. "We found a majority of Jewish People in the Hill clinging to old religious customs. Saturday is conscientiously observed by strict attendance at the Synagogue for many hours, the day ending by a prayer by the male head of the family over the wine cup…The observing of the dietary laws is also prevalent among the old generations of Jews, but this observance is fast disappearing among the young."[114] Beginning his explanation first with Jewish education, Pine points out the importance of Hebrew education among "pious Eastern European immigrants."[115] The *Jewish Criterion* reported in 1913 that of the 5,200 Jewish children between 5-14 years of age, eighty percent (primarily boys) attended Hebrew education schools in the traditional "cheder," or from "melamdim." The Hebrew Institute in the Hill district which was established by and large due to the inceptives of Rabbi Ashinsky collected an attendance of over 1,000 in 1924.[116] While traditional Hebrew school in the cheder style school was commonly practiced by Jewish immigrants on the Hill, Sunday schools were not a successful institution at all. In fact of the dozens of Sunday school efforts created by

[114] Kurt Pine, *The Jews in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, 1910-1940: a study of trends* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1943), 29.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid., 31.

Pittsburgh Jews, only one which was run by the Irene Kaufmann Settlement was even mildly successful. The explanation for the unpopularity of the schools was that "the Orthodox parents believed that their children would be prepared to be 'mshumodim' (converts)."[117] There were numerous attempts to establish Yiddish schools in the Hill district. The first attempt was made in 1912 by a Group of Jewish from Poland under the organization Poale Zion. Members of Poale Zion were almost always affiliated with the Workmen's Circle. On Sundays they would hold instructions on Yiddish language and culture. Eventually a new Yiddish school opened as an effort of the Labor Lyceum, but due to lack of interest, the school closed shortly after its opening. The Arbeiter Ring (Workmen's Circle) made a similar attempt to establish a Yiddish school in 1920 but also failed. Finally the Yohoash Folk-schule succeeded with the support of the Irene Kaufmann Settlement but lasted a total of only seven years. Nevertheless Jewish pupils were educated on practical things such as reading, writing, grammar, composition, but also areas such as Yiddish literature, Jewish history, Yiddish folk songs and classical music, which the community felt was essential in maintaining Jewishness.[118]

Perhaps more successful for the maintaining of Jewishness and Jewish education was the effort of Orthodox Rabbi Ashinsky to establish the Hebrew Institute (1916) in the heart of the Hill district. Dedicated to making Hebrew a modern language and incredibly popular among the Russian Jews in Pittsburgh, Ashinsky also shared mutual concerns voiced by the Reform Rabbis in Pittsburgh—both sides, though concerned Yiddish was retarding the immigrants' adjustment to American life, saw the importance of having a connectedness with Jewish language and tradition. The Hebrew Institute offered courses in Hebrew and was well attended by Hill

[117] Ibid., 32.
[118] Ibid., 35–6.

residents.[119] In 1919 as a result of complaints from Jewish parents in neighborhoods in Squirrel Hill and the North Side, the Hebrew Institute established branches outside of the Hill in Squirrel Hill and East Liberty. But at most only twenty percent of the Jewish youth in the city of Pittsburgh actually attended the Hebrew Institute because parents who were less adamant about the effort preferred a more limited understanding of Hebrew training which could be attained at the synagogue. Though, the Hebrew Institute cooperated with and had pupils from all congregations, Reform, Conservative and Orthodox, it was also exceptional in that it received the admittance of girls as well. Israel Abrams in particular pointed to the importance of girls having Hebrew education, "If we wish to bring up a generation imbued with the spirit and ideals of our people, we must turn out attention to the Jewish girls of today, the mothers of tomorrow."[120] For girls, and boys for that matter, the Institute offered eight year courses in Hebrew education which included: the Bible, Hebrew language, religion, history, tradition and ideals of the Jewish people—and study of the Talmud, which was specifically reserved for boys.

Charity

While it is often taken for granted that in Jewish communities of American cities, the affluent German-Jews provided the necessary funding for the impoverished immigrant community, this is a grave overgeneralization. As Orthodox leader Rabbi Coffee pointed out defensively, "The old people's home was largely financed and is almost wholly controlled by the people of the Hill; likewise the new hospital. And this is not a healthy state of affairs."[121] So to was the House of Shelter also organized and run with the strenuous work and efforts of two

[119] Burstin, *Steel City Jews*, 299.
[120] Israel A. Abrams, "Aims and Activities of the Hebrew Institute," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, November 3, 1916), Volume 47, Issue 11 edition.
[121] Joseph, "Rabbi Coffee Urges Federation."

hundred fifty Yiddish women from the Hill. Rabbi Coffee, known well for his pushing for a united Federation of charities in Pittsburgh, reported the lack of cooperation between charitable organizations, notably the Gusky Orphanage, Juvenile Court and Emma Farm association—the accused the lack of proper priorities, that is the caring for the young Jewish children, was indicative of the need for proper Federation.[122] A Federation of Jewish Philanthropies was eventually established in Pittsburgh, but it was a long and rocky road before success was reached. There was many pleas published in the *Criterion* asking for the federation, but interestingly, the leader and head of the Rodef Shalom Reform congregation supported the "no" vote for a Federation—Rabbi Levi of Rodef Shalom co-edited the Criterion, when in 1908 an editorial commented, "there is absolutely no more reason under present conditions for a federation than there is for more schnorrers (beggars)." For a federation would be costly and "create chaos."[123]

Lechem Aniyum Society (Bread for the Poor) was founded by a group of Orthodox Jews living in the Hill District in 1918. The group provided food donations and gifts for the neighborhood. They would collect and assemble baskets containing bread and foodstuffs every week at the Beth Jacob synagogue.[124] "Providing food during Passover and the High Holidays was a special concern of the Society, and extra deliveries of traditional foods were made during these times of the year."[125]

[122] Burstin, *Steel City Jews*, 265.
[123] Charles H. Joseph, "Pittsburgh Charities," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, January 10, 1908), Volume 26, Issue 5 edition.
[124] "Baskets of Food for Poor Distributed by Lechem Aniyum Society," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, September 23, 1932), Volume 80, Issue 20 edition.
[125] "Rauh Jewish Archives," Archive, *A Tradition of Giving: The History of Jewish Philanthropy in Pittsburgh*, n.d., http://www.jewishhistoryhhc.org/timeline

The Labor Lyceum located in the Hill District became the effective headquarters of the few, but active, Jewish labor unions in Pittsburgh in 1917. Some of the unions which met their frequently to raise money and food donations for striking steelworkers, coalminers, among others, were the Amalgamated Clothing workers, the stogy workers of America, and the Hebrew Bakers' union—all of which were affiliated with the Workman's Circle. The Labor Lyceum became the center of the immigrant labor movement in Pittsburgh.[126]

The Union movement is an important feature of the Hill Jews in Pittsburgh. In 1913, International Workers of the World (IWW) sought to unite workers in the Pittsburgh area. While most of the Orthodox Jews working in the stogy factories were hesitant to align with a militant group like the IWW, they saw the importance of protecting the poor and achieving greater sanitary and living conditions for their families. They were able to recruit 1,200 out of approximately 2,000 Jewish workers in the stogy industry.[127] The strikers were able to rally massive support on the Hill and raise $10,000 by charity dances and benefits for the workers. In the end the strikes achieved a fifty-four hour work week, no discrimination in rehiring, wage increases and better working and sanitation conditions. Though the strikes led by the Jewish stogy workers in Pittsburgh were very small and today are much less heard of compared to the iron and steel workers strikes, it is important because this was in effect part of the growing national labor movement which American Jewish labor unions were particularly active in between 1909-1914. There are not as many details about the strike as there should be as all of the Pittsburgh newspapers except for the local Socialist paper, *Justice,* refused to cover the

[126] "Bakery and Confectionery International Union Local 44 Records, 1917-1937, AIS.1978.21, Archives Service Center, University Library System, University of Pittsburgh", n.d.
[127] Patrick Lynch, *The Pittsburgh Stogy Industry in Transition and the IWW 1906-1920,* Seminar Paper. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1976), 4.

"radicals" strike. "The whole Hill District where the Jews lived swarmed and hummed with workers' activities."[128]

Culture

A different aspect which we can observe efforts to maintain Jewishness or Jewish culture in Pittsburgh was the presence of professional Yiddish theaters in the city. In 1910 approximately 20,836 individuals in the city reported that Yiddish was their mother tongue. Due to this large population of Yiddish speakers (primarily on the Hill) well known American Jewish actors would frequent the city and perform in its several Yiddish theater establishments. Stars such as Sigmund Mogulesko, Boris Thomasshefsky, Morris Schwartz, Jacob ben Ami, Jennie Goldstein and Molly Picon were noted to have come to Pittsburgh to perform at the Lando Theater in the heart of the Hill district, but also non-Yiddish theaters such as the Nixon and Schenley theaters.[129] Despite what seemed to be promising attempts to keep Yiddish culture alive by passing it along through the generations, in the end the immigrant spirit and old-world remnants carried over from Europe eventually were largely forgotten by third and fourth generation immigrants.

[128] Edwin M. Moser, *Jewish Labor in Pittsburgh: Its Ideology and Its Relation to the National Scene 1905-1914*, Seminar Paper. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1961), 9.
[129] Pine, *The Jews in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, 1910-1940: a study of trends*, 32–33.

Conclusion
From Judaism to Jewishness?

"The last word in the development of Jewish ideals in America will only have been spoken when you have given to our young men an all-inclusive Jewishness, from which Reform and Orthodox, Zionist and anti-Zionist, can derive their inspiration and the guidance for their lives. This all-inclusive Jewishness, this feeling that the ideals of Israel are concrete tangible realities, this source of inspiration must be brought home to the Jewish youth. This is for what I believe they are calling."[130] –Aaron Horovitz[131]

So far the various discourses from different factions within American Jewry have been highlighted; also a very detailed observation has been made about the particularities of Pittsburgh Jewries. Let it be understood that Jewishness is the idea that one can be Jewish but not practice Judaism as a religion. One can find connectedness with a common Jewish history, through having received a particular education, from knowing that one has Jewish ancestors or even by something as comparatively small such as recognizing certain facets of the dietary laws. Effectively, this concept of Jewishness is so unique because the individual can internally claim it and proclaim it. Furthermore, especially today, an individual can claim that they are Jewish, yet this does not necessarily need to be understood as "they practice Judaism." This alleged evolution in American Judaism to Jewishness may not really be a phenomenon at all. Professor Nathan Glazer suggests in *American Judaism* that,

"Judaism is even more vulnerable to the unsettling influence of modernity than Christianity. Judaism emphasizes acts, rituals, habits, a way of life…Once one had found—as so many immigrants did—that it was more convenient to work on Saturdays or to shave or to abandon traditional dress, one had no body of doctrine to fall back upon that could explain what remained *really* important than the rituals established by God's word."

[130] Aaron Horvitz, "American Jewry and the Young Man," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, May 12, 1911), Volume 32, Issue 14 edition.

[131] Aaron Horvitz, a resident of Pittsburgh, gave an address at the Third Annual Banquet of the Harvard Menorah Society in Boston, Mass. Horvitz at the time was the vice president of the society, this words were republished in the *Jewish Criterion* a couple days after the banquet. Horovitz highlighted the problems facing all of American Jewry—the waning enthusiasm of the young American Jew.

Consider an important feature of the East European Jewish immigrants: they were poor, generally not well educated, and they were also not the most devout people from their communities in Europe. Their connection to Judaism was much less religious doctrine than it was ritual and custom. Add to this concept of Jewishness as ritual, what several Jewish historians have pointed out—desire for separateness and distinctiveness. As Naomi Cohen explains, once American society became more accepting of the Jewish presence, "Jewish insistence on the sanctity of separation persisted. . . . As a pluralistic society accepted Jewish assertiveness more readily, the Jewish minority sharpened its attack against any entering wedge, no matter how innocuous in itself, which might breach the wall of separation."[132] Furthermore Jewish organizations which were once dominated by wealthier German-Jewish individuals came to be dominated by the East European Jews in America. However, the ideology of the organizations remained the same, secular and non-Orthodox. The new leading members effectively were unenthusiastic about religion in American society. Though they were speaking on the behalf of a religious community, their actions were in effect against religion and or indifferent.[133]

Very pertinent to this discussion on Jewishness is the commentary from the American Israelite on the Eastern Council of Reformed Rabbis, which set to deal with a matter of promoting Judaism over Jewishness. The author, Max Heller, beckons in a sarcastic tone "It is refreshingly novel, to being with, that a Rabbinical Conference, should, at its start, feel itself called upon to give assurances to the effect that it has not been organized against religion, but for it." The word Jewishness should be understood of in terms of its German origins, "Juedischkeit." Jewishness was modeled on this word, which in fact refers to life according to

[132] Ellliot Abrams, "Judaism or Jewishness?," *First Things*, no. 74 (July 1997): 18–25.
[133] Ibid.

the olden ritual law. Instead the rabbi thinks of Jewishness as a synonym for "ghetto-habit." But the meaning is actually quite significant as it cherishes the preservation of traditions, not just dietary laws—"it meant in the first place, the observance of Sabbath and holiday, the teaching of Judaism and the prayer in season...pious duties which were known as Mitzvahs; it embraced all the characteristic charity and family affection…"[134]

To be sure, by this understanding of Jewishness, there is no loss of traditional practices; there is no lack of observance of the Sabbath or Kashrus. Rather, Jewishness has merely been invented as a negative synonym for "ghetto," which one could connote has connections in Europe. By the light, to manifest Jewishness, as the council of rabbis was concerned, has nothing to do with Judaism as a religion but merely means to uphold a lifestyle that is not appropriate in the American setting. This precisely is the opposite truth, Heller explains.

American Jewishness

> "In the optimistic 1870s, it seemed to many American Jews that they had created a synthesis of Americanism and Judaism that would mutually reinforce the messianic goals of both. At an increasing pace, the rhetoric of respectability modulated into the rhetoric of ideology. Jews could attach a systematic Reform ideology to their middle-class American values: individualism, voluntarism, and mission."[135]

The concept of cult-of-synthesis, as we have seen, implies that Judaism and Americanism reinforce one another. To be a proper citizen of America, one becomes a better Jew, and vice-versa. This has been noted especially in regard to public school education. It is the public school that is at the center of the ven-diagram for Americanized Jews, Russian Jews and the majority of American society. We can see it in the discourses on the issue, how this cult-of-

[134] Max Heller, "Judaism Against Jewishness," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, July 12, 1912), Volume 34, Issue 23 edition.
[135] Shevitz, *Jewish Communities on the Ohio River*, 97.

synthesis seems to hold true. Regarding the Jewish institutions and the education of the Jewish Youth in the United States and specifically referencing Leroy-Beaulieu for his condoning Jews who do not observe the Mosaic code, which in his opinion make for the praiseworthy in character, Mr. A.H. Fromenson counters with a suggestion that consideration. The argument of the Superintendent of New York City's schools, Dr. Shimer, who reported, "I am convinced that the best friends of the public school system in this district are those who direct their efforts toward making the Jewish child and observant Jew." In effect, the more religiously observant Jewish children make first-class citizens.[136] This is the perspective of the non-Jew, so it is quite significant. It also speaks for the Jewish community, whom publishes and approves of the message. But there are more routes to manifesting and understanding Jewishness as opposed to Judaism yet.

Jewishness of Place

A significantly relevant point to mention and one which also fits the character of this present study is the local variations of Jewishness. "Jewishness varies across nations or cultures…Jewishness varies by locale within the same society. To be a Jew in New York City certainly differs from being Jewish elsewhere in America, but no doubt comparing the city to generalized American Jewry is itself a false picture."[137] In her study, Bethamie Horowitz presents the concept that social scientists can more or less measure the "Jewishness of Place." There are many dimensions that reflect the Jewishness of place: size and density of Jewish

[136] A. H. Fromenson, "The Trouble with Our Institutions," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, June 3, 1904), Volume 18, No 25 edition, 11.
[137] Bethamie Horowitz, "Jewishness in New York: Exception or Rule?," in *National Variations in Jewish Identity: Implications for Jewish Education* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 237.

population compared to a relevant comparison group (Irish Catholics for example), the number of Jewish institutions in the community, the age of community, and the status given to it as a Jewish cultural center. Let us consider Pittsburgh's Jewishness then in the following sections.

Americaness and Jewishness Together

Despite the disagreements on what Americanization entailed and what were the most essential criteria for being a respectable Jew, the Jews of Pittsburgh overcame their discrepancies during times of national struggle. The power of catastrophe to unite the Jews, let alone Americans of all creeds and backgrounds, shows brightly from the first page of the *Jewish Criterion* in 1919. Recounting mainly the impact of the war on Jewry the world over, Charles Joseph dedicates his front page to the commemoration and celebration of the triumphant deeds and actions of Western Pennsylvanian Jewish communities. "We are much impressed by the Jewishness that exists, by the desire to keep alive the faith of our fathers, by the earnest attention to those problems which vitally affect the welfare of our people the world over." In all Jewish communities, he claims that the Orthodox Jew outnumbers his Reform brethren; and consequently the Zionists greatly outnumber the anti-Zionist.[138] This observation which Joseph has made not just about Pittsburgh, but about Western Pennsylvanian Jewish communities is supportive of Naomi Cohen's point, that institutions which were once initiated and run by German-Reform Jews in America became dominated by the Orthodox community eventually.

While it has been noted in detail that German Reform Jews lived apart geographically from their brethren from Eastern Europe, this spatial polarization was only temporary. While the later immigration of Russian Jews differed greatly from the mass of German Jews who emigrated

[138] Charles H. Joseph, "Progressive Pennsylvania Communities," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, May 23, 1919), Volume 51, No 13 edition.

decades before, they shared also many similarities. Both strove for the middle class, emphasized the value of American education and strove to help their brethren abroad and within America. It is evident that both sides saw public school education as a cornerstone to the Americanization of immigrant children of all backgrounds. After moving together into the same neighborhoods and boroughs, it was left to the next generation, the descendents of the Russian-Jewish immigrants, to decide which traditions, beliefs and practices should live on and be passed down to the next generation. In effect, the second, third, and succeeding generations were and are the arbitrators of how Jewishness is represented at any given time. Furthermore, the children will always discern which elements of Jewishness are congruent and acceptable to their understanding of the present environment they live in. Jewishness is constantly being changed and reinterpreted—so we should not fear the loss of something spiritual or primordial, for nothing is lost as much as it is merely chosen to be forgotten.

Jewishness of Pittsburgh

Employing the strategy of Horowitz of "measuring" Jewishness of a place, we can first consider the component of non-Jewish opinions towards the Jewish community. As Horowitz explained, this is an important component which helps identify how accepted the Jewish element is in a given locale.

Jews from southern Germany first started settling in the Pittsburgh area in the early 1840s and by 1850 thirty Jewish families had settled near Allegheny City (North Side). By 1920 the Jewish population of Pittsburgh was 53,000 out of the total population of 588,343, nearly ten percent of the total population. The "tipping point" or threshold effect occurs when the Jewish population accounts for around ten percent of the total population, "suggesting that density is a

major social determinant of the Jewish identity of individuals."[139] Furthermore as was highlighted in the spatial distribution section of Chapter 2, the Jews of Pittsburgh were concentrated on the Hill, which was adjacent to the other concentration of German Jews in the neighborhoods of Oakland, Squirrel Hill and East End. By the coming of the 1920s, the population was becoming even denser as the former Jewish Hill residents moved eastward to join their German coreligionists. To this day the Squirrel Hill neighborhood is a predominantly Jewish neighborhood with a third of the cities Jewish population living in Squirrel Hill, and the fifty percent of the overall residents (approximately 25,905 total residents) being Jewish.[140]

Status as Cultural Center

Another important feature of the Jewishness of place concept is the locale's status as a cultural center. While undoubtedly New York City is the first thought when considering the symbol of Jewish in the United States, and Cincinnati may be considered as a great hub of the Reform movement, Pittsburgh should not be overlooked for its cultural significance. Pittsburgh played host to the single most decisive conference in the history of American Reform Judaism; the tenets of Reform which would guide the movement, the Pittsburgh Platform, was indeed a sincere point of pride for the Pittsburgh Jews. And even a decade and a half later on June 7, 1903 for the Sixth Annual Convention of the Federation of American Zionists, which was held on Forbes Avenue, a very central city street. While not many Reform minded Jews in Pittsburgh were so enthusiastic, one of the most notable figures of the Reform community, Josiah Cohen explained that he was a supporter of Zionism because he saw that it was bringing Jews together

[139] Horowitz, "Jewishness in New York: Exception or Rule?," 237.
[140] According to the 2002 Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition.

to deal with Jewish topics.[141] Furthermore, the news about the Convention and the material to be discussed was thoroughly covered in the Anglo Jewish newspaper, the *Criterion*, on the first page.

Another interesting yet debatable notion about Pittsburgh Jewry's significance is that, allegedly, the Hill claims the first Zionist chapter in the United States. While it is generally believed that Baltimore was the host of the first Zionist Association in 1893, there is evidence that Pittsburgh was "re-organizing" a branch of the Lovers of Zion in February of 1893. The word "re-organized" which was allegedly used in a letter sent from Ida Cohen Selavan to Jacob Marcus insinuates that there was a previous Zionist association.[142] [143] The "re-organization" allegedly was held at the President's, Ralph B. Raphael, of the organization's home in the Hill District. Raphael is an important name for Pittsburgh Jewry as he "has been acknowledged as the founding father of Pittsburgh Zionism…Raphael pre-empted Theodore Herzl when he published a book in 1893 calling for a Jewish state three years before Herzl jump-started the Zionist movement with his clarion call."[144]

Acceptance or Rejection

The last feature which we cannot forget in this model of Jewishness of place is the level of acceptance or rejection by the non-Jewish community. It has been argued and demonstrated by two of the foremost historians of Pittsburgh Jewry, Jacob Feldman and Barbara Burstin, that most of the non-Jewish in the city did not view the Jews of the Hill, the "Hill Hebrews," in a

[141] Feldman, *The Jewish Experience in Western Pennsylvania*, 220.
[142] The evidence of this exists in a letter which Ida Cohen Selevan, an American historian specializing in Yiddish and Jewish identity, sent to Jacob Marcus. The actual letter discussing the reorganization, the only copy, is in the author's possession.
[143] Burstin, *Steel City Jews*, 287.
[144] Ibid., 288.

negative light. It was said that even non-Jews flocked to the Hill neighborhood to do their shopping at the dozens of delicatessens, fish shops, challah bakeries and sweets shops. Fascinated by its "human energy," some even saw it as a rich attraction in their city. In 1904 the *Pittsburg Leader* described the Hill—

> "most picturesque…It is lined with shops, groceries, bottle dealers, kosher meat shops, fish marts, clothing shops, togy factories, etc, quaint men with ill-fitting clothes and high hats, push carts, street pianos, peddlers, hucksters, in fact a kaleidoscope of color, life and activity to be seen nowhere else in this city…wealth does not reside there, and neither does culture, except in rare instances..."[145] Pittsburgh Leader May 1, 1904 271

Another Pittsburgh resident, Molly Brunwasser, recalled some years after the Jews had left the Hill, all the names of the stores and shops "even many of the non-Jews went to "Jewtown" seeking bargains." On the Hill, every business under the sun could be found. There were indeed some residents who appreciated the unique atmosphere of this "ghetto life." It is a scene of animation and excitement. "The barkers on the outside almost scream to attract the housewives and it seems very near like pandemonium."[146]

Hartley Phelps, a writer for the Pittsburgh Leader even romanticizes the Jewish immigrant on the Hill in a 1904 editorial, saying that, be the Hebrew from the Czar's land uncouth and unkempt, he is industrious. "The Russian Jew, penniless and ragged though he be when he set forth in New York, rapidly rises as a merchant and in a few years becomes Americanized, sends his children to public schools, adopts American ideals and becomes an excellent citizen." Furthermore, Phelps pointed out that in Allegheny County (where Pittsburgh is located) only one murder in the last 116 years was committed by a Jew.[147]

[145] Ibid., 271.
[146] Benjamin L. Steinberg, "Echoes That Re-Echo From Pittsburg's Ghetto," *Jewish Criterion* (Pittsburgh, September 23, 1910), Volume 31, No 7 edition, 14.
[147] Hartley Phelps, *Pittsburgh Leader* (Pittsburgh, May 1, 1904).

Pittsburgh Jewry Today

People can respect and acknowledge the "Jewishness" of the Pittsburgh neighborhoods today when they visit. One need only drive down Murray Avenue in Squirrel Hill and see the kosher food stores, Pinsker's Book Store, and the Synagogues. Jewishness is very much alive in the city today; the past is celebrated and memorialized throughout the city—be it in the Jewish Community Center, the Chabad house on University of Pittsburgh campus, the kosher dining facilities or the presence of the few Orthodox Jews who can be seen entering a local favorite, Milky Way Kosher restaurant. Indeed in present day it is hard to believe that there used to be such turmoil and disagreement between the various Jewish denominations in Pittsburgh. An article in the Wall Street Journal refers to Squirrel Hill as "one of the most densely populated urban Jewish neighborhoods in the nation."[148] Just four square miles in area, the Squirrel Hill neighborhood contains more than twenty functioning synagogues and three Jewish schools, one of which, the Conservative school, has grown so large it has taken over the space of a former Catholic Church. The significance of the Jewishness of Squirrel Hill lives on today and is demonstrated well by the hundreds of Soviet Jewish refugees who arrived during the 1990s. Similar to the Jewish immigrants who arrived a century before them, they too received free English classes at the Jewish Community Center and free tuition at the Jewish schools. Today the community still has discrepancies, but the issues revolved around the Israel-Palestine conflict. A more symbolic feature of the neighborhood is the eruv, the wall that encompasses the boundary of the neighborhood, which permits the Orthodox Jews to carry things like books and strollers on the Sabbath.

[148] Clare Ansberry, "Diverse Views on Israel Emerge in Jewish Enclave," *Wall Street Journal* (Pittsburgh, July 2, 2010), http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703374104575336692368479502.html?mod=rss_middle_east_news.

This study would benefit from a comparative historical approach. For example, in studying how different factors in varying national contexts inhibited or facilitated the transmission of Jewishness or recreation of Jewishness. Also in the future I plan to use this present research in an overarching study on Pittsburgh Jewishness and the evolution of such, looking closely at how cultural developments have manifested throughout the entire 20th century and into the present day. As far as assessing newspaper discourses, it would have greatly benefited my research to have assessed Yiddish and Hebrew newspapers from Pittsburgh. These sources however have not been well preserved as the *Jewish Criterion* has been. In the future I have intentions to continue this research, which has ended at the year 1924, the year in which immigration was restricted in the United States, and continue observing how Jewish interfaith relations play out during the onset and duration of the Second World War. It would be interesting to compare how these varying groups of Jews interact and relate before and after the war. Particularly how the community deals with refugees after the Holocaust, how the refugees are treated, assimilated, welcomed or not welcomed. Furthermore, how do the events of the Holocaust influence the evolutionary path of Jewishness in the given locale?

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