

THE 2010 PAUL LECTURE

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**“The German-Jewish Legacy in
America”**

THE ROBERT A. AND SANDRA S. BORNES
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Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to present Professor Michael Meyer's essay, "The German-Jewish Legacy in America," which was delivered as the 2010 Dorit and Gerald Paul Program for the Study of Jews and Germans. The Paul Program has brought some of the most eminent scholars of German Jewry to the Bloomington campus of Indiana University and to Indianapolis to deliver public lectures. In the past, we have published one of these lectures as a pamphlet, but have recently switched our method of distribution to an on-line format. Professor Meyer's first lecture of the 2010 series, "True Honor is What We Gain for Ourselves: Maintaining Jewish Morale in Nazi Germany," was presented to an Indiana University audience in Bloomington on October 13, 2010, and is now available as a podcast from the Robert A. and Sandra S. Borns Jewish Studies Program at <http://www.indiana.edu/~jsp/lectures/index.shtml>. Professor Meyer's second lecture, "The German-Jewish Legacy in America," which was originally presented in Indianapolis on October 14, 2010, is being made available with this web publication.

Professor Meyer is the Adolph S. Ochs Professor of Jewish History at Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati. Professor Meyer has been one of the most influential scholars of German-Jewish history for at least a quarter century. His 1988 book *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* represented the culmination of years of masterful work on the subject. As its title implies, Professor Meyer saw the Reform movement first and foremost as a response to the wider world. The book spans across continents as the Reform movement reformed itself in its transplantation from Germany to America. Since the late 1980s,

Professor Meyer has served as editor of the four-volume monumental *German-Jewish History in Modern Times* project. Far more than just a synthetic survey of German-Jewish History as it has previously been told, these books bring new approaches to their subject, including a greater incorporation of the inner life of Jews, into the text. His most recent book *Joachim Prinz, Rebellious Rabbi: An Autobiography*, published in 2007 by Indiana University Press, presents the autobiography of Joachim Prinz, a truly remarkable and innovative rabbi, who began his career in Nazi Germany before emigrating to the United States. In his autobiography Prinz writes with poignancy about his efforts to preserve dignity under Nazi rule, a subject Professor Meyer explored in his first Paul lecture. The current essay, surveys the transformative role that German Jews have played in America. Professor Meyer details two distinct periods of German-Jewish immigration and assesses the cultural, intellectual, social, political and economic impact of each generation. Clearly this is a remarkable story of adaptation and transformation.

It is particularly fitting that this essay be delivered as part of the Dorit and Gerald Paul Program. Both Dorit and Gerald Paul are themselves German-Jewish immigrants: Dorit was born in Witten, and Gerald in Mannheim. Like many of the luminaries Meyer discusses, the Pauls fled persecution in Nazi Germany and contributed immensely to the flourishing of Jewish life in postwar America. In recognition of their ongoing support of German-Jewish culture, in 2010 the Pauls were awarded the German-American Friendship Award by the German Ambassador. The contributions of the Pauls echo those of the German-Jewish community writ large.

It is with great pride that we present Professor Michael Meyer's 2010 Dorit and Gerald Paul Program for the Study of Jews and Germans on "The German-Jewish Legacy in America."

Jeffrey Veidlinger
Director, Robert A. and Sandra S. Borns Jewish Studies
Program

THE GERMAN-JEWISH LEGACY IN AMERICA

Michael A. Meyer

A little over 150 years ago, in his poem "Princess Sabbath," Heinrich Heine compared the sufferings of the itinerant Jewish peddler in the German countryside to a despised dog. He wrote:

Hund mit hündischen Gedanken
 Kötert er die ganze Woche
 Durch des Lebens Koth und Kehricht,
 Gassenbuben zum Gespötte.

(A dog with doggish thoughts,
 all week he doglike drags himself
 through life's slop and slime,
 while urchins mock him on his way.)ⁱ

That was indeed the lot not only of many a poor Jew in the German countryside, but also of some of the first German Jews to come to the United States. These Yiddish-speaking uncultured immigrants, who came from villages in Bavaria and Württemberg and settled in small towns in the American midwest, had little appreciation of German

poetry. Surely, they hadn't read Heine. But they were determined to work their way up to a higher status in American society than they could hope for in Germany. Although some had crossed the Atlantic as early as the Colonial period, they would come in much larger numbers after 1820, and by the middle of the century they were able to bring with them no small measure of German Bildung--German education and culture--along with their Jewish identity. Thus, when in order to mark the hundredth anniversary of Heine's birth in 1897, plans for a fitting memorial in Düsseldorf, the city of Heine's birth, were foiled by government prohibition, it was the German Jews in America, along with others of German descent, who vigorously supported the memorial's installation in New York. They were now no longer peddlers, but for the most part comfortable businessmen. For them the Lorelei Fountain, as it was called in honor of Heine's most famous poem, was at once an acknowledgment of their German and their Jewish identities.

The story of the German Jews in America and the influence of their German-Jewish heritage consists of two quite distinct chapters: the first covers most of the nineteenth century, during which there was an almost continuous but gradually changing immigration; the second covers a much briefer period: from the rise of Hitler through the years of the Holocaust. My lecture will therefore be divided into these two

unequal parts.

The first German-Jewish immigrants to America were not disciples of Moses Mendelssohn, the great German-Jewish philosopher of the eighteenth century. They did not come from the enlightened cities of Berlin or Königsberg and they had no relation to either the German Aufklärung or its Jewish counterpart, the Haskalah. They were dominantly peddlers and cattle dealers; they spoke their own language and lived the traditional Jewish life of their ancestors. However, they were the first wave of a Central European immigration that by World War One would bring a quarter of a million Jews to America from German-speaking lands. The dominant pattern was that one family member came first, established himself, and then brought over his relatives in what is called a "chain migration." At first they came mainly from southern Germany, later increasingly from Posen (today called Poznan). They came for various reasons--in Bavaria marriage restrictions, the so-called "Matrikel," prevented them from establishing households; there were no positions for them as artisans; some were trying to evade military service, others to escape the pogroms that accompanied the 1848 Revolution. Nearly all sought a better economic future in America and a few were also attracted by America's greater political equality. Some remained on the East Coast, as had

almost all of the Spanish/Portuguese Jews who had preceded them, but a large proportion travelled westward, where they could fulfill economic roles not so different from those to which they had been accustomed in Germany. In fact, the majority of the peddlers on the American frontier, who sold city goods to farmers, were Jews. It was not an easy life. One such Jewish peddler wrote in his diary in a mixture of German and English: "As matters stand here, I'm buried alive. I have to peddle and ask 'Do you want to buy,' and sweat and carry my basket!"ⁱⁱⁱ Although after a few difficult years, they could hope to become store owners, only a few of the immigrants became truly wealthy. Some failed utterly, most gradually rose to the middle class. To varying degrees they were able to hang on to their Jewish heritage. The same diarist, while still on the ship, imagined that the waves of the sea sang the Sabbath blessings "as well as [Cantor] Solomon Sulzer in Vienna."

It was only in the 1850s, and then again after the American Civil War, that a significant number of German Jews with a German education arrived in the United States. In Posen the acquisition of German Bildung had been made compulsory beginning in 1833. The new immigrants, who played the major role in raising the Jewish population in the United States tenfold from 15,000 in 1840 to 150,000 in 1860, and those who would follow them to the end of the nineteenth

century, delayed the Americanization process of the earlier arrivals. Together with their non-Jewish counterparts they established on American soil a variety of social and educational associations on the German model. But whereas in Germany Jews had often been excluded from such Vereine, in the United States cooperation with their Christian middle-class counterparts was the rule. They joined in founding and in presiding over literary, choral, and athletic clubs. As they had in Germany, they became major consumers and financial supporters of culture. One highly antisemitic writer noted in 1858 that Jews constituted eighty percent of the audience at German plays in New York and that they could hardly be overlooked: "Just look at Rebekka und Sarah! How they manage to lean out over the first balcony, so that people will be sure to see them and know that they are there, and that they have seats on the first balcony, seats that cost 50 cents apiece!"ⁱⁱⁱ

German Jews in America took great pride in their German heritage, which they were certain had enriched America. It was not unusual for rabbis from Germany to praise the German contribution. In 1875, when Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise spoke at the monthly meeting of the Deutsche Pionier-Verein (The German Pioneer Association) in Cincinnati, he praised the Germans for bringing industry, serious theater (instead of "vulgar farces"), science, and philosophical thought

to America. They had expanded the intellectual horizons of the Americans. "One began to read," Wise noted, "and in the process of reading one began to think." But especially they had made America more musical. "The Germans brought music and song to America," he intoned. "The American, after all, with his mouth always full of chewing tobacco, just isn't able to sing. . . . Now the Americans are beginning to sing and to drink beer and to pay homage to art. And the more they sing, that much the more their whiskey and their lack of refinement disappears. He concluded on a liberal note: "When German progress arrived, the whole Puritan narrow-mindedness fell away. Today the American people has been imbued through and through by German thought..."^{iv} In a celebratory speech to the same group some years later another rabbi, Kaufmann Kohler, could add to Wise's list of German virtues "German idealism and the German temperament," as well as "critical historical biblical research," a discipline that Wise had rejected as being destructive of revelation. Like Wise, Kohler too did not limit himself to the spiritual and intellectual domain. He told the "German pioneers": "My friends, we all love the German cuisine, which is so much more nourishing and juicy than the boring English dinner table."^v Speaking to fellow immigrants from Central Europe, these two rabbis--and many German Jews like them--felt a bond of Germanism no less strong than the bond of Jewishness that they felt

with fellow Jews.

The German Jews in America could identify easily with Carl Schurz, a non-Jewish activist in the 1848 German liberal revolution, who became a highly principled and highly regarded American politician, the first German-born American to be elected to the American senate. Although he grew up as a Catholic, Schurz later associated himself with the Ethical Culture Society, a nondenominational religious organization founded by the son of a Reform rabbi, Felix Adler. Speaking before a German audience in New York, Schurz heaped praise on the Jewish community for the orphanages, hospitals, and schools that the Jews built and maintained. Not surprisingly, his political enemies declared that, "judged by his principles, [he] was always a Jew; he never acted otherwise than a Jew; he was the representative of European Jewry in America."^{vi} However, the German Jews in America for most of the nineteenth century were not themselves leading political figures or producers of American culture. There was no American equivalent of the German-Jewish politicians Gabriel Riesser, Eduard Lasker, and Ludwig Bamberger, nor of the poet Heinrich Heine or the popular short-story writer Berthold Auerbach. Only toward the beginning of the twentieth century do nationally prominent Jewish names appear among the German Jews in America: for example, Justice of the Supreme Court

Louis Brandeis, whose parents had immigrated from Prague; Oscar Straus, the first Jewish United States cabinet officer, who had come to America as a child from Otterberg near Kaiserslauten; Henry Morgenthau Sr., the Mannheim-born Jewish ambassador to the Ottoman Empire; and Herbert Lehman, the son of German immigrants, who became the first Jewish United States senator. During the nineteenth century German Jews in this country did produce an abundance of poetry, novels, and short stories, but none of their authors entered the American literary canon.

Only in the field of finance did German Jews in America, as a group, achieve notable prominence as early as the late nineteenth century. They have become known as "our crowd," a socially distinct group within American Jewry, intermarried with one another, that arose from humble beginnings to positions of extraordinary economic power. There were, for example, the Seligman brothers, who went from peddling to creating a major investment bank in New York; the department store tycoons Abraham Gimbel and Benjamin Bloomingdale, both from Bavaria; and Abraham Kuhn, who along with his partner Solomon Loeb created Kuhn, Loeb & Co., one of the most influential investment banks of its time. Unlike in Germany, where it was the pattern for wealthy Jews to convert to Christianity, in the United States--at least in the early generations--they remained Jewish

and even played a large role in Jewish life. In this regard the most prominent of them was Jacob Schiff, a Wall Street titan, who used his considerable economic power to finance the Japanese war against Russia in 1904, largely on account of the tsarist regime's marked antisemitism. Together with his wealthy associates, he fought against immigration restrictions that would limit the number of Jewish refugees able to enter the United States. No less strong than their sense of noblesse oblige vis-à-vis their Russian coreligionists was these wealthy Jews' sense of their own Germanness. German was the language they spoke in their homes; they vacationed in Germany; and on the wall of the social club they created in New York, the Harmonie Gesellschaft, hung a portrait of the Kaiser.

The Jewish life of the German Jews in America differed fundamentally from that to which they had been accustomed in Germany. Here in the United States there was no organic legally recognized community in each city that, like the German *Gemeinde*, was responsible for all of the religious and charitable institutions. Instead, one joined and supported an individual synagogue in accordance with one's preference and donated on the level of one's ability to various philanthropic endeavors. Participation in Jewish community life was entirely voluntary. In 1843 German Jews in America established the Order of B'nai B'rith and somewhat later its

female counterpart, the Independent Order of Loyal Sisters. In addition to providing mutual support to their members, both orders established a variety of charitable and educational institutions. Their language was German, their Jewishness expressed in the biblical names that they gave to their lodges. B'nai B'rith, which later spread to Germany where Rabbi Leo Baeck was a high ranking officer of the order, was a secular counterpart or, for some, a substitute for the synagogue. Later, in order to protect Jewish rights around the world, German Jews in the United States would also establish the American Jewish Committee, still today the most prestigious Jewish political organization, as well as the 115 year-old National Council of Jewish Women, which seeks to safeguard individual rights and to improve the quality of life for women, children, and families.

In specifically Jewish culture and in Jewish religion American Jewry during most of the nineteenth century remained heavily dependent upon the Jews still living in Germany. When the Jewish Publication Society of America was permanently established in Philadelphia in 1888, its first major publication was a six-volume slightly abridged English translation of the German-Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz's History of the Jews. Jewish periodicals reproduced articles from Ludwig Philippson's popular Jewish newspaper, the Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums, which the German-born Isaac

Leeser, the first significant religious figure in American Jewry, took as his model for the Occident, the first successful American Jewish periodical. Moses Mendelssohn's most important work, his Jerusalem, appeared in an American edition as early as 1852, Abraham Geiger's Judaism and its History in an English translation of the German original in New York in 1866. Leopold Zunz, the foremost Jewish scholar in Germany, served as a correspondent for the German-language periodical, Israels Herold that was published in New York in 1849. Another American Jewish periodical, the Asmonean, carried translations by Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise of writings by Zunz, Geiger, Graetz, and the conservative scholar Zacharias Frankel, among others. At least in summary form, the major fruits of German critical historical study of Judaism (*Wissenschaft des Judentums*) were thus readily available to American Jewry. Indeed, a correspondent in Philadelphia for the Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums, writing in 1865, insisted: "We know very well that the [American Jewish] newspapers are entirely dependent upon the Jewish press and literature in Germany and that, on the other hand, nothing has yet been produced here that would be worth making its way back to Europe."^{vii}

However, it was in the area of religion where the German-Jewish legacy in America was most apparent. The Reform movement in Judaism had its origins in Germany and by the 1860s there was a

cadre of German liberal rabbis who had gained positions in the United States. They brought with them a decidedly universalistic form of Judaism that emphasized the ethical dimension of Judaism more than the legal. Among them were radical intellectuals like David Einhorn, a decided proponent of full equality among the races and a champion of religious equality for women. Einhorn, a firm believer in the value of German culture, gave sermons only in the German language and was convinced that liberal religion even in America could flourish only within the context of German culture. The relatively more moderate Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise was more of an Americanizer but, as we have seen, at the same time a proponent of German values. These two men were great admirers of their German counterparts, Rabbis Samuel Holdheim and Abraham Geiger. Their conservative counterpart in America at midcentury, Isaac Leeser, took the German advocate of Zacharias Frankel's positive-historical Judaism, Michael Sachs, as his model. It was, however, largely a one-way relationship. Indeed, writing from Frankfurt in 1866, Geiger looked upon the German transplants a bit condescendingly: "We are, after all, still quite separate from one another. And since we here continue to regard ourselves as the motherland and to regard the daughter as spiritually dependent on us, we aren't much concerned to put ourselves into closer contact--perhaps to our own disadvantage."^{viii}

The German-Jewish influence on the American synagogue manifested itself in various specific ways. The Reform Har Zion Association in Baltimore adopted the Hamburg Temple prayer book, which had been compiled by the early Jewish religious reformers in Germany in 1819. The Jewish confirmation ceremony, invented in Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century, spread first to Reform and later to some Conservative congregations, as did the synagogue music of the German-Jewish composer Louis Lewandowski. Synagogue minutes for many years were kept in the German language. Even the Wimpel, the embroidered swaddling cloth used at an infant boy's circumcision and later dedicated to a synagogue as the binder for a Torah scroll, was imported to America from Germany. It is not an exaggeration to hold that all three of the major religious trends in German Judaism--Liberal, Conservative, and modern Orthodox--were adopted by American Jews from their German progenitors. Of the three, Neo-Orthodoxy, modeled on Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's motto of Torah im Derekh Eretz (Torah together with universal social and cultural values), was the last to establish itself in the United States, but Hirsch's writings too were eventually translated into English and became a staple of American modern Orthodoxy.

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, American Jewry was in the process of emancipating itself from its dependence on

Germany and we witness a certain resentment at the condescension expressed toward American Jews by Geiger and others who still viewed America as a rather barren cultural frontier. As early as 1880 Rabbi Adolf Moses of Louisville, Kentucky writes sarcastically in the German-Jewish American periodical Der Zeitgeist: "Whereas at one time in Germany one regarded the Jews of America as a kind of penal colony, now one rather expects the future salvation, the spiritual health [of world Jewry] to emanate from America."^{ix} Perhaps the first major indication of the intellectual independence of American Jewry was its successful production of the twelve-volume Jewish Encyclopedia between 1901 and 1905. Although most of its authors and editors were of German background, the encyclopedia was an American product not yet equalled in Germany. Then too, the rise of German antisemitism in the last decades of the nineteenth century, which had only a pale counterpart in the United States, tarnished Germany severely in Jewish eyes. And for American Reform Judaism, now in its radical phase, the religious compromises demanded by the unified Jewish communities in Germany were deemed to hold back more audacious religious progress.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the social composition of American Jewry had radically changed. Jews of German background were now a minority in the midst of a community

that was demographically dominated by the new immigrants from Eastern Europe. However, their decline to the status of a shrinking minority within the American Jewish community did not lead to the abandonment of their German-Jewish identity. Just the opposite: buttressed by their higher class status, social exclusivity, a diminished but by no means exhausted immigration from the Old Country, as well as the Reform Judaism that was uniquely associated with them, they separated themselves socially from the Yiddish-speaking, differently mannered newcomers. Then, when, by the third decade of the twentieth century, these marks of separation were beginning to fade, a new and final wave of German Jews entered the United States. These new immigrants differed greatly from the earlier generations who had preceded them.

Between 1933 and 1941 some 90,000 German-Jewish refugees from Nazism entered the United States.^x Unlike their predecessors a century earlier, the identity of the large majority of these Jews was far more German than it was Jewish. A few were religious, most were secular. Nearly all were middle class. Many were professionals and a few were intellectuals. They had grown up in the Second Reich or during the Weimar years and had felt quite at home in Germany until 1933. Hitler's accession to power came as a grave shock. They

migrated to America not for economic gain, but because they were forced to leave Germany and were fortunate enough to obtain coveted visas to the United States. They clustered in New York and Los Angeles, though some settled between the coasts. While seeking to adjust to American life and culture, they sometimes looked nostalgically back to Weimar. America became their new home, but it was not quite their *Heimat*. Hence they tended to congregate with each another, Weimar urban culture serving as the bond that united them. With only some exaggeration the philosopher Ludwig Marcuse wrote of his life in Los Angeles: "I hardly considered that Americans lived here too; here I sat in the middle of the Weimar Republic."^{xi} The refugees were determined to keep alive in their midst the "good" Germany, which no longer existed across the ocean, not the racial *Germanentum* but the cultural *Deushtum*. To their distress, some found themselves legally branded as enemy aliens, put into the same category with non-Jewish immigrants from Germany. On the West Coast they were required to give up their cameras and be in their homes by sundown.^{xii}

Yet the contribution of these "enemy aliens" to America was simply amazing. Few fields in the arts and sciences remained untouched. Well known are the words of Walter Cook, the chairman of the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University, who used to say:

"Hitler is my best friend: he shakes the tree and I collect the apples." One thinks, of course, of Albert Einstein, perhaps the best known of all the immigrants. But in addition to Albert Einstein, there was also, for example, Alfred Einstein, the renowned musicologist, who had long suffered severe academic discrimination in Germany and who in the United States finally gained the well deserved respect he had earlier been denied. Given the opportunity finally to make use of his excellent German training, Einstein established a higher level of musicology in America.^{xiii} Among classical composers, the most original and outstanding to come to the United States was Arnold Schönberg, whom Hitler had driven back to Judaism in 1933 after an earlier conversion to Christianity. His impact through his teaching at the University of California at Los Angeles was immense; his efforts to aid fellow refugees unceasing.^{xiv} Still in the field of music, there were the conductors Bruno Walter and Otto Klemperer, who decisively influenced musical life in Los Angeles, and in more popular music the highly original Kurt Weill. It is estimated that between 1933 and 1944 some 1500 musicians entered the United States from Europe, most of them Jews.^{xv} Their performances and their recordings left behind a lasting legacy.

What Alfred Einstein did for musicology in America Erwin Panofsky did for iconography, Erich Auerbach for literary theory, and

Erich Mendelsohn for architecture. There were also immigrants who found a role for themselves in the motion picture industry. The prize-winning director and screen writer Billy Wilder contributed to some 60 films. There were many other German Jews in Hollywood, including the successful director of comedies Ernst Lubitsch and the less well-known but no less successful Leopold Jessner, who stood apart from his fellows as a religiously observant Jew. The most famous of the stage directors of Jewish origin in Germany, Max Reinhardt, had relatively less influence in America due to his death in 1943, not very long after his arrival in the United States.

Among writers, the two refugees who were the most successful both lived in Los Angeles: Lion Feuchtwanger and Franz Werfel. Feuchtwanger devoted some of his novels to Jewish subjects; Werfel developed an interest in the Kabbalah.^{xvi} Their books enjoyed large sales and the Feuchtwangers could carry on an active intellectual life with friends at their lovely home, the Villa Aurora in Pacific Palisades. For them, as for Kurt Weill, Los Angeles was "paradise," a word that occurs in the titles of no less than three books on the subject.^{xvii}

Among Jewish intellectuals who made their way to America the highly controversial Hannah Arendt has gained iconic status, especially, though not only, among feminists. The leaders of the Frankfurt School, Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, spent a

few years in the United States, but Adorno refused to assimilate to what he regarded as an inferior culture and an unbearable commercialism. In 1945, in a speech delivered in German, he told a group of fellow refugees in Los Angeles: "If we are really serious about striving for better conditions in society we may only hope to contribute to that improvement if we will not blindly commit ourselves to the existing order of things."^{xviii} And that existing order of things, according to Adorno, meant the current state of American values and culture. Both Adorno and Horkheimer chose to return to Frankfurt after the war, where they gained renewed attention, though the critical theory they advocated continued to be influential in the United States as well. Other academics found their place in American universities where a number of them enjoyed considerable prominence. One thinks of the historians George Mosse, Peter Gay, Walter Laqueur, and the Christian scholar of Jewish origin, Fritz Stern. Steven Aschheim has argued that these men developed the fields of cultural and intellectual history while their counterparts in Germany, little appreciating their work, chose to focus on social history.^{xix} Mosse, in particular, has had a large influence on the writing of German-Jewish history among younger scholars in the United States. A number of Jewish historians from Germany initially taught at small African-American colleges, where they were able to raise the level of studies.

At Brandeis University Harry Zohn made a conscious effort to bring the German-Jewish literary legacy to America by teaching courses on German-Jewish authors. Years later, beginning in the 1970s, the tradition of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, a product of nineteenth-century German Jewry, would blossom anew in the United States as one university after another accepted the academic legitimacy of Jewish studies.

Two qualifications with regard to the influence of the Jewish refugees need, however, to be mentioned. First, not all of the most creative among the German immigrants came from a Jewish background. At least three major names should be mentioned in this regard: Thomas Mann in literature, Paul Tillich in theology, and Berhold Brecht in playwriting. Second, some twentieth-century German-speaking Jews who did not settle in the United States nonetheless, through their disciples and expositors in universities and Jewish seminaries in America, must be regarded as conveying important elements of the German-Jewish heritage. In this category one can place such outstanding names as Sigmund Freud, Franz Kafka, Gershom Scholem, Walter Benjamin, Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber and Leo Baeck. Although they died in Europe or migrated to England or Israel, the legacy of these Jews from Central Europe continues to resonate in American Judaism, and more broadly in the

general American culture

Finally, the vast majority of the refugees were neither artists nor intellectuals. They were simply average German Jews. If they arrived in America late in the Nazi period, they came with almost no money. Unlike their predecessors in the early nineteenth century they did not possess skills, but in most cases they were unable to use them. With difficulty they found menial jobs, well below their education, to tide them over during the first years: working as dishwashers or as maids. Necessarily, they clung to each other, defining themselves as a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* (a community of fate). Some joined synagogues led by refugee rabbis, whether liberal or orthodox, where they could hear the old melodies and feel that they were *unter uns* (among ourselves). Others refused to join because, as one woman put it, "We were angry with our beloved God."^{xx} How did they feel about America? Some made a quick adjustment and tried to put the German-Jewish heritage behind them. But others, at least initially, set themselves apart from the America that they encountered, speaking German at home or a mixed language they called "Immigranto," and encouraging children and grandchildren to learn to play piano and read the German classics just as they would have done in Germany. They continued to eat *Pflaumkuchen* (the typically German plum cake) and take a *Spaziergang* (the beloved promenade). They protested against

the widespread notion that German Jews had been both naïve in not anticipating the Holocaust and assimilationist in trying so hard to be German. And though these average German Jews made no tangible contributions to American culture, they brought with them a collection of values and behaviors that survived at least for a time in their children. One of the refugees described it as a syndrome composed of "a sense of duty, responsibility, and dependability, of punctuality, exactitude, orderliness, obedience to authority, pedantry and, perhaps especially, of dignity."^{xxi}

From the impoverished peddlers of the early nineteenth century, to the middle-class Jews of succeeding generations, and down to the refugees for Nazi Germany, the noteworthy and the everyday Jews among them, the German-Jewish legacy has been, and perhaps is still, a significant element in both the history of the modern Jews and the history of America.

ⁱ For a complete translation and analysis of the poem see "The Imagined Jew: Heinrich Heine's 'Prinzessin Sabbath,'" in William Cutter and David C. Jacobson, eds., History and Literature: New Readings of Jewish Texts in Honor of Arnold J. Band (Providence, 2002), 209-221.

ⁱⁱ S. E. Rosenbaum, A Voyage to America Ninety Years Ago: The Diary of a Bohemian Jew on His Voyage from Hamburg to New York in 1847, ed. Guido Kisch (San Bernadino, CA, 1995), 114.

ⁱⁱⁱ Theodor Griesinger, Lebende Bilder aus Amerika (Stuttgart, 1858), 147.

^{iv} Der deutsche Pionier 7 (1875): 32-35.

^v Tägliches Cincinnati Volksblatt, February 23, 1910.

^{vi} Cited in Avraham Barkai, Branching Out: German-Jewish Immigration to the United States, 1820-1914 (New York/London, 1994), 187.

^{vii} Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums 21 (1865): 655.

^{viii} B[ernhard] Felsenthal, "Briefe von Dr. Abraham Geiger," Die Deborah, New Series 2 (1902): 213.

^{ix} Adolf Moses, "Die heilsamen Folgen der sogenannten Judenfrage in Deutschland," Der Zeitgeist 1 (1880) 237.

^x Atina Grossmann, "German Jews as Provincial Cosmopolitans: Reflections from the Upper West Side," Leo Baeck Institute Year Book 53 (2008): 163.

^{xi} Holger Gumprecht, "New Weimar" unter Palmen. Deutsche Schriftsteller im Exil in Los Angeles (Berlin, 1998), 7

^{xii} That was the experience of my family in Los Angeles beginning in 1941.

^{xiii} Pamela M. Potter, "From Jewish Exile in Germany to German Scholar in America: Alfred Einstein's Emigration," in Reinhold Brinkmann and Christoff Wolff, eds., Driven into Paradise: The Musical Migration from Nazi Germany to the United States (Berkeley, 1999), 298-321.

^{xiv} John Russell Taylor, Strangers in Paradise: The Hollywood Émigrés 1933-1950 (New York, 1983), 82.

^{xv} Peter Gay, "'We Miss Our Jews': The Musical Migration from Nazi Germany," in Brinkmann and Wolff, 21.

^{xvi} *Ibid.*, 244.

^{xvii} In addition to the two mentioned in previous notes, also

Anthony Heilbut, Exiled in Paradise: German Refugee Artists and Intellectuals in America, from the 1930s to the Present (New York, 1983).

^{xviii} Theodor W. Adorno, "Fragen an die intellektuelle Emigration," in Rolf Tiedemann, ed., Theodor W. Adorno, Gesammelte Schriften (Frankfurt am Main, 1997), 20: 359.

^{xix} Steven E. Aschheim, Beyond the Border: The German-Jewish Legacy Abroad (Princeton, NJ, 2007), 45-80.

^{xx} Ruth Wolman, Crossing Over: An Oral History of Emigrants from Hitler's Germany (New York, 1995), 112.

^{xxi} Abraham Peck, ed., The German-Jewish Legacy in America, 1938-1988 (Detroit, 1989), 322-323.