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**Publication Date**

2012

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

A Prophet and His People: Israel Zangwill and His American Public,  
1892-1926 and Beyond

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in History

by

Erik Marc Greenberg

2012

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Prophet and His People: Israel Zangwill and His American Public,  
1892-1926 and Beyond

by

Erik Marc Greenberg

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor David N. Myers, Co-chair

Professor Janice L. Reiff, Co-chair

This dissertation explores the unique, significant, and sometimes contentious relationship that existed between British Jewish author and activist Israel Zangwill and the Jewish community of the United States of America from 1892-1926 and beyond. Employing a broad definition of prophets and prophecy based on the works of prominent theologians, anthropologists, sociologists, and others, this dissertation argues that Zangwill's vision of America as a new, diasporic cultural and religious center was so significant that we may reasonably characterize him as a prophet of American Judaism. This dissertation carefully studies Zangwill's prophecy and the American Jewish reaction to Zangwillian thought to better understand both the nature of Zangwill's thinking and the American Jewish community's reception of that thought. In so doing it provides important insight

into Zangwill's prophetic vision for America, as well as the American Jewish community's ideological divisions, limited tolerance for criticism, and anxieties over American toleration of Jews and Judaism in the Progressive era, the 1920s, and beyond. It places the narrative of Zangwill and America within the context of American Jewish intellectual history, as well as a broader, late-nineteenth-early-twentieth-century, trans-diasporic discourse on the prospective significance of America in Jewish life and culture. Of equal importance, this study carefully explores the phenomenon of modern fame as an important component in Zangwill's popularity and legitimacy in American Jewish discourse. It grants particular focus to the role that Israel Zangwill's American public played in determining the nature of Zangwill's fame, noting the ways in which Americans helped establish the late British Jewish author's reputation as an expert on Jews and Jewish affairs despite the fact that Zangwill preferred to be known as an artist unbound by the strictures of religion, nation, or tribe. In its conclusion, this dissertation considers the ways in which American Jews have written about and discussed Zangwill since his death. It notes the proclivity of twentieth-century, American Jewish intellectuals to reduce Zangwill's biography to a synecdochic device illustrating the supposed painful divisions of the modern Jewish personality, and it argues that this study, in conjunction with the recent works of literary scholars Edna Nahshon and Meri-Jane Rochelson, signals a new direction in the study of Israel Zangwill—an approach which recognizes his significant contributions to Anglo Jewish letters and discourse in his own day and in our contemporary historical moment, as well.

This dissertation of Erik Marc Greenberg is approved.

Russell Jacoby

Eric J. Sundquist

David N. Myers, Committee Co-chair

Janice L. Reiff, Committee Co-chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2012

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## **Acknowledgements**

This dissertation is the product of almost five years of research, thought, discussion, and writing, all of which would have been impossible without the support of a wide array of institutions and individuals. My recognition of, and thanks for, their assistance is a meager return on their investment, to be sure. I am, after all, forever in their debt. Still, I think it is extremely important to acknowledge publically their contribution to my scholarship, if only to inform those who read this dissertation of the tremendous generosity of the academic community, as well as that of my friends and family.

Naturally I am deeply indebted to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), specifically the University's Department of History and its Center for Jewish Studies (CJS). UCLA has been my intellectual home for the past six years, and whether in the classroom, at public symposia, or even just having a meal with my colleagues, I have found my time there to be extremely valuable and intellectually enriching. Equally important was the assistance of a host of administrators, both in the Department of History and at the CJS, who befriended me and helped me navigate through the tricky waters of the UCLA bureaucracy. I suspect that the following list may be incomplete, but I would like to thank these people for their assistance over the past six years—Vivian Hollenbeck (Assistant Director/ CJS), David Wu (Program Coordinator/CJS), Mary Enid Pinkerson (Community Affairs Coordinator/CJS), Barbara (Bebe) Bernstein (former Graduate Advisor/History), Hadley Porter (Graduate Advisor/History), Eboni Shaw (Graduate



Counselor/History), Nancy Dennis (Assistant to the Chair/History), Tammy Van Wagoner (Academic Apprentice Coordinator/History).

In addition to intellectual and administrative support, both the CJS and the Department of History provided me with financial support through employment as a researcher and teaching assistant, as well as through travel grants, a pre-dissertation year fellowship, and a dissertation year fellowship, as well. Both fellowships were made possible by a generous gift from the Monkarsh Family Fund. The Monkarsh's generosity has enabled me and a whole cohort of Jewish historians at UCLA to provide greater insight into the history of the Jewish experience worldwide, and such magnanimous philanthropy should not go unnoticed.

Financial support for my research came from other institutions, as well. Early on in my work, Temple University's Feinstein Center for American Jewish History provided me with a summer research grant. I would like to thank the Center's former Director, Michael Alexander, for his interest in, and support of, my work. Additional support came from the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, Ohio (AJA). I was a 2009 Lowenstein-Wiener Fellow at the AJA, an award which provided me with essential access to the Archives' valuable collection of historical documents and ephemera.

In truth, the AJA has provided more than financial support. If UCLA is my intellectual home, then the AJA and the libraries of Hebrew Union College (HUC)—particularly in Cincinnati and Los Angeles—are my home away from home. The staff of the AJA and of the HUC libraries has always made me feel welcome. Their kindness and hospitality, as well as their exceptional knowledge of their extensive

collections, have facilitated my research in a number of important ways. As with the staff at UCLA, I suspect that the following list is incomplete, but I would like very much to thank the following people from the AJA and the HUC libraries—Kevin Proffitt (Senior Archivist For Research and Collections, Director of Fellowship Programs/ AJA), Dana Herman (Managing Editor of the AJA Journal and Academic Associate/ AJA), Rabbi Gary Zola (Executive Director/ AJA), Camille Servizzi (Assistant to Archivists, AJA), Lisa Frankel (Director of Programs and Administration/ AJA), Sheryl Stahl (Senior Associate Librarian/HUC Libraries, Los Angeles), Allan Satin (Senior Associate Librarian/HUC Libraries, Cincinnati).

Other archives have facilitated my research as well. I am particularly indebted to Rochelle Rubinstein and the staff of the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem, Israel (CZA). The Zangwill collection at the CZA is vast, approximately five linear meters containing some 660 files. I spent nearly a month at the CZA and their staff was extremely helpful and responsive. Equally helpful was the staff of the UCLA libraries, the Center for Jewish History in New York City, the staff of the New York Public Library, and the archival staff of The Museum of the City of New York.

I must offer special thanks and recognition to the staff of the Autry National Center in Los Angeles, California. I have been a member of the Autry staff for twelve plus years, now. The support and interest of a number of Autry employees helped foster my interest in, and appreciation for, historical scholarship, and throughout my six year doctoral program, the Autry has continued to support me, employing me for three years as a consultant, and hiring me to be the museum's

Director of Education in the spring of 2009. A number of individuals at the Autry deserve special recognition. Michael Duchemin, former Senior Curator of the Autry, played a critical role in sparking my interest in the study of history and its application in the public sphere. Stephen Aron, currently the Western History Chair of the Autry and a Professor of Western History at UCLA has provided important financial, intellectual, and emotional support. The former President and CEO of the Autry, John Gray, had a profound interest in my development as a scholar, and a great deal of my success as an academic and public historian is directly attributable to John's support. The current President and CEO of the Autry, Daniel Finley, has been an enthusiastic supporter, frequently asking me about my progress and offering words of encouragement along the way. Ben Fitzsimmons, a museum teacher at the Autry, as well as a fine historian and good friend, and Scott Frank, former Senior Education Manager at the Autry and a talented cultural anthropologist, offered valuable feedback on my second chapter. And Amy Scott, the Autry's curator of art and a fine doctoral student in her own right, offered important insight into drafts of my introduction and fourth chapter.

A host of historians and rabbis have provided valuable insight into my research and writing at various stages of this project, and their contributions have made this study a more cogent and significant work of history. One notable and significant cohort of scholars to read drafts of this work were the "Sliced Bread" writing group—so named because all of us found the group to be so useful that we believed it was the best thing since sliced bread! I would like to thank "sliced breaders" Erin Brown, Mel Lebe, Kim Hernandez, and my dear friend and colleague

Karen Wilson for their time, patience, and insight. Others who read drafts of this study or discussed the direction of my work include Kevin Goldberg, Emily Katz, Lina Maria Del Castillo, Liora Halperin, Melanie Arias, Stephanie Amerian, and Jeffrey Auerbach. Eminent Zangwill scholar Meri-Jane Rochelson offered critical insight and much appreciated encouragement. Jody Myers, Coordinator of the Jewish Studies Program at California State University, Northridge (CSUN) offered important insight into my work at a moment when I was utterly uncertain about the direction of this dissertation's narrative, and Michael A. Meyer, the renowned historian of Reform Judaism, provided valuable and timely feedback to portions of chapter three. And discussions with Rabbis Scott Perlo and Adam Greenwald helped me understand certain critically important religious concepts along the way.

Undoubtedly, the most influential cohort of scholars to read this work were the members of my dissertation committee. Intellectual historian Russell Jacoby's probing questions about my dissertation prospectus continually ran through my head throughout the writing process. Eric Sundquist, Professor of English, offered valuable insight and feedback on each chapter. Naturally the two most influential scholars were my committee co-chairs, David Myers and Jan Reiff. Both David and Jan are remarkable scholars and teachers, and I cherish their advice, insight, and support throughout this process. Professor Myers first exposed me to the fascinating and rewarding field of Jewish intellectual history, and through my readings for, and debates and discussions with, David I have become more familiar with, and connected to, the history of Jewish thought. Consequently I am a more thoughtful and sensitive historian for having been David Myers' student. David

provided important financial support for my research, as well, and I am forever grateful for his assistance. I first worked with Professor Reiff in a readings course my first year at UCLA. Thanks to Jan I have a deeper and more complex understanding of Progressive era America and American immigration history. And my discussions with Jan throughout the writing of this dissertation have produced a clearer, more comprehensible work. While this study is deeply engaged in the currents of American Jewish thought, thanks to Jan it is a work thoroughly engaged in the historical currents of early-twentieth-century American history, as well.

My family's love and support sustained me throughout this process. My in-laws, Frank and Betty McCraven, have been enthusiastic supporters of my work. Frank and Betty moved to Los Angeles over twelve years ago to help my wife and I care for our daughter, Emma, and their assistance has made this process much easier. My mother, Miriam Greenberg, has demonstrated remarkable patience, understanding, and support. I began my doctoral program at age forty-one, and I can only imagine what it must be like to tell your friends that your forty-plus year old son is still in school. Throughout this process, though, my mother has continually expressed her pride in my accomplishments, and I deeply value her love and support.

My wife (Amy) and daughter (Emma) have felt most keenly the effects of my pursuit of a Ph.D., and I am deeply appreciative of their patience, tolerance, and support. My graduate studies have, from time to time, posed emotional and financial burdens on our family. I have travelled half way around the world and spent extended periods of time away from home. I have covered our living room

with exam books from undergraduates, and I have been obsessive about anyone in my family touching my computer—which, after all, holds the sum total of five years of research and writing. Amy and Emma have been remarkably understanding and kind. They have also been important partners in my intellectual development. Amy has read various sections of this dissertation and offered valuable feedback and encouragement, and both Amy and Emma have spent countless hours discussing the nature of American Jewish identity and religion with me. Indeed, Emma and I have been discussing the likes of Israel Zangwill, Mordecai Kaplan, Simon Dubnow, Israel Friedlaender, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and other important Jewish thinkers since she was ten years old (she is currently fifteen). I can honestly say that I have learned a great deal from Amy and Emma, and I look forward to learning more.

Finally, I must thank my father (of blessed memory), Gary Greenberg, for his love, support, and legacy. My dad was my greatest supporter. He firmly believed in my capacity to become a scholar, and encouraged me to apply to doctoral programs long after I had convinced myself that such pursuits were too time consuming and expensive. A year before my entrance into the doctoral program at UCLA, dad was diagnosed with a recurrence of metastatic melanoma and had been told he likely had less than a year to live. Through the wonders of modern science, the support of his family, and his sheer will to live, dad lived another four years. One of his experimental treatment regimes required dad to fly to Los Angeles weekly to visit the Hoag Cancer Center in Newport Beach, California. Every Tuesday night dad would land in LA, and every Wednesday morning I would drive

him to Newport Beach for treatment and then back to the airport for his return to New York. During our countless hours stuck on Southern California's glacial freeways we discussed a great many things. More often than not our discussions turned to my scholarship and to the study of Jews and Jewish identity. Throughout the process I learned a great deal from my father, and he, I am proud to say, learned a great deal from me. Thanks to those frequent trips to and from Orange County, my dad and I engaged in a thoughtful exchange about what it means to be Jewish in America. Those discussions played a critical role in my academic interests, and I will always cherish those moments.

Dad died on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. When I returned to UCLA for the 2008 winter quarter, Professor Myers and I met to discuss my progress on my dissertation prospectus. David asked how I was holding up after the recent loss of my father. I told David that it was hard, that dad had been my greatest supporter, and that he had wanted to see me complete my Ph.D. very much. David then said, "Well, let's make sure that this dissertation is a worthy testament to your father's legacy," or words to that affect. In some sense, every intellectual pursuit I have ever undertaken has been a testament to dad's legacy. He was an insightful thinker, a valued counselor, a brutal (though helpful) critic, an extraordinary attorney, and a fine writer. Any native intelligence or intellectual capacity that I possess is undoubtedly some portion of my patrimony. And so, in truth, this dissertation, and indeed all subsequent studies I undertake are, for better or worse, a testament to my father's legacy. I only hope that this dissertation is, as David stipulated, a worthy testament.

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(February 2009) Jewish Urban History in the Americas: A Comparative Look at Jewish Buenos Aires and Jewish Los Angeles—UCLA, *Struggle for Cultural Hegemony in the Founding of the University of Judaism*

(April 2010) The Loewenstein-Wiener Fellowship Seminar—The American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH, *Zangwill in America*

(Feb 2010) "Competing Visions and the Formation of the University of Judaism, Circa 1945-1952," *Perush: An Online of Jewish Scholarship and Interpretation* Vol.2, no.1

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(2010) "Review of Fred Rosenbaum's, *Cosmopolitans A Social and Cultural History of the Jews of the San Francisco Bay Area*," *American Jewish Archives Journal*, Vol. 62.

(January, 2011) Rethinking the History of Jewish Nationalism: An International Symposium, UCLA, *Israel Zangwill's Territorialist Critique of the Zionist Project*  
(November, 2011) "Review of Ken Koltun-Fromm's *Material Culture and Jewish Thought in America*," *Jewish History*, Vol. 25, nos. 3-4

## Introduction

This dissertation studies the unique, significant, and sometimes controversial relationship that existed between British Jewish author and activist Israel Zangwill—whose literary and political accomplishments included the 1892 novel, *Children of the Ghetto*, the 1908 melodrama “The Melting Pot,” and the founding of the Jewish Territorial Organization, to name a few— and the Jewish community of the United States of America from 1892-1926 and beyond.<sup>1</sup> It explores the ways in which the American Jewish community (as well as the broader American public) promoted an image of Zangwill as a bold Jewish polemicist and a widely acknowledged expert on Jewish peoples and affairs who spoke his mind to both Jew and Gentile alike and cared little for the repercussions of his caustic criticisms and audacious assertions. This image of Zangwill—created in large part through the American Jewish reception of his works and disseminated through a broad network of Jewish and non-Jewish American newspapers, magazines, and journals—I have termed, the *idea of Zangwill*. Also, this study carefully examines Zangwill’s letters, published works, speeches, and other pronouncements to understand his thoughts on American Jewry and its prospective role in a pre-Israel, diasporic Jewish identity and religious observance—the *ideals of Zangwill*. In so doing it reveals Israel Zangwill’s challenging call for America’s Jews to create an evolutionary, adaptive, inclusive, and politically engaged American Judaism. This Zangwillian vision for American Jewry represented a significant contribution to the history of American Jewish discourse in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, catalyzing searching, and sometimes raucous, discussion and debate in the American Jewish

press, in American Jewish institutions, from American pulpits, and in private exchanges between significant figures in the American Jewish community during and even after Zangwill's lifetime. Indeed, this dissertation argues that Zangwill's role as a critic of, and visionary for, American Jewish life was so significant, that we may reasonably characterize him as a prophet of American Judaism. This dissertation, then, with its focus on the exchange between Zangwill and America, is a study of the relationship between a prophet and his people.

This last assertion, concerning the prophetic nature of Zangwill's American critique and commentary, may seem intemperate, but the claim to Zangwill's role as prophet is not without past mention or merit. As we shall see, throughout his American career, leading figures in American Jewry, such as Rabbis Samuel Schulman, David Phillipson, George Alexander Kohut, and others hailed Israel Zangwill as a Jewish prophet. Even *The New York Times*, in a 1904 editorial cartoon, would portray Zangwill as a second Moses. And posthumous assessments of Zangwill throughout the twentieth century made frequent reference to his works and legacy as prophetic. The most notable of these assessments came from Zangwill's friend and first biographer, Joseph Leftwich, who said of Zangwill, he "was a Jew inspired by the Jewish spirit and belonging to the line of the Hebrew Prophets."<sup>2</sup>

Lefwich's assessments aside, this dissertation does not literally argue that Zangwill was a prophet on a par with the prophets of the Old Testament. After all, the Jewish prophets of the Bible claimed direct communication with God, and the notion of prophecy is often understood to suggest a certain level of prescience.

This study surely does not claim to know the ultimate source of Israel Zangwill's intellectual inspiration, and Zangwill himself did not claim to be divinely inspired (though Leftwich makes clear that Zangwill did see his critical writings as part of a prophetic tradition).<sup>3</sup> Nor does this study assert that Zangwill's vision of American Judaism has been fulfilled—which would imply a certain Zangwillian prescience.

But as biblical scholar David Petersen observes, both in academic discourse and popular culture there is no one definition of a prophet or prophecy. "[P]rophets have been understood as priests, charismatics, ecstasics, poets, theologians, politicians—the list could go on almost without limit."<sup>4</sup> This dissertation employs the definitions of the prophet as articulated in the works of prominent scholars such as Petersen, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Max Weber, and others, to argue that Zangwill's American career shares certain characteristics with the societal role of the prophet, as well as certain aspects of the traditional prophetic narrative.

These thinkers have carefully studied the role of the prophet in society, and their definitions and assessments of prophets and prophecy provide important insight into the prophet's essential personality traits, as well as the sociological role of prophets in a host of ancient civilizations. "The prophet is an iconoclast," proclaims Heschel. "Beliefs cherished as certainties, institutions endowed with supreme sanctity, he exposes as scandalous pretensions."<sup>5</sup> He is, as Weber asserts, "an individual bearer of charisma, who by virtue of his mission proclaims a religious doctrine or divine commandment."<sup>6</sup> As Eliezer Schweid tells us, the prophet does not choose his mission. Indeed, he is hesitant and resistant to embrace his difficult message, but ultimately "the message overwhelms its bearer"

and, as Weber and Heschel make clear, the prophetic message explodes forth in audacious oratory. “The prophet is a person who speaks or writes in a distinctive way,” says Petersen. And Heschel offers even greater clarity on the nature of prophetic speech, observing that “The prophet’s words are outbursts of violent emotions...His rebuke is harsh and relentless.” His sweeping allegations do not necessarily assail the entire society as guilty of sin, but they do hold all people responsible for healing a damaged world. And ultimately, the boldness of the prophet, his uncompromising audacity, renders him alone and despised. “He alienates the wicked as well as the pious, the cynics as well as the believers, the priests and the princes, the judges and the false prophets.”<sup>7</sup>

As the reader will see, the above descriptions of the prophet and prophecy are remarkably consistent with Israel Zangwill’s engagement with his American public. First encouraged to write a Jewish-themed novel by representatives of the Jewish Publication Society of America, Zangwill would initially prove hesitant to be known as a Jewish artist—let alone a Jewish expert, statesman, or prophet. Still, he was an iconoclastic, charismatic figure who, upon encountering and observing the American Jewish scene, shed what literary scholar Leo Braudy has called “the posture of reticence”<sup>8</sup> and delivered a challenging message to American Jewry about its existing institutional base and culture as well as its emerging role as a center of global Jewish life. On five separate speaking tours (in 1898, 1899, 1904, 1908, and 1923) and through numerous essays, editorial columns, and other written communications, Israel Zangwill would challenge the dogma and structure of key institutions in American Jewish religious life, opposing the community’s

denominational divisions and criticizing both American Reform and Orthodox Judaism in equal measure. Concomitantly he dismissed as narrow-minded and ahistorical the American Jewish proclivity to define Jewishness racially, insisting that religious engagement, not racial inheritance, should be the basis of Jewish identity in America. And ultimately, he would implore American Jews to employ their Hebraic legacy in America's political arena for the sake of all persecuted Americans, thus articulating a clear connection between Judaism and social justice in the United States of America.

What is more, Israel Zangwill delivered his remarks through a theatrical and sensational oratorical style which favored epigrams, witticisms, and other statements calculated to shock his audience to attention rather than measured political or academic speech. This Zangwillian style would prove useful in attracting attention to Israel Zangwill's statements, while, like the prophets of the Bible, it would concomitantly alarm and offend his audience. Here, Zangwill's literary and political careers share a common trait with his Zionist colleague Theodore Herzl, a man that biographer Ernst Pawel called "a secular prophet." The cultural historian Carl Schorske has characterized Herzl's political style as being conducted in a "sharper key... a mode of political behavior at once more abrasive, more creative, and more satisfying to the life of feeling than the deliberative style of the social liberals." Like the political liberals of Schorske's fin de siècle Vienna, most political activists of Progressive Era America (both Jewish and non-Jewish) prized deliberation and rationality over emotion and feeling. And so, ironically, Zangwill's melodramatic theatrical productions, brash essays, and brazen speeches while

initially appealing to his public would oftentimes offend his audience's sense of sobriety and reserve.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, having challenged American Jewry to live up to its role as a new and exceptional center of Jewish life, Zangwill would so alienate his American Jewish public that he ended his days in a kind of self-imposed exile from the US. In 1923 Zangwill would visit America at the behest of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise's American Jewish Congress. His speech to the Congress as well as subsequent addresses in the United States would, among other things, challenge American Jewry to speak out against American prejudice and injustice at an historical moment when such activism might prove dangerous or even deadly. In response, most leaders and public figures in American Jewry rejected Israel Zangwill as a dangerously uninformed gadfly. Despite the author's efforts to clarify his remarks and assert his abiding belief in the significance and political power of the American Jewish community, he would leave the United States in February of 1924 despised and discounted by many. After thirty years of robust exchange between Zangwill and his American public, the years between his 1923 American sojourn and his 1926 passing would be marked by a notable absence of Zangwillian commentary in the American Jewish press and sermons on Zangwill and Zangwillian ideals in the American pulpit.

Beyond demonstrating the resonance between the paradigmatic narrative of the prophet and Israel Zangwill's American career, this dissertation seeks to explore and explain fully Zangwillian "prophecy" as it applied to America. It places Israel Zangwill's works in the context of American Jewish intellectual history, as well as a

broader, late-nineteenth-early- twentieth-century, trans-diasporic discourse on the prospective significance of America in Jewish life and culture.<sup>10</sup> Writing and speaking at the height of an historic wave of Jewish immigration to America, Israel Zangwill fully recognized that the United States of America was in the process of becoming the demographic center of Diaspora Jewry. To be sure, he was not alone in comprehending this fact. Zangwill's colleague Theodore Herzl, cultural Zionist Ahad Ha Am, Diaspora nationalist historian Simon Dubnow, and other important Jewish thinkers and activists all addressed the significance of America in their late nineteenth and early twentieth century treatises on the so-called Jewish problem. But Zangwill differed from such figures in important ways. Unlike the most doctrinaire of Zionists, Zangwill viewed the Diaspora as a permanent and salutary feature, rather than the defining problem, of Jewish life. His recognition of this fact led him to argue for the centrality of America in the ongoing development of Jewish communal life and Judaism in the Diaspora. Here, Zangwill shared a similar outlook with Dubnow, whose work made clear that throughout history, Jewish life, culture, and religion had centered on several global centers of hegemony. Still, Dubnow and Zangwill would differ greatly on their approaches towards the creation of a global Jewish center in America. Dubnow believed that the US Constitution could allow for the formation of national, ethnic communities and that through careful organization Jews could create their own, semi-autonomous towns and regions within the American polity. By contrast, Zangwill would make crystal clear his belief that the American Constitution could not abide the existence of an American



Jewish *national* identity. In his 1923 address to the American Jewish Congress he unambiguously stated that, in America, “only *religious* unity was constitutional.”<sup>11</sup>

The Zangwillian insistence on Judaism’s centrality in American Jewish community and identity is the defining characteristic of Zangwill’s vision for American Jewry. Despite his participation in various forms of Jewish nationalism, Israel Zangwill rejected the idea that Jews in diaspora represented a national people. A Jewish national identity, he would proclaim, was only possible in a Jewish nation-state. And so as immigration swelled the ranks of the American Jewish community it became vitally important, in Zangwill’s opinion, to unite this vast and disparate population through the creation of an American Judaism that, at once, adapted to the physical and cultural realities of America while still maintaining the essential precepts of Jewish, ethical monotheism.

To be sure, Zangwill was not the first to articulate the need for Judaism to adapt to modern realities. Indeed the call for a sufficiently adaptive Diasporic Judaism is a staple doctrine of many modern, western, Jewish religious movements ranging from efforts of eighteenth and nineteenth century liberal Jewish reformers in Germany and France, to the work of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, considered the founder of Neo-Orthodox Judaism. Nor was Israel Zangwill the first person to call for the creation of a distinctly American Jewish tradition. Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, for example, a vitally important figure in American Jewish history and an early admirer of Zangwill’s, dedicated considerable time and effort to a failed attempt to create a universally accepted American Jewish liturgical tradition (his *minhag Amerika*).<sup>12</sup>

Still, Zangwill's vision for American Judaism was unique. As we shall see, he rejected the dogma of both the liberal reformers and the more conservative Orthodox movement as ossified and excessively doctrinal. He believed America to be an exceptional site in the history of the Jews, a place devoid of Jewish tradition, and therefore a place capable of building a new Judaism from whole cloth. The Zangwillian belief in this American Jewish exceptionalism released Israel Zangwill's thinking from the dual restraints of tradition and denominationalism. To be sure, the past would inform Zangwill's vision of American Judaism, but it did not define it. Here, Zangwill's ideology anticipated the thinking of two comparatively recent movements in American Jewish life, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan's Reconstructionist Movement—first considered by Kaplan in the 1910s and 1920s, but fully articulated and formed into a religious movement from the 1930s-1950s—and the more recent development of post-denominational Judaism. Like the Zangwillian vision of American Judaism, both Reconstructionism and post-denominationalism share Zangwill's sense that the relative freedoms of the United States can empower its Jews to create new and evolutionary forms of Judaism which dynamically and creatively link the traditions of the past with the realities, interests, and concerns of the present.<sup>13</sup>

And yet this resonance between Zangwillian ideology and contemporary movements in American Judaism has not resulted in widespread familiarity with the life and works of Israel Zangwill in twenty-first century American Jewish circles. Despite a shared outlook about the possibilities America presents for the creation of new and adaptive forms of Judaism, it seems unlikely that most contemporary

proponents of, and adherents to, Reconstructionism or post-denominationalism are even remotely aware of the works and activism of Israel Zangwill. The few mentions of Zangwill that exist in contemporary American discourse largely associate the late British Jewish writer with his most famous play, "The Melting Pot." But even in those instances, Zangwill's work is mistakenly portrayed as a paean to the unrestrained assimilation of immigrants into American culture and society.<sup>14</sup>

But Israel Zangwill's writings on, and vision for, America and its Jewish community consisted of much more than his 1908 melodrama. Few American Jews are familiar with his numerous editorial pieces in American newspapers and journals (both Jewish and non-Jewish), or his essays and speeches collected in volumes such as his 1920 work *The Voice of Jerusalem*. This unfortunate lack of familiarity with Zangwillian thought has obscured our understanding of Israel Zangwill's relationship with America and its Jewry, largely excluding Zangwillian critique and commentary from American Jewish history and from a broader contemporary discourse about American Jewish life. As stated above, Zangwillian prophecy anticipated many ideas now prevalent in twenty-first century American Jewish life, and yet his essays, speeches, and other pronouncements on American Judaism have been absent from American Jewish discourse for decades. This dissertation seeks, in some small way, to remedy this absence.

Zangwill's absence from American Jewish discourse is due, in part, to the paucity of academic research into his American career. This is not to say that scholars have failed to study Israel Zangwill. Indeed several literary scholars have

written detailed and illuminating biographical studies of the late British Jewish author. But the breadth of Zangwill's life and works and the nature of their research projects have, perforce, limited their focus on Zangwill's American career—his vision for American Jewish life, his role in American Jewish discourse, and his controversial and contradictory relationship with the American Jewish public. Israel Zangwill was a prolific writer and an engaged activist who employed his pen and voice on behalf of a wide variety of social and political causes, both Jewish and non-Jewish. He wrote eight novels, including *The Children of the Ghetto* and *Grandchildren of the Ghetto*, nine collections of short stories, sixteen plays—the most well known of these being “The Melting Pot”—and numerous poems, essays, editorials, speeches, and other public pronouncements. In addition to his involvement in Zionism, Territorialism, and American Jewish discourse, he was also a powerful advocate for women's suffrage and for global peace. The breadth of Israel Zangwill's career has diffused the focus of previous studies on his life and works as scholars seek to account for his entire literary corpus, as well as the full breadth of his political engagement. And so depth of understanding into the relationship between Zangwill and America has been sacrificed to breadth of knowledge about the author's fascinating life and extensive career.

What is more, as we shall see in a later chapter, most biographical accounts of Zangwill's life dedicate much greater focus to the idea of Zangwill than to his ideals. Literary scholars such as Maurice Wohlgernter, Elsie Bonita Adams, Joseph Udelson, and others have carefully examined Zangwill's life and works within the context of English letters. Such studies have, by and large, turned Israel Zangwill's

biography into a synecdochic device illustrating the modern Jewish struggle to reconcile the supposed painful divisions of citizenship in a diaspora country (England) with the deeper connection to a sense of Jewish peoplehood. In so doing these twentieth and twenty-first-century scholars have created a new idea of Zangwill, that of a hopelessly and painfully divided personality and soul.<sup>15</sup>

This study contends, though, that Zangwill's career represents far more than a mere example of supposed Jewish alienation and division. While little known today, during his lifetime American Jewry fully recognized that Israel Zangwill's presence in the America and American Jewish discourse was important and noteworthy. Over a thirty-plus years career his literary works were read and viewed by countless Americans, both Jew and Gentile. His opinions on a variety of issues ranging from Zionism, to the Jewish question in Russia, Europe, and America, to the state of the English speaking stage were routinely printed and discussed in a host of daily papers, monthly periodicals, and books, as well as the subject of numerous public appearances and lectures. His activism on behalf of global Jewry was duly reported in the American press (both Jewish and mainstream). The milestones of his life, his marriage, the birth of his children, his travels back and forth across the Atlantic, and his sojourns in America were common knowledge, headlines in countless columns in the major daily papers as well as smaller market dailies and in the English language Jewish press. And in 1923, some three years before his death, *The Jewish Tribune* printed a list of the twelve most outstanding Jews in the world. Zangwill ranked third behind Albert Einstein and Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann; a fact which landed Zangwill on the

cover of *Time Magazine*, an honor he shared that year with Warren G. Harding, Winston Churchill, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Mustafa Kemal Pasha, King Fuad of Egypt, famed author and close friend of Zangwill's, George Bernard Shaw, as well as boxing legend Jack Dempsey and a host of other famous figures from politics and popular culture. In short, Israel Zangwill was both a publically engaged intellectual and a popular celebrity, perhaps the first such Jewish celebrity of the twentieth century.<sup>16</sup>

As we shall see, the American Jewish public played a critical role in establishing Israel Zangwill's fame and celebrity. Indeed, an understanding of fame and the public's role in the creation of "public figures" is an essential component of this study. For if, as this study argues, Israel Zangwill was a prophet in American Israel, then that prophet's "call" came not from the Almighty but from his American public. And Zangwill's prophetic pulpit, his ability to broadcast his ideas across the United States, was made possible by his American, and indeed global, fame. Leo Braudy reminds us, though, that modern fame is not created by the actions or words of the famous alone. Rather, it is a "contract between the audience and the aspirant, a contract that the fame seeker often knows less about than do those who are asked to be his appreciators." And that contract is always compounded Braudy tells us, "[by] the audience's aspirations and its despair, its need to admire and to find a scapegoat for that need."<sup>17</sup>

The contractual and reciprocal nature of modern fame powerfully informs and drives the narrative of Israel Zangwill's relationship with his American public. As this dissertation will demonstrate, the American Jewish community would, in a

sense, make a deal with Israel Zangwill, rewarding him with their attention and patronage provided that he embraced his prescribed role as an expert and advocate on Jewish affairs and people. In other words, Israel Zangwill became famous in America because he fulfilled, what I have previously called, the “idea of Zangwill.” Despite his initial reticence to be thought of solely as a Jewish artist, Zangwill would, at least implicitly, accept the terms American Jewry offered, writing Jewish-themed novels and stories and advocating for Jewish peoples and causes. But Zangwill’s interpretation of the terms of the contract differed from those of his American Jewish fans. As we shall see, Zangwill believed that the pulpit offered him in America entitled him to articulate a trenchant critique of the state of American Judaism and offer a new vision of what American Jewish life could and should be. American Jewry, by contrast, rejected the notion that Zangwill had been invited to critique America and its Jews.

This fundamental conflict between the American Jewish idea of Israel Zangwill and the author’s American Jewish ideals would come to define the relationship between the prophet and his people. As we shall see, despite the fact that American Jewry played a critical role in establishing Zangwill’s reputation as an expert on Jewish life and Jewish affairs, and despite the fact that American Jews frequently solicited the author’s opinions on, and insights into, the Jewish experience, when Israel Zangwill’s insight and opinions turned away from the Whitechapel Ghetto of London, the Jewish refugees of Eastern Europe, the Zionist project in Palestine, or indeed any Jewish community or issue outside the United States and instead looked to the state of American Judaism and American Jewish

life, most, though not all, American Jews grew tense and defensive. They revoked the terms of his contract and rejected the authority they had granted Zangwill, dismissing his insights as inappropriate or uninformed. In so doing they revealed existing tensions within the American Jewish community, as well as a deep seated fear about the ways in which Zangwillian prophecy might threaten the comparative freedom and tolerance afforded to the American Jewish community, an existential sense of security that the American Jewish historian Naomi Cohen has called, Jewish “at-homeness” in America.<sup>18</sup>

To understand Israel Zangwill’s American career, his prophetic vision of American Judaism, and his relationship with American Jewry I have organized this study into chapters reflecting three analytical approaches—chapters that integrate Zangwillian ideals and American Jewish reception of them, chapters that separate Zangwillian thought from American Jewish reception (to dissect and discern more clearly and cleanly the meaning of both), and a final chapter that explores the ways in which Americans in general, and American Jews in particular, have studied and thought about Israel Zangwill since his death.

In the first chapter, which explores the evolution of Zangwill’s fame and renown in the United States, I integrate the author’s works and public pronouncements with their reception by his American Jewish public. The chapter recounts the history of Israel Zangwill as a public figure in American popular culture from the American publication of his 1892 novel, *Children of the Ghetto*, to the late 1910s, a decade when Zangwill’s political commitments, as well as the dangers of



wartime, transatlantic travel precluded the author's visiting the United States. It documents and explains Israel Zangwill's emergence in American Jewish circles as a prominent and respected spokesman and statesman for Jewish issues and peoples. Of equal importance, chapter one reveals how Americans, both Jewish and non-Jewish, shaped the idea of Zangwill. It makes clear the ways in which American Jewish leaders, thinkers, and rabbis, as well readers of, and journalists for, the American press (both in Jewish and non-Jewish papers) interpreted Zangwill's early fictional works as expert sociological studies of Jewish life, thus setting the stage for the author's role as an expert on all things Jewish. And it carefully documents the ways in which the American public's perception of Zangwill's career contributed to the evolution of his reputation from Jewish expert to Jewish statesman. As observed above, understanding the public's influence on the development of Zangwillian fame is essential to understanding his legitimacy as a prophet in American Israel, and so in a very real sense, chapter one is also a study of the prophet's call.

Chapters two and three generally separate out Zangwillian thought from its American Jewish reception. Chapter two is an analysis of Zangwillian thought on the United States and American Jewish life. It is here, in his critical assessment of, and his vision for, the United States and its Jews that we can fully perceive Israel Zangwill's American career as a prophetic mission. Indeed, as Zangwill biographer Joseph Leftwich makes clear, Israel Zangwill fully believed that his incisive critique on a host of subjects was a part of the Jewish prophetic tradition of "admonition and criticism."<sup>19</sup> But as Eliezer Schweid argues in his writings on prophecy,

admonition is just one aspect of prophetic message; the other aspect is prophetic instruction towards a proper path to redemption.<sup>20</sup> Chapter two examines both elements of prophetic rhetoric in Zangwillian thought—admonition and instruction. As with other studies on Zangwill, it pays close attention to Israel Zangwill’s belief in the great promise of America, but also it directs greater focus towards the author’s powerful critique of the ways in which American Jews, and particularly American Judaism, failed to fulfill the promise of the United States as a diasporic center of Jewish cultural and religious creativity and hegemony. It then explores Israel Zangwill’s prophetic instruction—that is, his vision for the creation of an adaptive and evolutionary form of American Judaism.

Chapter three is a study of American Jewish reception to Israel Zangwill’s most significant fictional works, essays, and speeches and it contextualizes that reception through a careful reading of American Jewish history. As we shall see, much of the American Jewish reception to Zangwill’s works was profoundly influenced by certain vital concerns of Progressive era American Jews. Despite the American Jewish community’s interest in Israel Zangwill’s life and activism and despite his hopes for the future of the American Jewish community, many American Jews found the author’s writings, speeches, and other public pronouncements to be a threat to the continued development and continuity of American Jewish life. In private letters, on the pages of the American Jewish press, and from pulpits across the country these Jews expressed an understanding of Zangwill’s works that differed greatly from the British Jewish author’s vision for America. Paradoxically, they lamented Zangwill’s seeming approval of the cultures and customs of the

Jewish ghetto as a threat to American tolerance of Jews, while concomitantly expressing concern over the way in which his 1908 play, "The Melting Pot," seemingly encouraged the loss of Jewish identity through assimilation and intermarriage. And American Jewish religious leaders would bristle at Zangwill's critique of American Judaism, ignoring his vision of a new, non-denominational form of Judaism and mistakenly denouncing him as a partisan of opposing denominational camps.

Chapter four returns to the integration of Zangwillian ideals and their reception by the American public. The chapter is a history of Israel Zangwill's 1923-1924 visit to the United States, his final sojourn in America. An examination of Zangwill's 1923 speaking tour clearly demonstrates the clash between the American Jewish idea of Israel Zangwill and the author's American Jewish ideals, as well as his vision for the broader American nation. Zangwill came to the United States in 1923 to speak to the American Jewish Congress on the state of Jewish affairs, worldwide. His return to the States and his address to the Congress were hailed by many in the American Jewish community as an extraordinarily significant event. Indeed, Zangwill's speech to the American Jewish Congress proved so important to his hosts that they arranged to have the address broadcast nationwide via the relatively new technology of radio. With much of the American Jewish community's attention focused on Israel Zangwill, the author offered a scathing critique of the American Jewish community's timidity and inaction in the face of increasing American nationalism, nativism, racism, and anti-Semitism, as well as offering a rather dour assessment of the Zionist project in Palestine. Through his

address to the Congress, as well as other public pronouncements, Zangwill called on America's Jews to engage politically in an effort to advance Jewish ethics and push back against the growing trend of American intolerance. Appalled by Zangwill's critique, and unwilling to accept his prophetic instruction, many in the American Jewish community would depict Zangwill as reckless and dangerously misinformed. Despite the public admiration and acclaim with which he had been greeted in the States, by the end of his American speaking tour a number of prominent American Jews, as well as other Americans, would proclaim that Israel Zangwill's ideas were a threat to American Jewish safety. They rejected the deference and authority once granted to Zangwill's insights and opinions and demanded, instead, his silence and departure.

Chapter five, my concluding chapter, studies the American Jewish reception and interpretation of Israel Zangwill's ideas since his death in 1926. It examines how, immediately following the author's passing, the American Jewish community would regain some appreciation for Zangwill as a prophet—this despite their profound misunderstanding about the nature of his prophecy. It then proceeds to study the ways in which Zangwillian thought has been interpreted throughout the twentieth and twenty first centuries, noting, in particular, the profound influence of popular psychology on the exegesis of the idea of Zangwill in the mid to late twentieth century. And it concludes with my own thinking on the ways in which my work is part of a recent trend towards a valuable and salutary reading of Zangwill's life and works.

The collected chapters of this dissertation—with their examination of the tension between ideas and ideals, between the prophet and his people, between the famous and their fans—undertake a number of historically and historiographically important tasks. The dissertation is at once an intellectual history of overlooked Zangwillian thought and a historically contextualized study of the American Jewish reception of the author and his thinking. It provides important and overdue insight into Israel Zangwill’s unique vision for American Jewry, while concomitantly revealing the American Jewish community’s ideological divisions, limited tolerance for criticism, and anxieties over American toleration of Jews and Judaism in the Progressive era, the 1920s, and beyond. While it does not argue that Zangwill was a completely successful prophet, it does suggest that his prophetic vision was significant enough to warrant study by contemporary American Jewish intellectuals, rabbis, and other thinkers. And Zangwill’s rise to prominence and subsequent plunge into semi-obscurity reminds the reader, as well, that the canon of historically significant intellectuals is not an objectively determined and immutable register of luminaries, but instead an historically contingent, evolving list of names and ideas ultimately determined by the reading and thinking public. Finally, with few exceptions, this dissertation does not seek to overturn or reject previous studies on Israel Zangwill. In particular, this study is deeply indebted to the work of Meri-Jane Rochelson and of Edna Nahshon—authors of recent, important works on Israel Zangwill and his literary and historical significance. Rather, this dissertation seeks to provide greater depth and insight into, what I believe to be,

the most important aspect of Zangwill's lengthy and multi-faceted career—his engagement with, and vision for, America and its Jewish community

## **Chapter One: Fans and the Famous: The Development of Zangwill's Fame in America**

While over a thirty plus year career, Israel Zangwill would achieve noteworthy fame and renown across the globe, one may reasonably argue that it was his American benefactors and his American public that first established his fame, promoting Zangwill from a talented but somewhat obscure humorist and author to the level of Jewish expert, statesman, and prophet. As Zangwill's friend and ally the American rabbi and political leader Stephen S. Wise observed in his 1926 eulogy for the fallen British Jewish author, "[Zangwill's] American friends were the first to acclaim his youthful genius, to discern that the author of 'The Children of the Ghetto,' was not a facile and brilliant journalist, but an understanding and truthful interpreter of his people's dreams. [And] We might well say that from afar he [Zangwill] ...exercised a potent influence over the lives of the Jewish millions across the seas."<sup>1</sup>

This aspect of Israel Zangwill's career, his relationship with the American Jewish public and its role in promoting and advancing the idea of Zangwill as a prominent and influential figure in Jewish life, has received too little attention in the numerous studies of Israel Zangwill's life and works. This chapter, though, seeks to grant much greater focus to the role of the American public in the development of Israel Zangwill's fame and celebrity in America, circa 1892-1922. It documents the evolution of Zangwill's renown, observing the ways in which public perception of Zangwill as an acknowledged expert on Jewish life and Jewish issues evolved into a widespread recognition of Zangwill as a prominent Jewish leader.

As Leo Braudy has observed, the study of fame is a central though rarely recognized component of a great many historical studies. "Too often," Braudy writes, "historians think they are writing histories of politics or literature when they are in fact writing histories of political or literary fame...Since fifth century Athens, fame has been a way of expressing...the legitimacy of the individual within society."<sup>2</sup> In her recent biography of Israel Zangwill, author Meri-Jane Rochelson has quite clearly established the ways in which Zangwill himself participated in the creation of his celebrity; she has given less attention to the way in which the public's reception and perception of Zangwill contributed to this fame. If as Braudy asserts, though, modern fame is a contract between the fans and the famous, then understanding the American public's reception of Zangwill, and their role in establishing his reputation as Jewish expert and leader is essential to understanding the influence of both signatories, if you will, to the contract of fame. For, as Braudy reminds us, "the heart of what it [means] to go public [is] to be entrapped by the gaze of others, to be reduced by their definitions."<sup>3</sup>

What is more, comprehending Zangwill's stature in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century America is particularly important to understanding the way in which the American populace in general and American Jews in particular responded to his literary works, essays, and speeches. For as this chapter will make clear, neither American Jews nor the broader American public viewed Zangwill's writings as merely the work of a commercial author seeking to entertain his audience. Over a thirty year period Americans would actually perceive Zangwill's literary efforts as a series of social, political, and religious statements about the past, present, and future of the Jewish people, the United States in general, and, of greatest



importance, the American Jewish community from the most famous Jewish figure in American literary culture and a widely acknowledged political and religious leader of the global Jewish community.

And of equal importance, studying the American public's role in the formation of Zangwillian renown also highlights key narrative elements in the history of Israel Zangwill's prophetic career. For while Israel Zangwill would ultimately embrace the role articulated by his American public—that of an expert on, and spokesman for, Jewish causes and peoples—he was initially reticent about the idea of taking on the parochial responsibility of Jewish artistry and leadership, preferring, instead, to think of himself as unbound by the limitations of tribe, nation, or religion. And as Schweid and others remind us, reticence and hesitancy are hallmarks of the prophet's character and the prophetic narrative, and it is only after initially resisting his call that the prophet ultimately embraces his mission.<sup>4</sup>

In his groundbreaking study of literary fame, Leo Braudy has divided the concept of fame into four elements—the individual, their accomplishments, contemporaneous publicity, and their renown over posterity.<sup>5</sup> While these aspects of fame are critically important to understanding a person's renown both during and after their lifetime, for the purpose of this chapter, which studies the creation and development of Zangwillian fame from its genesis through the height of his career, I will assess two analytical categories. The first category is reputation, which, in essence, is the public's perception of a person's accomplishments and standing and therefore encompasses the Braudian elements of the individual, their accomplishments, and contemporaneous publicity. The other analytical category, which Braudy does not address in his study, is ubiquity. Ubiquity represents the

breadth of a person's visibility in the various venues which compose the cultural milieu of a particular time and place. In this study we will focus primarily on Zangwill's visibility within the popular literary culture of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century America, a public sphere of readers who consumed and exchanged information through a wide array of written sources. As Mary Ellen Warren-Zuckerman reminds us, the 1890s witnessed the beginning of a "magazine revolution...a new era of low-price high-volume magazines subsidized by advertising revenues." Consequently, distribution of periodicals rose from the tens of thousands into the hundreds of thousands, reaching a nationwide audience. Newspapers, which had already established a wide distribution network in the 1830s and 1840s, also played a significant role in the popular literary culture of the 1890s. While novels of the period proved so popular that one scholar has observed they were "devoured as much as read."<sup>6</sup>

In this multi-layered literary culture, Zangwill appeared before the public in a number of ways—through the publication of his books and the production of his plays; through reviews of his work in both newspapers and periodicals; through his columns and essays as well as serialized fiction which he either wrote for the American press or were republished from British magazines; through newspaper and magazine reportage on his comings and goings as well as his political activities; through interviews—some brief, others lengthier—which Zangwill granted to members of the press; through advertisements for his books and the periodicals for which he wrote, and through the significant stream of public commentary about Zangwill which appeared in a host of newspapers, magazines, journals and books. In short, as we shall see, Israel Zangwill was a ubiquitous figure in popular

American literary culture. This ubiquity and the emergence of his significant reputation began when a small, American Jewish institution commissioned Zangwill to write his first novel.<sup>7</sup>

#### Establishing a Reputation in America: *The Children of the Ghetto*

Israel Zangwill's fame in America began with the publication of his 1892 novel *The Children of the Ghetto*, a work which would, in a very short time, establish his reputation as an expert on Jewish peoples and Jewish issues. To be sure, Zangwill had already established himself as a significant author and journalist in England prior to writing the book. Throughout the 1880s he wrote for and edited several satirical British papers for both Jewish and Gentile markets. But the publication of *The Children of the Ghetto* launched Zangwill onto the American literary scene and established a long term trans-Atlantic exchange between Zangwill and some of the key leadership figures in the American Jewish community, a relationship which would last from 1892 until his death in 1926.

Zangwill first came to the attention of America's Jewish leadership in 1889 with the publication of two notable pieces, a Faustian tale called "Satan Mekatrig," and an essay for the inaugural issue of the *Jewish Quarterly Review* entitled "English Judaism: A Criticism and a Classification," a critical work which challenged the Anglo-Jewish establishment. Both works came to the attention of Mayer Sulzberger, a prominent Philadelphia judge and the Chairman of the Publications Committee for the recently formed Jewish Publication Society of America (JPS). Sulzberger took a particular interest in "Satan Mekatrig, and this interest in Zangwill's fiction ultimately led to a commission from the JPS calling on Zangwill to

write a fictional account of the Jews of London's East End, to reveal, as Sulzberger put it, the "fine flowers" which grow on the "muck heap" of the ghetto.<sup>8</sup>

Israel Zangwill, however, proved somewhat suspect at the prospect of writing a parochial Jewish novel. In his response to Sulzberger he expressed his concern, asserting that he "could not undertake for any amount of dollars to write a novel which should appeal exclusively to a section."<sup>9</sup> He hoped his first novel would be considered a great work of art. In his correspondence with Sulzberger, Zangwill proclaimed that, "Behind all the Jewish details [in the book], there must be the human interest which will raise it into that cosmopolitan thing, a work of art."<sup>10</sup> Despite his unease Zangwill accepted the JPS' commission. The resulting work, *The Children of the Ghetto* would, as Zangwill had hoped, appeal to a broad, cosmopolitan audience. Yet ironically, as we shall soon see, the book's greatest appeal proved to be its intense Jewish character. Indeed, despite Zangwill's desire to create a work of art which expressed some universally accepted truth about the human condition, the publication of *Children of the Ghetto* would lead to the public perception of Zangwill as an unbiased, yet inside, observer into a unique and distinct way of life. As Meri-Jane Rochelson has observed, the novel would establish Zangwill's reputation as the "foremost interpreter of the Jewish community in the English speaking world."<sup>11</sup>

The novel Zangwill produced for the JPS was a two volume exploration of Jewish life in England. Sulzberger had requested that Zangwill create a Jewish version of Mary Ward's *Robert Elsmere*, a best-selling, English novel which addressed the need to adapt traditional religion to the modern world. In his two volumes Zangwill attempted to do just that while still paying homage to the

significance of traditional ghetto culture. The first volume, *Children of the Ghetto*, offered a detailed yet romanticized view of the Jews of London's East End ghetto, while the second, *Grandchildren of the Ghetto*, provided a more cynical assessment of the Jewish bourgeoisie and their struggles with acculturation and Jewish identity. Though both volumes were published simultaneously, it was the first book, *The Children of the Ghetto*, which seems to have generated the most popular and critical interest in America.<sup>12</sup>

Structurally *Children of the Ghetto* was a series of vignettes each of which revealed some of the many character types that composed Jewish life in London while concomitantly telling the story of Reb Shmuel, Rabbi of the largest congregation in the ghetto, and his daughter Hannah. One evening at a party, a friend jokingly asks Hannah to marry him and she, in jest, accepts. According to Jewish law, however, the proposal and acceptance in front of a witness means that Hannah is in fact married and must get a divorce, which she does. Sadly, when Hannah falls in love with, and agrees to marry, David Brandon, a non-observant Jew who has returned to London after seeking his fortune in South Africa, her father objects, not because the young man is non-observant, but rather because he is a descendant of the Jewish priestly caste (a Cohen) and according to Jewish law cannot marry a divorced woman. Hannah must choose between love for the traditions of her father and her love for David. Ultimately she rejects David, when, at the Passover Seder, she refuses to follow through with a planned elopement.<sup>13</sup>

Artistically speaking, the literary critics of the day found Zangwill's work to be lacking. "Children of the Ghetto is interesting, but unsatisfactory as a work of art," wrote one critic, "The novel contains realistic characters and incidents but

lacks composition and cohesion.”<sup>14</sup> A brief review of the novel in *The Atlantic* also noted that *Children of the Ghetto* suffered from certain structural deficiencies which made it seem more like a “collection of sketches and studies [rather] than a continuous narrative.”<sup>15</sup> Other notices observed that the “construction of [its] story is by no means free from criticism,” and that the book lacked a “plot or any real development of character.”<sup>16</sup>

If the success of *The Children of the Ghetto* had depended on its author’s skills as a literary artist, then, it would have likely failed. Ironically, though, the book proved a tremendous success. Indeed, three years after its initial publication, the American publishing firm Macmillan and Co. published the book in a one volume edition, making *Children of the Ghetto*, the first JPS work to be reprinted by a general, commercial press. The reason for the book’s commercial appeal was that critics in America and England, as well as members of the American public, both Jewish and non-Jewish, applauded Zangwill’s work, not for its aesthetic achievements, but rather as a work of ethnography. Reviews of *Children of the Ghetto* argued that the novel was not merely a work of fiction but rather an insider’s study of Jewish life, a book which brought to light a previously mysterious and unknown world. “Mr. Zangwill seems to have found his own in the study of the Jewish life to which he himself is no stranger,” wrote Arthur Waugh.<sup>17</sup> Other reviews of the book similarly marveled at the ability of Zangwill, to bring to life the grim reality of his coreligionists’ life in the ghetto. The *Hartford Courant* raved that “the Jewish nation should be proud to claim this author and his book,” which depicted a world “so real that we feel and touch and shrink from its wretchedness.”<sup>18</sup>

This claim that despite its artistic faults *Children of the Ghetto* offered an objective view of life in London's Jewish ghetto would become a frequent theme in reviews of the novel, as well as Zangwill's other Jewish themed works, elevating his reputation as a writer, thinker, and spokesman for Jewish peoples and causes. A critic for the American magazine, *Outlook* argued that not only had Zangwill provided an insider's perspective into Jewish life, but that in so doing he had revolutionized the literary portrayal of Jews. His work was something wholly new. An 1894 column in the magazine asserted that,

From the day of Shylock and the Jew of Malta to that of Daniel Deronda the Jew has been a familiar figure in English literature; and yet in all that treatment he has received, whether sympathetic or contemptuous, there has always been a touch of conventionality. It is hardly too much to say that Mr. Zangwill is the first to break away from the beaten track and to present a fresh and independent study of Jewish life. We have, for the first time, in his work the point of view of no outsider, but, on the contrary, of one thoroughly at home among the people and the scenes he describes, yet broad enough in culture and worldly experience to regard them dispassionately.<sup>19</sup>

Here again we see the reviewer stress Zangwill's reputation as both an insider and an unbiased observer.

This interpretation of Zangwill's novel as a dispassionate insider's view of Jewish ghetto life would lead some critics to argue that the book was not, in fact, a novel at all, but rather an educational tool. A review in *The Critic* observed that *The Children of the Ghetto* "may be called a thesaurus of information upon the daily life of those misunderstood, and therefore, traduced, fellow-mortals who keep up Talmudic and Cabalistic Judaism right in the heart of modern London, the capital of Protestantism."<sup>20</sup> While another piece called the book "a cyclopedia of London Jewry cast in the form of narrative."<sup>21</sup>

Critics and pundits in the American Jewish press similarly perceived *Children of the Ghetto* as a work of ethnography or social science. For a literary critic from New York's *Jewish Messenger* this fact proved to be the book's greatest flaw. "Zangwill's 'Children of the Ghetto,'" he wrote, "is in many respects a remarkable and brilliant piece of writing. Though somewhat pedantic with an unnecessary display of scholarship and the overuse of technical and scientific words."<sup>22</sup> By contrast Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, a founder of the American Reform Movement and editor of the movement's organ, *The American Israelite*, applauded Zangwill's approach. Shortly after the novel's American release, Wise wrote an editorial in the *Israelite* in which he proclaimed that,

He [Zangwill] is not only witty sarcastic and truthful; he is more than that; he is an eminent psychologist looking into the very hearts of his characters, and possesses the descriptive [sic] power to present his character [sic] with their motives, the beautiful and the ugly, the noble and ignoble and to impart them into life and motion.<sup>23</sup>

According to Wise, Zangwill's artistry and his ability to dispassionately interpret Jewish ghetto life rendered him "perhaps the most eminent of Israelites." This perception of Zangwill as a dispassionate, yet internal, observer of Jewish life would even lead to an invitation at the 1893 Columbian Exposition's Congress of Religions to present a paper entitled, "The History of Domestic and Inner Social Life of the Jews at Various Periods," an invitation which Zangwill declined.<sup>24</sup>

#### Ubiquity and Reputation, 1893-1898

As Zangwill's reputation as an expert on Jewish affairs grew, so too did his literary ubiquity. From 1893 until 1898 he published three more Jewish-themed works, *Ghetto Tragedies* (1893), *King of the Schnorrers* (1894), and *Dreamers of the Ghetto* (1898). In and of themselves, the books might have significantly



advanced Zangwill's ubiquity, but since each opus was a collection of short stories, Zangwill further increased his visibility either through the republication or advance publication of the books' constituent stories in popular periodicals and newspapers of the day. Several stories from *Ghetto Tragedies* appeared in the popular periodical *McClure's* as well as in the *Los Angeles Times*, while pieces from *King of the Schnorrers* were republished in *Outlook* magazine, *Current Literature*, and *Zion's Herald*. And a number of stories which would comprise Zangwill's critically acclaimed *Dreamers of the Ghetto* appeared in *Cosmopolitan* in advance of the book's publication. A non Jewish themed novel by Zangwill, *The Master*, was serialized in *Harper's Weekly*. Nor was Zangwill's literary output in America limited to works of fiction. Within a year of the publication of *Children of the Ghetto* Zangwill served as a critic and columnist for several American magazines, as well, either writing specifically for particular American periodicals or republishing his British columns in American magazines. In 1893 he began a monthly column on literature in *The Cosmopolitan*, and in 1894 the American magazine, *The Critic*, began republishing his "Without Prejudice" column from the London periodical, *Pall Mall Magazine*, under the heading "Men, Women, and Books." And other magazines such as *The Chap*, *Current Literature*, and *The North American Review* occasionally offered their own Zangwill columns or republished his existing contributions in their own editions. This increase in Zangwill's visibility on the American literary scene led one magazine to note that not only had Zangwill achieved "rapid acceptance as a literary artist," but that his name appeared "incessantly in current journalism."<sup>25</sup>

Zangwill's increasing literary ubiquity helped expand his reputation as well, establishing him not only as an author of, and expert on, Jewish subjects, but also

as a prominent cultural critic and author of general interest fiction. Advertisements for the above cited magazines often made prominent mention of Zangwill, clearly establishing the author as an important voice in American and world literary culture. Ads for *The Cosmopolitan*, for example, hailed Zangwill as one of the "eight ...most famous critics of the world,"<sup>26</sup> including him in a list of such prominent figures as German novelist Ferederich von Spielhagen, American essayist Agnes Repplier, and Scottish author and essayist Andrew Lang. *Cosmopolitan* also went to great lengths to promote their publication of Zangwill's fiction. In an oft repeated ad for the magazine's December 1895 edition, Zangwill and a prominent list of authors including Robert Louis Stevenson were promoted as contributors to the strongest "array of fiction ever...presented in any magazine."<sup>27</sup>

Ads for *The Critic* similarly lauded Zangwill as an important literary figure, one who legitimized and strengthened the magazine's reputation as an important literary periodical. These advertisements cited a review of the magazine in the December edition of *The Outlook* which stated that

The Critic has always been interesting, but of late years it has shown many signs of increasing prosperity and of widening editorial grasp. We have commented on the excellence of literary correspondence from London, Boston, Chicago and elsewhere, and on its capital special articles. It is now publishing at frequent intervals very interesting familiar talks books and people from the pen of Mr. Zangwill.<sup>28</sup>

What is particularly noteworthy about this advertisement, which was reprinted in *Literary World*, *The New York Times*, *The Chap* and in other publications, is not necessarily the comments on Zangwill, but rather that Zangwill was, in fact, the only person promoted. In short *The Critic* used Zangwill and his reputation as *the* selling point in advertising the success and standing of its magazine.

Indeed, *The Critic's* use of Zangwill's column further reinforces the author's importance. Largely a collection of unattributed literary reviews, Zangwill was one of only four writers who received a byline in the magazine—the other three were correspondents from Boston, Chicago, and London who posted small dispatches on local literary happenings. By contrast, Zangwill's expansive columns, reprints from the *Pall Mall*, could run for several pages and addressed a wide variety of topics ranging from medieval poetry to the proliferation of global exhibitions (such as Chicago's Colombian Exposition). In short, Zangwill's was the most prominent voice in the magazine.<sup>29</sup>

The sudden growth of Zangwill's ubiquity and reputation in fields unrelated to Jewish themes did not in any way infringe upon the continued growth of his status as an interpreter of Jewish life and Judaism. In 1895, the *North American Review* republished one of Zangwill's well received lectures as an essay entitled "The Position of Judaism." Zangwill's treatise promoted Judaism and Jewish thought as the foundation of the Judeo-Christian and Islamic conceptions of God, a notion, he claimed, which was merely advanced by individual prophets such as Jesus and Mohammed to the Gentile world. "There is no God but God," Zangwill wrote, "and Israel is his prophet; not Moses, not Christ, not Mohammed, but Israel, the race in whom God was revealed." For Zangwill, Judaism's system of laws, centered on the "here and now" rather than in some world to come, proved the most modern of worldviews, an exemplar for modern social behavior and thought, a sociological system "raised to religion, so that obedience is rendered, not to cold hygienic laws, but to warm religious feeling."<sup>30</sup>

There is much to explore in Zangwill's essay. As his first non-fictional statement about Jews and Jewish life in American print culture, we may reasonably consider the essay the author's first prophetic message, a forceful assertion about the centrality of Judaism in western culture and the essential Jewish character of the Abrahamic faiths. What is more, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, his assertions about Judaism and Jewish thought predate similar assessments of the Hebraic contribution to western civilization from several prominent twentieth-century American Jewish thinkers. Most notably, Horace Kallen would write several significant articles in 1909 and 1910 which echoed some of Zangwill's insights.<sup>31</sup> For the purposes of this chapter, though, it is essential that we consider the way in which this work advanced Zangwill's fame, to understand how the publication of "The Position of Judaism" affected the author's reputation and ubiquity. In this particular instance, it is difficult to disentangle the two phenomena.

With its confident tone and sweeping assessments of the Jewish past, present, and future, the very publication of the essay, in some sense furthered Zangwill's reputation as an expert on all things Jewish. A review in *The Critic* took note of this when it observed that the essay was "remarkable for its grasp and sweep—the work of a true son of the race whose genius is for religion."<sup>32</sup> As we have seen, though, Zangwill's column was a prominent feature in *The Critic* and so any of its laudatory statements about his work should likely be viewed with a certain level of skepticism. Indeed, it is impossible to know for certain whether or not Zangwill himself wrote the magazine's review of his essay. It is worth noting, however, that "The Position of Judaism" was republished, either in part or whole, in a number of other periodicals and newspapers including *The Independent*, *Current*

*Literature*, and *The American Israelite*. Indeed, in the *Israelite* Zangwill's essay was published in its entirety, serialized over two issues. If such evidence does not definitively demonstrate the continued development of Zangwill's reputation, it certainly makes clear his persistent ubiquity in American print culture on Jewish subjects.

If the publication of "The Position of Judaism" did not definitively advance Zangwill's reputation as an interpreter of Jewish life and Jewish subjects, it is still worth noting that the release of his essay occurred just months before the 1895 Macmillan reprint of his 1892 novel, *The Children of the Ghetto*, a work which surely reinforced his *bona fides* as an expert on Jewish ghetto life. As previously noted, the novel was the first work produced by the Jewish Publication Society of America—a subscription based service—to be republished by a general release mainstream press. Through its advertising, Macmillan further enforced Zangwill's role as an expert on Jewish issues. Ads for the novel applauded Zangwill's grasp and understanding of ghetto life, noting that "Mr. Zangwill presents a most graphic and comprehensive picture of the little-known details of everyday Jewish life."<sup>33</sup>

Advertising for the Macmillan edition furthered the belief that the book was a compendium of Jewish ghetto life by noting the inclusion of a glossary of Yiddish terms written by Zangwill. Prior to this, the author had resisted the inclusion of a glossary in his work and did not contribute to the list which appeared in the JPS edition. This likely reflected his discomfort with the use of the language, which Zangwill and many acculturated Jews dismissively referred to as jargon. Indeed, as Rochelson has observed, "In the chapters for which comparison is possible, there is considerably less Yiddish in every edition of the published novel than appeared in

the typescript draft sent to Judge [Mayer] Sulzberger."<sup>34</sup> But ultimately, with the publication of the Macmillan edition Zangwill conceded to his American publisher and produced a glossary, a fact that Macmillan and Company made note of in their advertisements.<sup>35</sup>

Throughout the mid 1890s, Israel Zangwill's ubiquity and reputation were further enhanced by the publication in several American periodicals of a number of short biographies. These were brief articles ranging from a few paragraphs to a few pages which described the author's academic and literary careers as well as his personality and even his general appearance. Such pieces appeared in a number of organs ranging from magazines for general distribution, such as *Harper's Bazaar* and *Lipincott's Monthly* to specifically Jewish papers such as *The American Hebrew* and *The Reform Advocate*, a Chicago-based paper published by the iconoclastic Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch. Meri-Jane Rochelson has noted that these pieces recounted a "rags to riches" tale, a popular form in the celebrity profile genre. These stories, Rochelson tells us, presented Zangwill's life as a struggle to emerge from the poverty of the London ghetto and enter into "an honorable place in English letters." To be sure such descriptions do exist in American accounts of Zangwill's life. Yet a closer reading of these texts reveals another significant narrative strain, one in which Zangwill is portrayed as a man so engrossed in his study and writing, and so committed to his cause, that he paid little attention to his surroundings or his personal appearance. In an oft reprinted article from *The New York Observer*, we learn that Zangwill would amble about the streets of London "with his overcoat-pockets stuffed full of manuscript, proof sheets, and press-clippings." This same piece noted that "One of his charms is his air of helplessness. He strays about Paris

in the middle of the street rather than on the sidewalk in constant danger of being rundown by the omnipresent Parisian cocher.”<sup>36</sup>

These brief biographies make clear, though, that it was precisely Zangwill’s intense commitment to writing, oftentimes at the exclusion of other interests and needs, which rendered him such an important author on Jewish life. In so doing, such articles make clear what I earlier termed the American Jewish idea of Zangwill, they depict a self-assured, and deeply committed champion for Jewish peoples and causes who would speak the truth about Jews and Jewish issues regardless of the consequences. In a frequently recounted story of Zangwill’s early academic career, for example, we read of his firing as an instructor from the Rothschild sponsored Jews’ Free School in London. “It was reported that some of his [Zangwill’s] opinions brought him into collision with the authorities. A failure to meet their views on certain matters led to his resignation from the Free School staff.” What is more, the author’s own words helped advance this idea of Zangwill. In one interview Zangwill noted “at the very beginning of my literary career I was much criticized by the Jews for writing about the Jews as they were. Now I am a Jew myself, and I admire the Jews, but this is no reason why I should idealize my people in literature...” Zangwill’s devotion to the truth about Jewish people, one biography argued, was the great strength of his writing. Though he had written in newspapers and magazines, and even demonstrated some talent as a playwright, “it is as a novelist that the name of Israel Zangwill will go down in posterity.” His pictures of Jewish life “are models of accuracy. This is above all a recommendation for Zangwill’s work...he shows the actual Jew as he is: not the Jew of Shakespeare

nor the Jew of Dickens...nor of any other writer. His work might be described as a living photograph, if such a thing were possible."<sup>37</sup>

And so, by the mid 1890s, Israel Zangwill's name became synonymous with the study of Jewish ghetto life. Mayer Sulzberger, for example, noted the JPS' desire to publish more English language, Jewish fiction by proclaiming that the society hoped to publish works by "the Zangwills and the lesser Zangwills." In November of 1895 Mayer's cousin Cyrus Sulzberger, a prominent member of New York's Jewish community, asked Zangwill to donate an autographed copy of one of his books for sale at a charity fundraiser. In his request to Zangwill, Sulzberger noted that "there is no living author in whom the Jews of our city are more interested than in you, and any of your volumes containing your autograph would be eagerly sought."<sup>38</sup> An 1896 review of American Yiddishist and author Abraham Cahan anticipated that one day Cahan would become "an American Zangwill." And in that same year a Chicago resident, in response to the rules of a JPS fiction competition which required that all manuscripts include the author's name and address, observed that, "Involuntarily the most impartial tribunal will be in favor of a manuscript, for instance, above the name of Zangville [sic], versus one signed simply by X.Y. Costa."<sup>39</sup>

Clearly many in America knew the name of Zangwill and of his reputation before he ever set foot in the country. By the mid 1890s he had established significant standing in the United States as a man of letters, and the American Jewish idea of Zangwill as a courageous advocate for Jewish peoples and causes had begun to take root. Indeed, by 1899 Zangwill's reputation in the broader



literary world would pale in comparison to his far more compelling status as an author of, and expert on, Jewish issues and peoples.

### Zangwill in America: 1898 and 1899

As seen earlier, Israel Zangwill had hoped that his reputation as an author would move beyond the parochialism of race, nation, tribe, or religion. And clearly in the mid 1890s his increasing literary ubiquity enabled Zangwill's repute to move beyond such strictures. Still, there were limits to the extent to which America's cultural elite would tolerate Zangwill's engagement in the world of cultural and literary criticism. These limits would become quite clear during his first two visits to the United States at the close of the 1890s. His initial trip occurred in the fall of 1898 for a lecture tour sponsored by the renowned promoter Major James B. Pond. This was followed by another journey to America one year later to assist in producing the stage version of "The Children of the Ghetto." In 1898, following his critical assessment of the English speaking stage, Zangwill's reputation as a man of letters would come under sharp attack by American critics and the theatrical community. These same figures would similarly dismiss the 1899 dramatization of "The Children of the Ghetto" as a work devoid of dramatic or artistic merit. By contrast the deference paid to Zangwill as a widely acknowledged expert on Jewish affairs makes clear the depth and strength of his reputation in that field. This despite the fact that Zangwill offered a frank and critical assessment of American Jewry on his first trip and the 1899 production of "Children of the Ghetto" would prove controversial to many American Jews.

Before contrasting these two moments of critical reception, though, it is worth recalling that in the closing years of the nineteenth century, Israel Zangwill's

status as a cultural critic was no less prominent than his reputation as an expert on Jewish issues. Indeed, the promotional materials created for Zangwill's American speaking tour made no direct mention of his reputation in Jewish matters. Instead, such ephemera promoted Zangwill's standing as an "Eminent Lecturer, Novelist, and Critic."<sup>40</sup> In the intervening years between the 1892 release of *Children of the Ghetto* and his arrival in America in the fall of 1898, Zangwill's literary ubiquity helped cultivate his reputation as both an author of general, non-ethnic fiction and as an important literary, cultural, and theatrical critic. He had published four books'; two of them, *King of the Schnorrers* and *Dreamers of the Ghetto*, were collections of previously serialized, Jewish themed short stories, and the other two *Merely Mary Ann* and *The Master* were novels with no Jewish focus at all. Also during those same years Zangwill had become a widely recognized cultural critic with bylines in two major, American periodicals. His observations in these two columns, "Men, Women, and Books" and his monthly contribution to *The Cosmopolitan* commented on all manner of literary topics, including the English speaking stage. As early as 1891, Zangwill had served as a well known and well respected theatrical critic, not only reviewing specific plays, but offering broader critiques about the stage in general. Two of these pieces, a meditation on the relationship between the theatrical critic and the play-going public, and a condemnation of the proliferation of sex farces on the English stage, had been reprinted in his 1896 book, *Without Prejudice*.<sup>41</sup>

Responses to Israel Zangwill's work in *Without Prejudice* fully recognized his status as a critic. In 1896, *The San Francisco Chronicle* hailed Zangwill's criticism as "strong, original, and brilliant." In that same year *The Watchman* called Zangwill

one of the most “conspicuously able critics of the time.” Zangwill even received similar acclaim on his arrival in America in August of 1898, a little more than two months before his attackers would challenge his reputation as a critic. In the August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1898 edition of *The New York Times* we read that *Without Prejudice* had done much to establish Zangwill’s critical reputation as a “heavy hitter.”<sup>42</sup> Still, Zangwill’s 1898 lecture on, “The Drama as Fine Art,” a powerful critique of commercial theater would bring severe condemnation from members of the press and the theatrical community which ignored or dismissed his earlier accomplishments, depicting Zangwill as devoid of critical expertise or dramatic talent.<sup>43</sup>

Whether or not Zangwill’s assessment of the English speaking stage was correct, his comments created a literary firestorm. One columnist from the *Los Angeles Times* observed that Zangwill’s lecture had created “a tremendous uproar” throughout the nation. Commentary on the lecture, both defending and attacking Zangwill appeared in newspapers throughout the country as well as in nationally distributed periodicals such as *The Literary World* and *Harper’s Bazaar*. Zangwill’s defenders noted that he had not discovered some new scandal, but rather repeated, perhaps in a more biting fashion than necessary, what others had already said both in private and public. His attackers, though, argued that Zangwill had “never gained any special knowledge or reputation as an actor...dramatist, or drama critic.” They believed the comments in his lecture to be “densely ignorant and criminally careless.” Indeed, one drama critic compared Zangwill to the buffoonish Dogberry from Shakespeare’s “*Much Ado About Nothing*” and asserted that Zangwill knew absolutely nothing about contemporary drama. Still others in the theatrical

community believed Zangwill's opinions sprang not from sound critical assessment, but from his own yearnings to see his work performed on the stage. Actor Edward Sothorn opined that clearly "Mr. Zangwill has written a play which he cannot get produced." And producer Charles Frohman suggested that "with a production of a play of his own, Mr. Zangwill would see gleams of hope for the drama."<sup>44</sup>

Of greater significance, however, is the fact that on this same 1898 lecture tour Israel Zangwill would begin his prophetic mission to America's Jews by powerfully criticizing the state of American Judaism and offering prophetic instruction on how to correct its perceived failures. Unlike the theatrical community, though, American Jews would not attack Zangwill's reputation. To be sure, a variety of prominent members of the American Jewish community would challenge Zangwill's assertions, but none of these figures ever challenged his standing as an important observer of Jewish life. Indeed, the level of deference paid to Zangwill, and the general tone of the response to Zangwill's comments indicate the continued strength of his reputation as an expert on Jewish affairs and Jewish peoples.

Zangwill offered his comments on American Judaism on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1898 at a dinner held in his honor by the Judeans, a Jewish cultural society modeled on the British "Maccabeans." In his remarks, he applauded the rabbis of the American Reform movement, then some forty or so years old, for their efforts in constructing a Jewish institutional life and practice in a new land largely devoid of Jewish traditions. But in so doing, Zangwill argued, and in their efforts to model Jewish practice on mainline Protestantism, the rabbis had stripped away much of what was unique to Judaism. Zangwill questioned the Reform movement's recent creation of the Union Prayer book, a work which removed from the Sabbath service such

central Jewish tenets as “chosenness,” the call for the Jewish Messiah, and all mentions of the Jewish yearning to restore a national homeland in Palestine. Employing his biting prophetic style, he admonished American Reformers for their use of English prayers and for modeling their services on the decorous and restrained practices of their Christian counterparts. “If you must have new prayers,” Zangwill proclaimed, “let the congregation pray them. But no! the minister and the choir do all the work. One would almost think Reform Synagogues were Homes for the Dumb [sic].” To be sure, Zangwill offered a great many complimentary and conciliatory remarks as well, asserting that American Jewry contributed much to a renaissance of Jewish scholarship and worship. Still Israel Zangwill’s prophetic admonition and instruction, delivered through his hallmark Zangwillian style, undoubtedly, raised the ire of those on the receiving end of his commentary.<sup>45</sup>

Still, the leaders and other public figures of American Jewry continued to pay deference to Israel Zangwill’s significant fame and reputation. Rabbi Emil Hirsch, for example, the iconoclastic leader of Chicago’s oldest reform congregation, fully concurred with much of Zangwill’s speech. While Isaac Mayer Wise, leader of the American Reform Movement, and one who would surely have had reason to take offense at Zangwill’s assessment of American reform, made no mention of Zangwill’s comments at all. On the contrary, Wise even called on congregations and other Jewish institutions throughout America to “tax themselves a little above common” to raise money for Zangwill’s \$500 lecture fees so that they might hear and see this “noted coreligionist.”<sup>46</sup>

Others argued that though Zangwill was surely an expert on Jewish affairs, he was not yet familiar with American Jewry and American Jewish history, and therefore could not accurately assess the community. Writing in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania's *The Jewish Criterion*, for example, Rabbi Samuel Greenfield asserted that Zangwill's assessment of American reform came from a fairly limited sampling of East Coast congregations, which Greenfield concurred were devoid of Jewish spirit. Only in the smaller congregations of the West, Greenfield argued, would Zangwill see the true, heartfelt spirit of American Reform Judaism. "In England no notion of the true situation in American Jewish life can be obtained," Greenfield wrote. "Please tell us, Mr. Zangwill, what you think of us after you have seen a few more segments in the circle which will bring you back home again."<sup>47</sup>

It is important to note that even in Greenfield's dissent, there was a significant sense of respect for Zangwill and his reputation on Jewish matters. The Rabbi did not dismiss Zangwill's opinions or his standing. Indeed, he was eager for Zangwill to return to a discussion of American Reform once he had time to observe American Jewish life. After all, Israel Zangwill's observation of the London Ghetto had resulted in his widely acclaimed Jewish-themed novels and stories, works which many believed to be far more successful as ethnography than as fiction. It should come as no surprise, then, that Greenfield wished for Zangwill to return to the subject of American reform after some time for observation.

Zangwill would return to America in 1899 to assist in producing the stage version of "The Children of the Ghetto." As with his visit the previous year, Zangwill's reputation in the field of drama was condemned by New York's theatrical community while concomitantly his status as an expert on Jewish matters remained

intact. Indeed, in some sense one can mark 1899 as a turning point in the American reception of Zangwill. Though he would continue to write plays and novels on non-Jewish themes throughout much of his life, Zangwill's American fame, that is his reputation and his ubiquity in the United States, would from this point forward center around his status as an expert on Jewish affairs.

By some accounts, the 1899 production of *The Children of the Ghetto* was Israel Zangwill's response to earlier claims that he lacked any competence as a dramatic critic and dramatist. In two separate reviews in the New York based *American Hebrew*, the paper speculated that Zangwill wrote the play "practically upon a literary wager to demonstrate that he could construct a drama as well as criticise *the* drama [sic]." The reviewers at the *Hebrew* believed that Zangwill had won that wager. "Whatever differences of opinion there may exist concerning the Zangwill play..."they wrote, "there can be little doubt at all but that the author has proven his ability to write a play as well as to criticize one." The *New York Times* concurred with the *Hebrew's* assessment of the play. Even going so far as to argue that "The Children of the Ghetto" served as a far better vehicle for Zangwill to articulate his critique of the stage than his earlier lecture, observing that, "Mr. Zangwill's fine appreciation of the drama as an art is much more clearly revealed in his first play than it was in his smart lectures."<sup>48</sup>

Most prominent New York drama critics, however, disagreed. In a number of lengthy reviews which made extensive reference to Zangwill's earlier comments in "The Drama as Fine Art," New York's theatrical reviewers panned his work, arguing that not only did it lack dramatic structure, but that it was so ethnically specific in its content that it would be of little interest to anyone but other Jews. The most

widely reported of these critiques came from the *New York Herald's* drama critic, Clement Scott, who wrote in part that, "I do not consider Mr. Zangwill's play a masterpiece of any kind [nor is it] the kind of a play that will be accepted as a masterpiece by the great playgoing majority... [Zangwill] fritters away the best part of his play with episodic matter which may be very interesting to a Hebrew audience, but which is wholly uninteresting to a Christian one."<sup>49</sup> This sentiment, which was echoed in a number of reviews, encapsulates in unexpected fashion, the way in which Zangwill's fame would function in American society. In essence such reviews simultaneously condemned and elevated Zangwill's talents, informing the public that Israel Zangwill, the renowned author of Jewish themed essays and fiction, had created a work of ethnography, of particular interest to Jews, but possessing little or no dramatic merit.

Still, Zangwill's 1892 novel and its subsequent 1899 stage production would result in significant attention from numerous non-Jews interested in the cultural and sociological makeup of the Jewish ghetto—particularly the paradigmatic American ghetto of New York's Lower East Side. Despite critical condemnation of the dramatic merits of Zangwill's play, as well as disdain for the play's excessive ethnic specificity, reports of packed houses of Jews and Gentiles in Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, and other sites attest to popular appeal of the play and its subject matter. And as Edna Nahshon has observed, prominent Progressive era activists such as Lincoln Steffens and Norman Hapgood would frequently cite Zangwill as their primary source of knowledge and information on the culture and society of the ghetto. Indeed, in his autobiography, Steffens observed that in the late 1890s he called upon Zangwill to guide him through the Lower East Side—this



despite the fact that Zangwill had precious little prior exposure to the neighborhood.<sup>50</sup>

Among America's Jews the production of *The Children of the Ghetto* would simply reaffirm Zangwill's status as an author of note and a recognized expert in Jewish affairs. As with the release of the novel some seven years earlier, many in the American Jewish community applauded Zangwill's work for its accurate and realistic portrayal of Jewish life. Writing in *The Jewish Criterion*, Rebecca Altman applauded the play for its ability to reveal a hidden world to both assimilated Jews and to Christians. Still others in *The Criterion* applauded Zangwill as a Jewish sage, lauding his detailed knowledge of Jewish texts, proclaiming that "Zangwill is more at home in the highways of the Talmud than some very promising American rabbis."<sup>51</sup> While Rabbi Henry Berkowitz, founder of the Jewish Chautauqua movement commended the play for its ability to reveal "the living drama of Jewish life in all its reality."<sup>52</sup>

As we shall see in subsequent chapters, not everyone in the Jewish community believed Israel Zangwill's play to be salutary. Some Jewish leaders in America feared that an onstage portrayal of the customs and superstitions of the Jewish ghetto would set back the cause of Jewish acculturation and religious reform, resulting in increased anti Jewish prejudice. And yet even those who questioned the benefit of publicly staging the realities of Jewish ghetto life fully recognized Zangwill's importance as an expert on Jewish matters. Indeed, these figures argued, it was precisely because of Zangwill's fame that the stage version of "The Children of the Ghetto" proved so problematic. Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, who only a year earlier had encouraged American Jews to fund generously Zangwill's

lecture tour, lamented the playwright's decision to misuse his "undoubted talents" by making "merchandise" of ghetto customs and Orthodox Jewish rituals. "Mr. Zangwill is a man of much education acquired from books and contact with many men," Mayer wrote. "It is saddening to discover that with it all he has failed to acquire the knowledge of what is required from a gentleman."<sup>53</sup>

But For Rabbi Samuel Schulman, then the assistant of renowned Reform rabbi, Kaufman Kohler at New York's Temple Beth El, Israel Zangwill possessed a far more significant reputation than a mere man of literary talent. Schulman was likely the first American Jew to acknowledge publicly Israel Zangwill as a prophet, and as such Zangwill's theatrical work was obligated to provide more than mere entertainment. Schulman sought prophetic instruction. In his critique of the play, Rabbi Schulman argued that by focusing on the daily goings on of ghetto life, Zangwill had failed to prescribe a liberal, western vision of Judaism's future. And such an omission was an unfortunate mistake coming from a man that Schulman applauded as a prophet and a genius who possessed "a warm Jewish heart."<sup>54</sup>

But in the late 1890s, Israel Zangwill was still hesitant to embrace fully the role of expert, leader, and prophet. Indeed, as late as 1900 he would even reject the notion that he was an expert on Jewish affairs. In 1900 Richard Gottheil, rabbi at New York's Temple Emmanu-El, director of the New York Public Library's Oriental Department, and a close friend of Zangwill's, wrote to Zangwill asking him to contribute to Funk and Wagnall's Jewish Encyclopedia, a massive project which included some of the finest minds in Progressive era Jewish studies. Though he was honored by the request, Zangwill declined, observing that he was not an expert in the Yiddishist literature of the ghetto, Hebrew fiction, and several other important

Jewish topics. Zangwill believed his art—not his knowledge nor his activism, per se—to be his service to his race.<sup>55</sup>

And so quite clearly the contrasts between the way Israel Zangwill's work was received by New York's theatrical community, by America's Jews, and indeed even Zangwill's own perception of his status offers insight into an essential element of reputation, namely the fact that it emerges from public perception rather than any specific factual realities. When, in Shakespeare's *Othello*, Michael Cassio laments the loss of his reputation, Iago reminds him that, "Reputation is an idle and most false imposition; oft got without merit, and lost without deserving: you have lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself such a loser."<sup>56</sup> The critical uproar which emerged from Zangwill's visits to America in 1898 and 1899 demonstrates Iago's point about the public imposition of reputation quite clearly. Zangwill's skills as a critic were no less "strong, original, and brilliant" than they were before his 1898 American speaking tour. Nor was "The Children of Ghetto," which had received tremendous acclaim in Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia, drastically rewritten before its New York premiere. What had changed was the way in which one segment of the public had come to perceive Zangwill's talents and his role in the theatrical and American Jewish communities. Indeed, even key figures in the American Reform Movement, as well as those who took exception to the public performance of Jewish life and ritual in the stage production of "The Children of the Ghetto," could not help but recognize Zangwill's emerging reputation as one of Israel's great geniuses, an expert on, and prophet for, Jewish life and issues of Jewish importance.

Public recognition of Zangwill's status in Jewish affairs would continue to grow in the early twentieth-century, as he became a central figure in the early development of one of the most important movements in the long history of the Jews, namely Zionism. Indeed, his efforts towards the creation of a Jewish homeland would shift public perception of Zangwill from a widely recognized expert on Jewish affairs and causes to a widely recognized Jewish political leader.

#### From Jewish Expert to Jewish Leader: Zangwill as Zionist and Territorialist

Israel Zangwill first met Theodore Herzl, the founder of modern, political Zionism, in November 1895 at the bequest of their mutual friend, Max Nordau. Herzl believed that, because of the British Empire's centrality in global affairs, the political work of his nascent Zionist movement should be located in London. But Herzl was unfamiliar with the city and its Jewry and needed an ally to help introduce him to London's Jewish society. Though not an instant convert to Zionism, Zangwill ably assisted Herzl in establishing a political base in London's Jewish community and by 1901 he joined the Zionist movement, serving as a delegate at the Fifth Zionist Congress in December of that year. "From that point forward," Edna Nahshon has observed, "[Zangwill's] energy, his pen, and his connections were placed with magnanimity and flamboyance at the service of Jewish national renaissance, so much so that he declared he had ceased to be a novelist and had become a Zionist."<sup>57</sup>

Zangwill's official entry into the Zionist movement would receive significant coverage in the American press, both in the broader mainstream as well as the American-Jewish papers. His premiere speech on behalf of Zionism, offered at the 1901, Fifth Zionist Congress, was front page news both in Pittsburgh's *Jewish*

*Criterion* as well as in Philadelphia's *Jewish Exponent*. Indeed, both papers reprinted the speech in its entirety, and his 1903 address to the Sixth Zionist Congress would be reprinted on seven full pages over two separate editions in the *Criterion*. Of greater importance, though, is that within just a year of Zangwill's entrance into the movement, the press depicted him as a central leader in the cause of Jewish nationalism. In April of 1902, for example, the *Criterion* reported that Zangwill was "the spokesman of Zionism." In that same year, Zangwill was listed along with Herzl and Nordau as part of the troika of the Zionist leadership, one of three "Zionist Brilliants!" Indeed on more than one occasion the names Herzl, Nordau, and Zangwill would come to represent the official leadership of the movement.<sup>58</sup>

This was particularly true in the reportage of the 1903 meeting of the Federation of American Zionists in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Coverage by both the local American Jewish paper, the *Criterion*, as well as in the Associated Press, which distributed its report to a host of papers nationwide, noted in its headlines that the "Meeting of the American Federation Receives Greetings from Herzl, Nordau, and Zangwill." This linking of Zangwill with Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement, and Herzl's earliest confidant, Max Nordau, reveals something of Zangwill's reputation as a Zionist activist. As well, the listing of these three men solely through the use of their last names reveals the significant force of all three's reputation and ubiquity. These very same articles, for example, refer to several other prominent British and American Jews such as Benjamin Cohen (a Jewish member of Parliament), Richard Gottheil (prominent New York rabbi, scholar, and President of the Federation of American Zionists), and Sir Francis Montefiore (scion

of one of the most important Jewish families in England). In each of these cases, the press felt obliged to include the first names of these significant figures, while they referred to Herzl, Nordau, and Zangwill, only by their last names. Surely this fact suggests that these men possessed a noteworthy level of fame in early twentieth-century American culture.<sup>59</sup>

1903 would also mark a critical turning point in Zangwill's relationship to the Zionist movement. In April of that year in Kishinev, Bessarabia, a Western province of the Russian empire, a local newspaper accused the region's Jews of killing a Christian child as part of their Passover rituals. This inflammatory use of the ancient "blood libel," sparked a three day pogrom which resulted in the deaths of over forty Jews, as well as the destruction and looting of hundreds of Jewish homes and businesses. The specter of Kishinev profoundly influenced Zangwill's actions and work. Indeed, several years after the event, Zangwill would make the protagonist of his most important play, "The Melting Pot," a survivor of the pogrom who escapes to America after witnessing the murder of his family. The events of Kishinev also convinced Zangwill of the immediate need to find a place of Jewish refuge be it in Palestine or some other site. In his above-cited comments to the Sixth Convention of the Federation of American Zionists, in which he was reported as part of the troika of Zionist leadership, Zangwill observed that,

The Kishineff [sic] massacre has brought home to the blindest the need of a publicly and legally safeguarded home for our unhappy race. When you come to consider where this centralized home should be you will find no place as practicable as Palestine, or at least for a start, its neighborhood.<sup>60</sup>

Like Zangwill, Theodore Herzl hoped for a Jewish homeland in Palestine but recognized that global events demanded an immediate solution to the Jewish

problem, in Russia at least, even if that solution required Jewish refugees to settle outside of *Eretz Israel*.<sup>61</sup>

As early as 1902, Herzl's negotiations with the Ottoman Empire for a Jewish homeland in Palestine had proven so futile and the dream of Zion so distant that he decided to approach the British about the creation of a Jewish colony in Africa. And in April of 1903 his efforts in London seemed to bear fruit. In response to the horrors of Kishinev, England's Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain proposed to Herzl the creation a semiautonomous region on the Gwas Ngishu plateau in British East Africa for Jewish settlement. When Herzl revealed Chamberlain's offer to the Sixth Zionist Congress in August of 1903, Zangwill spoke in favor of the proposal. In his speech to the Congress Zangwill made clear that, though he did not see East Africa as the ultimate consummation of the Zionist cause, he did believe that it proved a particularly useful, temporary (if still somewhat long-term) solution to the Jewish problem in Russia.<sup>62</sup>

But few in the World Zionist Organization supported the Uganda Scheme, as the East Africa offer was sometimes called, particularly those representatives from Eastern Europe who argued that Palestine alone was the sole acceptable site for a Jewish homeland. And Herzl was severely criticized for his willingness to seek a Jewish state outside of the Middle East. Such criticism, Zangwill claimed, contributed to Herzl's death from heart failure in 1904. In a 1905 speech on the East Africa offer he exclaimed:

Herzl is dead: he worked for his people as no man ever worked for them since Judas Maccabaeus. His people called him dreamer and demagogue, and towards the end men of his own party called him traitor and broke his heart. He worked for his people: they paid him his wages and he has gone home.<sup>63</sup>

Zangwill's hyperbole notwithstanding, Herzl did die in 1904, and the following year, the members of the Seventh Zionist Congress, formally rejected the Uganda Scheme.<sup>64</sup>

Following the rejection of the East Africa offer, Zangwill contacted Lucien Wolf, an English Jewish journalist and member of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the main representative body of Anglo Jewry. Wolf was an opponent of political Zionism, but did support the creation of Jewish colonies in the Diaspora. In August of 1905 Zangwill and Wolf met to discuss the Uganda Scheme, and in subsequent correspondence between the two we learn that both supported the creation of a Jewish colony in British East Africa. Wolf had objected to any specifically "Jewish national homeland," that is to say a state which ghettoized Jews, preserving Jewish customs and law as the basis for governance. Though Zangwill's literary works suggest his nostalgia for the ghetto, he too recognized the need for a modern Jewish polity. Both concurred that a self governing Jewish territory should be based on a preponderance of Jews in the region rather than British legislative fiat, and both concurred that the new government should be formed on a modern, democratic basis rather than some earlier biblical ideal or Eastern European *Kehilla* structure. This basic agreement between Zangwill and Wolf would lead to the formation of the Jewish Territorial Organization (ITO), an organization dedicated to "obtaining a large tract of territory (preferably within the British Empire) wherein to found a Jewish Home of Refuge," and to the elevation of Zangwill to the ITO presidency<sup>65</sup>

Israel Zangwill's ascendancy to the ITO presidency further advanced his reputation in America as a Jewish political leader. Indeed, after Herzl's death,



some in America viewed Zangwill as the central leader of the Jewish nationalist cause. A 1905 article in the *The Los Angeles Herald*, for example, recounts the comments of A.W. Voorsanger, editor of San Francisco's Jewish paper, *The Emmanu-El*. Voorsanger, an non-Zionist, argued that "Israel Zangwill is a brilliant man and the Jews of America are cognizant of that fact, but they do not believe in the practicability of the scheme he is now advocating in this country...which is to repeople Palestine with those of his race."<sup>66</sup> A 1905 letter to *The New York Times* questioned the need to implement "Mr. Zangwill's plan" to send "the Jews back to the Holy Land..." And in 1906, when New York's premiere Reform Temple, Emmanu-El, offered their pulpit to the young Zionist rabbi Judah Magnes *The New York Times* described Magnes as "a follower of Israel Zangwill, an earnest Zionist." This despite the fact that Magnes was not at all a Territorialist but rather a political Zionist committed to the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.

Indeed, the above cited examples reveal one of the great ironies of Israel Zangwill's fame in America, namely the contrast between his self-perception and the public's perception of him. For each of the previously cited reports depict Zangwill as the leader of the Palestinian oriented Zionist movement at precisely the moment Zangwill promoted and institutionalized the Territorialist search for a Jewish land outside of Palestine.<sup>67</sup>

Another telling, and entertaining, example of this shift in the perception of Zangwill can be seen in a 1904 cartoon in *The New York Times*. The drawing, which accompanied a lengthy interview with Zangwill about Chamberlain's East Africa offer, depicted Zangwill as a latter day Moses. He is shown sitting in a fold out chair in front of a tent and the accompanying caption reads, "On the Road to

Zion—A Pleasant Halt by the Wayside.” This depiction is a stark contrast to earlier descriptions of Zangwill in the 1890s as an absent-minded professor. Indeed, the written description of Zangwill in the *Times*’ article offers an entirely new sense of his appearance and demeanor. “Force, reserve, and the sobriety of his race mark Mr. Zangwill,” the author wrote. “The type of his long head, his large nose, his high forehead in general is similar to that of Disraeli but the floridity of the latter is entirely lacking in both dress and manner.”<sup>68</sup> Such depictions of Zangwill as a sober and somber leader and prophet of Israel appeared in a host of publications advancing not only Zangwill’s reputation but his ubiquity as well. This level of public awareness of Zangwill’s leadership status prompted Joseph Jacobs, Australian folklorist, Cambridge graduate, and a faculty member at New York’s Jewish Theological Seminary, to write to Zangwill that, “You are filling the world with your ITO exploits.”<sup>69</sup>

Israel Zangwill’s prominence in the cause of Jewish nationalism would even color the press coverage of his 1903 marriage to Edith Ayrton. Ayrton, the daughter of British physicist William E. Ayrton was not Jewish, but had been under the care and influence of William’s second wife, the Jewish author and poetess Herta Marks, since Edith was ten years old. As Joseph Udelson has observed, with the exception of a few internal comments in the Zionist movement, there was little or no public reaction to Zangwill’s having married outside of his faith. This is likely due, in part, to Edith’s association with Marks. Indeed, in its initial report on Zangwill’s engagement, *The American Hebrew* made much of the Marks’ family, observing that “The stepmother of Miss Ayrton...belongs to a Jewish family of striking intellectual ability.”<sup>70</sup> But of equal importance is the fact that Edith would

prove to be a passionate backer of Jewish nationalism. Indeed, the few press reports of the marriage which even bother to note Edith's status as a non-Jew make significant mention of her commitment to the nationalist cause. *The American Hebrew*, for example, noted that "Miss Ayrton claims to be an ardent Zionist and has declared that in the event of a Jewish State being established, either in East Africa or Palestine, she would accompany her husband should he decide to settle there. She is described as having complete literary and spiritual sympathy with Mr. Zangwill's work."<sup>71</sup> While several years later in 1908, *The Jewish Criterion* described Edith as a modern day Ruth, a reference to the biblical story of the Moabite woman who marries into a Jewish family and becomes a part of the ancestral line of King David.<sup>72</sup>

For some, Zangwill's marriage enhanced his standing as a Jewish leader, granting his reputation a level of masculine strength, which was undoubtedly an essential component in the gendered environment of Progressive era American politics. In December 1904, the Zangwills travelled to America to garner support for the East Africa offer. Upon his arrival in the States, *The Pittsburg Gazette* effused, "With Zionism in his heart...with a beautiful bride on his arm. Israel Zangwill is in America...for the first time in a triplicate role. Prophet, poet and young husband—could any combination of masculine personalities be embodied in a trinity which would offer more to the imagination?"<sup>73</sup> The article went on to proclaim Zangwill the prophet of Zionism and reprinted over two full pages an interview in which Zangwill offered his expertise on the prospects of a Jewish state in Palestine and East Africa.<sup>74</sup>

It is important to note that Israel Zangwill's emergent reputation as a Jewish political leader was not solely the public perception of the press and the general public. In fact, the legitimacy of Zangwill's reputation as a leader can be seen in the way in which some of America's most prominent Jews either participated in ITO or partnered with Zangwill on resettlement work. The American leadership of the Territorialists included Secretary of Commerce, Oscar Straus—the first Jew to ever hold a cabinet post in the American government—as well as several members of the Board of Trustees of the Jewish Publication Society of America. In 1907, Jacob Schiff, the prominent American banker and one of the leading figures in Progressive era American Jewry, would work with closely with Zangwill and ITO on the Galveston Plan, a resettlement effort to redirect eastern European immigration from away from the congested cities of America's East Coast towards the Texas port of Galveston, and ultimately the American interior. As President of the ITO, Zangwill oversaw the European end of the Galveston Plan, securing ships, selecting immigrants who might successfully relocate into the American West, and taking care of other functions. Mining mogul, Daniel Guggenheim assisted Zangwill in efforts to assess the feasibility of an ITO colony in Nevada, and prominent New York attorney and co-founder of the American Jewish Committee Louis Marshall, though not officially a supporter of ITO provided Zangwill's movement with legal advice. In short, some of the leading figures of early twentieth-century American Jewry recognized Zangwill's role as an important leader in the search for a Jewish homeland, and supported him in a number of ways.<sup>75</sup>

And so by the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century, Israel Zangwill had established a solid reputation in America as a leader of the Jewish

peoples and an important voice on the issue of Jewish nationalism. What is more, numerous sources, both Jewish and non-Jewish recognized Zangwill as a prophet of the Jewish people. One 1908 report in the non-Zionist *Reform Advocate* sarcastically observed that, "To use a Yiddishism, the Jewish population [of America] are 'licking their fingers' after Zangwill. He is their great hero and a spotless one. Zangwill's public work has shed a glamor around him.[sic]."<sup>76</sup> While another, more complimentary piece in the very same paper noted that, Zangwill's work in Galveston was but his first step in his efforts to help the Jewish refugees of Russia. "Before long he will find other places of shelter for the Jews. It is true he is not building a Jewish state, but he is helping Jews to obtain shelter...[and] safety."<sup>77</sup> This perception of Zangwill as a leader dedicated to the safety of Jewish peoples would significantly influence the ways in which Americans, both Jewish and non-Jewish would understand what is arguably Zangwill's most important work in his long American career, the 1908 -1910 production of his play, "The Melting Pot."

#### "The Melting Pot:" Merging of Literary and Political Reputation

In 1908, Israel Zangwill's literary and political reputations would come together, arguably granting him his most widespread and fame in America. In fall of that year, Zangwill would travel to the United States to premiere his new play "The Melting Pot," his first new work for the stage since he assumed the presidency of the ITO in 1905. Over the next two years, from late 1908-1911, "The Melting Pot" would run throughout the United States, from New York to Los Angeles, from Chicago to San Francisco and to smaller venues as well, such as Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Toledo. And many of the ideas in the play would continue to influence American and American Jewish discourse well beyond its production.

Indeed, as Werner Sollors has observed, whether or not they have seen or read the play, Americans continue to cite “The Melting Pot” in discussions about ethnic interaction, making Zangwill’s work a “rarely read yet universally invoked play.”<sup>78</sup> Subsequent chapters will inquire into Zangwill’s meaning behind the play as well as the public’s interpretations and misinterpretations of the drama. For the purposes of this chapter, though, it is essential to investigate the ways in which the play’s initial run in 1908 and 1911 would enhance Zangwill’s reputation in a number of spheres, as playwright and politician, pundit, prophet, and leader.

Israel Zangwill arrived in America on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1908, less than one month prior to the play’s Washington, D.C. premiere. Upon his arrival and in the weeks leading up to the premiere, Zangwill agreed to a number of interviews, in which he promoted his new play while concomitantly stressing his role as the leader of the ITO. Indeed, in a widely distributed interview for *The New York Sun*, Zangwill claimed that “The Melting Pot” was written as an intellectual exercise to help pass the long months spent waiting for the results of an ITO geographical expedition to North Africa. During that time, Zangwill asserted, he took the time to think about Zionism, Territorialism, and the promise of America. According to Zangwill “The Melting Pot” represented his conclusions on these vitally important topics. And so, in some sense, Zangwill promoted the play not as a mere theatrical diversion, but rather as an important political statement from a widely recognized Jewish leader.<sup>79</sup>

The story of “The Melting Pot,” centers on David Quixano, a survivor of the Kishinev pogroms who came to America with his grandmother, the only other member of the family in Russia to survive the massacre. David is a talented

musician and composer as well as a passionate believer in the ability of America to overcome the racial and national hatreds of European society. Indeed, so great is the promise of the American Melting Pot, that David falls in love with and marries the daughter of the very man who led the pogrom against his village. Through a series of fortuitous connections, David's first major work, the *Sinfonia America*, receives its New York Premiere, and as the play closes David's symphony is played on the roof of a Manhattan *salon*, so that Quixano's music may be heard by all Americans, not just the wealthy WASP patrons of the arts, but by the entire melting pot of New York City. The teeming masses of "Celt and Latin, Slav and Teuton, Greek and Syrian—black and yellow—Jew and Gentile" all of whom would soon be fused together in the American crucible.<sup>80</sup>

The American public's response to Zangwill and his play would reflect the many aspects of his fame—that of author, Jewish expert, and Jewish leader—while offering yet another facet to his substantial reputation, that of American prophet. This marked a distinct departure from earlier characterizations of Zangwill solely as a prophet of Jewish peoples. Indeed, the depiction of Zangwill as an American prophet makes clear his brief success as a writer, critic, and thinker for all peoples, not just Jews—a reputation Zangwill continually desired but rarely received. Reviews of the Washington premiere hailed Zangwill's prophetic vision for America as the city on the hill, the exemplar for the integration of the European masses who flooded America's shores. "The Melting Pot," one reviewer wrote, "comes as a textbook drama with a lesson for all peoples and all communities, but with a special application to America—the America that the prophet would see become a republic of men and a kingdom of God."<sup>81</sup> Another reviewer observed that, "Zangwill, who

is not of ours, who has written the great American play; for he has shown us the white soul of America and interpreted to all lands her message."<sup>82</sup> Leo Kaul writing in Chicago's *Reform Advocate* compared Zangwill's Melting Pot metaphor with the words of the prophet Ezekiel.<sup>83</sup>

Following its Washington premiere, "The Melting Pot" would tour the United States with performances in Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Pittsburgh, two lengthy runs in Chicago and the Midwest, Los Angeles, and other venues throughout the country. As with "The Children of the Ghetto," the New York critics lambasted the play. And while this may have affected its long term fiscal success, it did nothing to dampen national enthusiasm for Zangwill and his ideas. At least two B'nai Brith lodges, one in Philadelphia and the other in Hammond, Indiana, were named in Zangwill's honor. A Melting Pot club was formed in Boston to carry out the play's teachings. And in 1910, the Better Citizenship Association of Portland, Oregon invited Zangwill to participate in their educational initiative "to do away with lawlessness" by educating the public about the inherent goodness of all peoples, a sentiment they believed they shared with Zangwill.<sup>84</sup>

Reception of the play in the American Jewish community was mixed. Many Jews believed that Zangwill's play advocated widespread intermarriage, a prescription that most rabbis and other Jewish representatives rejected. Yet even those who took exception with this perceived meaning of Zangwill's work felt obliged to recognize his considerable reputation as a literary talent and a significant figure in Jewry. Rabbi Leon Harrison of St. Louis, for example, recognized Zangwill as the "the great Anglo-Hebrew genius," while publicly repudiating "The Melting Pot's" call for the Jews to intermarry. The same is true of Jacob Schiff, who



proclaimed in the press that Zangwill's was a great play, "even if I do not agree with the author in his advocacy of intermarriage." Philadelphia rabbi Jacob Landau, protesting the negative response of New York's theatrical critics admitted that he "differed strongly from...Mr. Zangwill's views as expressed in 'The Melting Pot,'" but still recognized Zangwill as the "greatest living Jewish idealist." While American Jewish artist Leo Mielziner wrote to *The New York Times* objecting to Zangwill's "point of view respecting the process of amalgamation of the races" while still recognizing his status as "an artist and a philosopher and a world-recognized literary figure"<sup>85</sup>

Despite these other discursive streams concerning Zangwill's reputation, it was his status as an important leader and thinker in Jewish and American affairs which emerged most prominently in the public response to "The Melting Pot." Not only was this fact explicitly stated, as in *The Washington Herald's* review which proclaimed Zangwill, "a leader among Jews," but this status was also implied through the long list of prominent Americans and American Jews who supported the play. The audience at the play's premiere included such significant figures as, Secretary of State Elihu Root, Secretary of Commerce Oscar Straus, Simon Wolf, Washington, D.C. judge and author of *The American Jew as Soldier and Patriot*, and President Theodore Roosevelt. Indeed the reportage of the Washington debut made much of Roosevelt's appreciation of the play, noting that the President led the applause and at the play's conclusion publicly proclaimed, "That's a great play, Mr. Zangwill, that's a great play." Throughout the run of the play, Zangwill's American producers, Liebler and Co., ran a large advertisement which included endorsements for the play from a wide list of prominent Americans, including

President Roosevelt, author and journalist Hamlin Garland, Jacob Schiff, and noted Chicago Progressive Jane Addams, who applauded Zangwill's work for its "high service" to the American Republic. Clearly the production of "the Melting Pot" enhanced Israel Zangwill's reputation as a major figure in American and American Jewish discourse.<sup>86</sup>

### Beyond "The Melting Pot," 1911-1922

In the years following the American premiere of "The Melting Pot," Zangwill's reputation in America as a central figure on Jewish issues and a political leader would continue to grow and evolve. To be sure, the public perception of Zangwill as an expert on all things Jewish would continue throughout these years, as would his newly forged role as a prophet of American exceptionalism. A May 1914 issue of *The Bookman*, reported on both of these facets of Zangwill's personality, observing that, "By writing in English, Israel Zangwill has not only revealed the tragedy and comedy of his race, he also revealed it to a nation which still took its knowledge of the Jew from the naïveté of Shakespeare's Shylock." While the same article also hailed "The Melting Pot" as the most inspiring picture of America since Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass."<sup>87</sup> Above all, though, in these years preceding Zangwill's 1923 visit to America, a moment so significant in the history of Zangwill's American career and reputation that it warrants its own chapter, Zangwill's reputation would rise to great heights in the Jewish community. He would become an important contributor to the Intercollegiate Menorah Association's fledgling organ, *The Menorah Journal*, not only submitting his own work to the magazine, but also serving as a go-between, providing the journal with important content from

contributors in England, Europe, and even America. Politically, he would continue to advance the cause of Territorialism while concomitantly attempting to speak on behalf of, and raise funds to assist, European Jews affected by the violence and horrors of World War I. All the while, Zangwill would continue to express his opinion on Jewish life and American Jewry in a number of essays and books, thus maintaining not only his significant reputation, but also his widespread, literary ubiquity.

Zangwill's contribution to Henry Hurwitz's *Menorah Journal*—the official organ of the Jewish cultural organization, the Intercollegiate Menorah Society—began with the second number of its inaugural volume in April of 1915. Zangwill's piece, a small but significant poem entitled "For Small Mercies," lamented the position of Poland's Jews who were surrounded by, and victims to, the devastating violence of WWI, while concomitantly offering a withering criticism of Russia, who continued to abuse its Jews even though, by Zangwill's account, some "thrice a hundred thousand [fought] beside their Russian brethren." Of particular concern to Zangwill was England's unwillingness to criticize its Russian ally for these abuses. At the poem's conclusion he applauds the British paper, *The Nation*, as "The one voice in England [who] said these things were so."<sup>88</sup>

"For Small Mercies" was only one small part of Zangwill's much larger contribution to *The Menorah Journal* during its initial years. Zangwill frequently authored articles and poems for the magazine, but of equal importance was his role as a literary intermediary, transferring the work of significant British, European, and even American scholars to *Menorah*. This Zangwill did through his role as a participant in, and organizer of, the Arthur Davis Memorial Lecture series. Davis

was an important Hebraist in late nineteenth-century English Jewry. In the early 1900s Davis brought together a number of England's most knowledgeable Jews to translate the Festival Prayer Book. Zangwill was a contributor to this project, translating a number of prayers including the concluding hymn of the Sabbath service, Adon Olam. Davis died in 1906 and in 1917 the members of the Jewish Historical Society of England joined forces with the collaborators on the Festival Prayer Book translation to create a lecture series in his name. Zangwill was the inaugural Arthur Davis lecturer and a written version of the lecture, "Chosen Peoples," would be published in October 1918 edition of *The Menorah Journal*.<sup>89</sup>

Over the next seven years, from 1918 until 1925, Zangwill would serve as a literary agent of sorts, offering Hurwitz the right of first refusal for the American publication rights of the Arthur Davis Memorial Lecture and using the funds from the sale of publication rights to support the Arthur Davis Memorial Fund, an educational fund meant to foster Jewish learning in England. Through this arrangement with Zangwill, *The Menorah Journal* published a number of articles from such prominent scholars as the Unitarian scholar of Judaic and Talmudic Studies, Rev. Travers Herford, the Grand Rabbi of France, Israel Levi, and the Polish born, American legal scholar Max Radin.<sup>90</sup>

But for Hurwitz and the contributors to *The Menorah Journal*, Israel Zangwill's importance to the journal and the Menorah Movement far exceeded his role as an intellectual intermediary. They viewed Zangwill as one of the most prominent Jewish thinkers and leaders in the world, a Jewish prophet who had an essential message to offer to all peoples associated with Menorah. In August of 1917 Henry Hurwitz wrote to Zangwill's friend and first American benefactor, Mayer

Sulzberger, to seek his assistance in bringing Zangwill to America to speak at the fifth annual convention of the Menorah Society. "One of our most cherished ambitions is to have Mr. Zangwill come over from England as our guest," Hurwitz wrote. "We feel confident that Mr. Zangwill would...be a potent factor in increasing the influence of our ideals."<sup>91</sup> On Sulzberger's advice, Hurwitz sent a cable to Zangwill saying that Jacob Schiff, Mayer Sulzberger and many other prominent Jews urged Zangwill to attend the convention. Hurwitz immediately followed up his cable with a lengthy letter to Zangwill, including the names of some fifty prominent members of the Jewish community who all called on Zangwill to attend. Hurwitz hoped that the list of names would impress upon Zangwill that Hurwitz's request was not merely the "over-enthusiastic desire on the part of a company of young men but the serious and responsible wish of the entire community, all wings of the community...[to] give us all the advantage of your presence and utterance..."<sup>92</sup>

Despite this rather impressive invitation, Zangwill declined to attend the Menorah Convention, citing his work load and his reluctance to leave his family. The response to that initial refusal represents one of the most significant moments in the history of Israel Zangwill's fame in America. The December 1917 issue of *The Menorah Journal* would feature a five and a half page article on the invitation to Zangwill as well as Zangwill's responses. But whereas Hurwitz's original letter to Zangwill only included a list of names of those who urged Zangwill to attend, the article in *Menorah* included testimonials from some of the key figures in American Jewish life, each stressing just how significant Zangwill was to American Jewish discourse and the Menorah ideal. Horace Kallen, the up and coming political philosopher and an important contributor to *The Menorah Journal*, believed that

Zangwill's voice might in some way unify a "divided house of Israel" torn apart over disputes about the nature of Jewish identity and denominationalism in America. Rabbi Max Heller of New Orleans, a central figure in the American Reform Movement hailed Zangwill's commitment to Jewish causes and his significant knowledge of Jewish history and contemporary life. He believed that Zangwill's works and activism made him a true Jewish leader. While Jewish educator and author George Alexander Kohut called Zangwill a latter-day prophet, whose "universal message for Catholic Israel...and whose clarity of vision and gift for leadership entitled[d] him [Zangwill] to preside at a function so momentous in the life of American [Jewry]."<sup>93</sup>

Clearly Israel Zangwill's twenty-five years of writings and activism on behalf of the Jewish people had granted him a remarkable reputation among some of the most prominent leaders of American Jewry. Indeed, as Hurwitz observed in the published invitation, "Rarely has any man been accorded so remarkable a tribute as was recently paid to Israel Zangwill." Still, despite the passionate entreaties of the American Jewish leadership, Zangwill declined the invitation to speak to the fifth annual Menorah Convention. The responsibilities of ITO leadership, his scholarship and the dangers of World War I made Zangwill loath to abandon his work and family even for a brief visit to America.<sup>94</sup>

In the war's aftermath, Zangwill would continue to play an important role in American Jewish discourse, providing critical insight into the mistreatment of Europe's Jews. As Meri-Jane Rochelson has observed, in the last years of Zangwill's career, from the end of WWI until his death in 1926, much of his work and activism focused on the plight of Europe's Jews and the growing problem of European anti-

Semitism. Zangwill frequently and fearlessly upbraided the governments of Europe for their wanton indifference to the abuse of Jews on the continent. As we have already seen, Zangwill's first contribution to *The Menorah Journal* offered a desperate assessment of the plight of European Jewry while critiquing Russia, a member of the Entente powers, for its poor treatment of its Jewish citizens and soldiers, and condemning the authorities in England for their silence on the matter. But Zangwill did not limit his critique to governments and leaders.<sup>95</sup>

In 1920, for example, Zangwill released a collection of essays and poems entitled, *The Voice of Jerusalem*. Within the collection Zangwill reprinted a poem entitled "The Goyim." In some ways the poem reflected an earlier theme found in Zangwill's *The Dreamers of the Ghetto*, namely the pull of Gentile society for Jews living in the Diaspora. Jacob, the protagonist of the poem is enamored of Gentile culture, of the works of Plato, Virgil, Shakespeare, Shelley, Bach Beethoven, Michelangelo and others. He finds Jewish culture to be parochial and wanting, and so he embraces the world of "the Goyim." But towards the end of his life, Jacob realizes the many failings of Gentile society, its anti-Semitism, the imbalance of wealth inherent in capitalist societies, and the senseless deaths of countless wars. Not only does Jacob come to appreciate his Jewish heritage but actually comes to revile the Goyim who,

despite all their Platos  
Their Shakespeares and Shelleys,  
Their Bachs and Beethovens,  
Drink human blood.  
Not only ours [the Jews'] but their kinsmen's  
...But the worst of the *Goyim* are the creatures called Christians.<sup>96</sup>

The poem raised significant concerns among the American Jewish leadership. Zangwill had dedicated the book to Jacob Schiff, and there were many who believed

that the position of Schiff, and of equal importance, the position of Zangwill in the broader American public would lead to a major backlash against America's Jews. In the late summer of 1920 Louis Marshall, wrote to Zangwill on behalf of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), asking that Zangwill remove the poem from the book. Zangwill refused, though he was willing to assist the AJC by adding a few lines which would make clear that his poem was intended to castigate the Gentiles of Europe, not of America. Ultimately, Zangwill did not alter the poem, and thankfully no backlash occurred, but the concerns of the American Jewish Committee clearly demonstrate the significant reputation and ubiquity Zangwill had attained in America and among America's Jews.<sup>97</sup>

Still, despite their disagreement over the tone of Zangwill's criticism, America's Jewish leadership would employ Zangwill's literary skills and his considerable reputation in the American Jewish community in their own philanthropic work with Europe's Jewish war refugees. In 1919 Zangwill wrote a poem entitled, "Our Own," which was part of a fundraising appeal for the Central Committee for the Relief of Jews Suffering Through the War (CRC), one of the original members of the Joint Distribution Committee. In the foreword to Zangwill's appeal, the CRC chairman proclaimed Zangwill the master writer of the Jewish people, a man whose eloquence and passion for the Jewish people should "move every Jewish heart" to give generously. These comments were seconded by no less a figure in the American Jewish community than Jacob Schiff.<sup>98</sup>

By the 1920s, Israel Zangwill's fame had reached global proportions. He was an acknowledged Jewish nationalist leader. Numerous leaders and intellectuals hailed him as a prophet of his people and of American exceptionalism. His plays



had been produced on stages across the United States and Europe, and his novels had been translated into French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish, Dutch, and, of course, Yiddish and Hebrew. Zangwill's remarkable prominence as politician, prophet, and artist compelled Henry Hurwitz and the other members of the Intercollegiate Menorah Association to offer Zangwill yet another invitation to come to America and speak, this time as part of the newly formed *Zunz Lecturship*, an annual lecture in honor of the renowned German Jewish historian, Leopold Zunz. Zangwill was deeply appreciative of the offer but would decline it, in part because of failing health which made the trans-Atlantic crossing a physical challenge, but also because of the pressures of fame. "I shrink from a visit to America," Zangwill wrote.

The journey would [be] a great drain on my vitality, which is not what it was when I first risked an excursion to those perilous regions. I say 'perilous' deliberately for the cascade of interviewers, autograph hunters, and cranks that descend upon one, would be exhaustive enough even without the more legitimate and kindly hospitalities with their incessant demand for speeches.<sup>99</sup>

In describing the physical and mental challenges of fame, Israel Zangwill expressed his reticence to engage in what Leo Braudy has called, "The Frenzy of Renown." This posture of reticence, a common trait of all prophets, was also, as Braudy tells us, a common reaction among nineteenth-century American and European writers. "Public men...found it difficult to disentangle the impulses to ostentatious self-staging, on the one hand, and anticommercial reclusiveness on the other."<sup>100</sup> Still, Braudy notes that as Western media-based culture expanded, public engagement and publicity became inextricably intertwined, and worldly fame, though oftentimes cultivated by the individual, also became, as this chapter has demonstrated, a creation of forces outside the author's control. Indeed, despite his

strenuous objections to taking on American speaking tour, Zangwill would ultimately concede to such a tour in 1923. The content of Zangwill's remarks on that tour and the public's response to them are the subject of another chapter of this study.<sup>101</sup>

What is important for us to understand at present, though, is that Zangwill's comments in 1923 carried tremendous import, as did his earlier statements in *The Children of the Ghetto* in 1892, in his Jewish themed works from 1893-1898, in the stage production of "The Children of the Ghetto" in 1899, in the 1908 production of "The Melting Pot," and beyond. Indeed, almost since the moment Zangwill appeared on the American scene, his discourse received a certain deference and privilege which was widely recognized by the American Jewish community and the broader American public as well. To be sure, part of that deference emerged from the content of Zangwill's works and activism, but of equal importance was Zangwill's noteworthy fame in American society, a fame that materialized through his significant reputation as an expert and leader in Jewish affairs, as well as his standing as leading prophet of American exceptionalism, and his widespread ubiquity in American literary culture.

Though, as Meri-Jane Rochelson has demonstrated, Zangwill played an explicit role in the formation of his fame, there are some facets of his reputation which were imposed upon him by the public. Zangwill had hoped to be recognized as an artist, whose work transcended the bonds of nation, tribe, or religion, hoping to create literary works which spoke to all of humanity. And yet, the public came to perceive Zangwill almost solely as an expert on Jews and Jewish issues. Zangwill hoped to lead Jewish refugees to a homeland in any number of geographic sites in a

desperate effort to save the Jews of Russia and Eastern Europe from violence and oppression. And yet some quarters of the American public believed Zangwill to be the central leader in Palestinian centered Zionism for years after the creation of the ITO. Zangwill wrote "The Melting Pot" as a discourse on America and American exceptionalism. And yet his reputation as an expert on all things Jewish led to a widespread perception of the play as a call for America's Jews to intermarry. True, Zangwill did not shrink from the public's imposition of these noteworthy aspects of his reputation. Still much of Zangwill's American reputation was imposed from without rather than formed from his own interests and desires.

Understanding the public perception of Zangwill's fame enables us to understand why his works and activism would play an important role in American Jewish discourse and in the discourse of the broader society. For those who read Zangwill's works in his novels, short stories, and essays; or learned about Zangwill's activism and pronouncements on the Jewish problem through local newspapers and national periodicals; or witnessed Zangwill's portrayals of the London Ghetto and of the American Melting Pot on stages across the country perceived Zangwill's literary and political efforts as emanating from one of the most important literary and political figures in the British, American, and global Jewish community. And so Zangwill's thoughts on American society, the development of American Jewry, the place of America for global Jewry, the possibilities for an autonomous Jewish colony outside of Palestine, and other topics of interest to American Jews and the broader American public were widely read and discussed. The content of those thoughts is the subject of the following chapter, a study of Zangwillian prophecy on America and American Jewry and Judaism.

## **Chapter Two: Zangwillian Prophecy: Much More Than the Melting Pot**

As the previous chapter has demonstrated, Israel Zangwill was an important and extremely well known figure in American literary culture and public discourse for some thirty years. His considerable fame and celebrity lent a certain air of legitimacy to the author's works and activism, and the American public (both Jewish and non-Jewish) granted considerable deference to Zangwill's thoughts on Jewish peoples and causes, as well as American exceptionalism. At the very least, when Zangwill wrote or spoke on these issues influential segments of the American public took notice. Still, as the previous chapter has also demonstrated, Zangwill's reputation was—to a great extent—shaped by the public's perception of him. And oftentimes the idea of Zangwill in America stood in stark contrast with Israel Zangwill's American Jewish ideals, as well as his desire to be seen as an artist, critic, and Territorialist.

As with the American public's ability to influence the nature of Zangwill's fame in spite of his own interests and desires, similarly, many Americans—particularly Jewish Americans—would interpret Zangwill's thoughts and opinions in ways that differed greatly from his own. Indeed, throughout his American career, Israel Zangwill, though an important figure in American Jewish discourse, was also an extremely misunderstood and misinterpreted figure, as well. Subsequent chapters will explore the ways in which twentieth-century Americans—both during and after Zangwill's lifetime—have misinterpreted the insight and opinions of this prominent Jewish author, critic, and activist. This chapter, though, will—through a close reading of the author's essays, speeches, and other public pronouncements

establish Israel Zangwill's thoughts and opinions on the American Jewish community and the United States of America.

By and large, the public's misinterpretation of Zangwillian thought and Zangwill's role in early twentieth-century American-Jewish discourse is an ironic byproduct of the popular success of his novels, short stories, and plays. These works established Israel Zangwill's significant reputation in early twentieth-century American literary culture. The same is true of Zangwill's standing in his native England, and so most of Zangwill's contemporaries—and even subsequent generations of critics and scholars—looked to his fictional works to discern the author's opinions on a host of topics.

This chapter argues, though, that in order to comprehend fully Zangwill's thoughts and opinions on any subject, one must pay closer attention to the author's essays, speeches, and other public pronouncements rather than his novels, short stories, and plays. This argument emerges from Zangwill's own understanding of the uses of fiction and theater in addressing social and political issues. Just as Oscar Wilde once observed that "No artist desires to prove anything," Israel Zangwill similarly disdained the need for art to provide objective proof for a given argument or idea.<sup>1</sup> He believed that the role of the artist was to serve as a provocateur rather than a sage, and he thought that his work should spark debate rather than take a specific position on contemporary issues. My job, Zangwill noted in an 1898 interview is to "supply thoughts for other people for them to take or leave."<sup>2</sup> During his 1908 American sojourn, to oversee the debut of "The Melting Pot," Zangwill further clarified his belief in the inability of art (and the artist) to

solve contemporary social and political issues, asserting that “art knows no answer—can give none. There is no answer to anything in art.”<sup>3</sup> As the previous chapter has shown, American critics often celebrated Zangwill’s skill at depicting the reality of Jewish ghetto life, while alternately lamenting the author’s inability or unwillingness to insert his own voice into his works—noting the absence of a clear plot to resolve his stories or of an instructive statement about the future of the Jewish people. To be sure some of his works, particularly “The Melting Pot,” did seem to suggest a specific set of solutions to a specific set of problems. And indeed, this chapter does not completely ignore the important insight derived from studying Zangwill’s fictional works. Still, it is in Israel Zangwill’s essays, speeches, and other pronouncements where the author regularly crossed the line from detached artist to engaged activist and prophet. It is in these works that he expressed not only his most direct and biting opinions about a host of problems faced by American and global Jewry, but also proffered a number of solutions to those same problems.

In exploring Israel Zangwill’s American Jewish ideals this chapter reveals certain essential elements in the prophetic character—that of the prophet’s heightened concern for his people and of his desperate plea for their return to the proper path. As Abraham Joshua Heschel explains, those events that so disturb and dismay the prophet are considered mundane and unremarkable by the rest of society. The prophet “lavishes excessive language upon trifling subjects...things that horrified the prophets are even now daily occurrences all over the world.”<sup>4</sup> As we shall see, Israel Zangwill’s concerns about the nature of American Jewish life were seen by many Jews as non-issues. But in Zangwill’s mind, the American

Jewish community's at homeness in America and their unwillingness to fully embrace and engage their religious heritage for fear of threatening that at homeness was of more than trifling interest. Such complacency and contentment, denied America and the world valuable, and indeed indispensable, religious and ethical instruction. Similarly Zangwill railed against the broader society for its failure to fulfill the exceptionalist vision of American equality and tolerance first articulated in the nation's founding documents

Israel Zangwill expressed his prophecy in a number of forums. His pronouncements were heard in lecture halls throughout the United States, read in countless newspapers, magazines, journals, and in his collected essays and other works of non-fiction. Through these public lectures, newspaper interviews, and published treatises, Israel Zangwill attempted to spur the American Jewish community toward greater religious and civic engagement. He articulated a prophetic vision to America's Jews, admonishing them over their failure to create an adaptive and evolutionary Judaism which addressed both the essential character of Jewish ethical monotheism and the demands of American modernity. Concomitantly Zangwill would offer American Jewry words of consolation and instruction, articulating an exceptionalist vision of America and a unique and significant role for its Jews as the standard bearers of the American ideals of democracy and justice, as well as the creators of a universalist form of Diaspora Judaism. He boldly asserted the centrality of Judaism in the maintenance of Jewish identity, while also recognizing the need for Judaism to evolve in response to the social, economic, and even technological conditions of modernity and the concrete

reality of an extremely large and seemingly permanent Jewish Diaspora. In similarly bold fashion he attributed much of Western, and indeed even Islamic, theology to core Jewish beliefs. And his message to the broader American society, in which he articulated his belief in the potential of the United States of America to transcend the perils of European-style nationalism, literally provided the vocabulary by which believers in American exceptionalism expressed, and continue to express, their beliefs.

To understand Israel Zangwill's opinions on the US and its role in Jewish life we must first comprehend his belief in the promise of America, in the nation's potential to accept fully its Jewish citizens into its fold without any of the mistrust, alienation, and oppression which continued to plague the emancipated Jews of Western Europe. The promise of American acceptance, as well as Zangwill's perception of the youth of organized Jewish life in America, would allow the American Jewish community to create a wholly new form of Jewish life and observance, one which synthesized the most significant contributions of the Jewish past with the creative and adaptive spirit of modern America. Having established Zangwill's sense of the promise of America we must then turn our attention to his assessment of the American Jewish problem, that is, his profound concern about the character of Jewish observance in America, as well as his frustration with the American Jewish community's reticence to employ their ethics in the nation's social and political arenas. Finally, to grasp fully Zangwillian prophecy, we must move beyond his prophetic admonitions and explore his prophetic instruction, his vision for the development of a new and adaptive form of American Jewish observance



which would elevate the United States from a mere recipient of Jewish immigrants to a new cultural and religious center of diasporic Jewish life.

### The Promise and Problems of America

Israel Zangwill viewed the emancipation and civic equality of Western Jews as the central challenge of the modern Jewish experience. To be sure, Zangwill was not alone in this. Important Zionist writers—both Zangwill’s precursors and his contemporaries—wrote extensively on this topic, expressing their concerns and skepticism about the benefits of emancipation. But Zangwill differed from these thinkers—at least in the years prior to World War I—in his belief that Western societies, particularly England and the US would socially accept emancipated Jews into their fold. In this way, Zangwill’s writings resonate with, and to some extent they prefigured, the work of American Jewish thinkers from the early through mid twentieth century such as Mordecai Kaplan, Israel Friedlander, and others who similarly questioned the benefits of emancipation for American Jewry.

By contrast, Zionist writers such as Leo Pinsker and Theodore Herzl rejected the idea that emancipated Jews encountered such acceptance. Regardless of their legal or civil status the Jew would always be considered an alien, an adopted child. In short, Zionist thinkers such as Pinsker and Herzl viewed emancipation as the cause of *the* Jewish problem, specifically the anti-Semitism which arose in response to the fallacy of Jewish citizenship in an alien nation. Zangwill argued, though, that the relative ease with which Jews could assimilate into Western society created a complex of geographically, historically, and culturally unique “Jewish Problems,” asserting to the American press on his 1908 visit, for example, that “there is not

one Jewish problem, there are many Jewish problems in many lands...The problem is not a unity.”<sup>5</sup>

To be clear, Israel Zangwill believed that all modern Jewish problems emanated from one specific dilemma—the fact that the conditions of the Diaspora required Jews to choose between living a distinct life adhering to the dictates of Judaism’s legal and behavioral code, or to assimilate into the life and customs of their diasporic homes, thus disappearing into an undifferentiated mass of modern Western peoples. Still, each Western society presented the challenge of Jewish emancipation in its own unique fashion, requiring each Jewish community to respond to such circumstances in their own distinct ways consonant with the history and culture of the countries in which they lived. In Germany, for example, significant social and professional pressures and opportunities compelled upwardly mobile Jews to convert to Christianity. While English Jews, Zangwill argued, like their Christian counterparts, desperately sought to rationalize their religious beliefs, detaching their religion from the wonder of its Sinaitic revelation and turning English Jewish observance into a rote, ossified system of synagogue attendance and membership in philanthropic organizations. Such efforts rendered English Judaism devoid of any depth of feeling or spirituality. In this way English Jews had shed their distinctiveness and become just like their Gentile countrymen.<sup>6</sup>

Understanding Zangwill’s belief in a geographically and culturally specific complex of Jewish problems, and solutions, is essential to understanding Zangwillian thought as it related to the United States of America and more specifically to the American Jewish community. As previously noted in this study,

as well as in a host of other works, Zangwill believed that the US possessed a unique position in the history of Western society, as well as in the lengthy history of the Jewish people.<sup>7</sup> For the broader American society, Zangwill believed that the nation's geographic removal from Europe's political and territorial squabbles, its transcontinental scope, its absence of an inherited aristocracy or a national church, and the availability of supposedly unoccupied lands would enable immigrants to overcome the enmity and longstanding feuds which tore the European continent apart in the first quarter of the twentieth century. For American Jews and Jewish immigrants to the US, the nation's democratic ethos promised an equality of opportunity which global Jewry had never experienced in its long history. Indeed, in 1922, Zangwill observed in the pages of *The American Hebrew* that the political and social circumstances of the American polity should have signaled a new chapter in the history of Jews in diaspora, one in which Jews were fully accepted as citizens, rather than persecuted as an alien nation. And its open immigration policy of the first quarter of the twentieth century created an opportunity for the oppressed Jews of Russia and Eastern Europe to find a safe haven. In his post WWI play, "The Cockpit," Zangwill compared the nations of Europe to a pit of "steel-spurred cocks each crowing on its own little dunghill," while he hailed America as "God's own country."<sup>8</sup>

What is more, by Zangwill's account, the relative youth of organized American Jewish life meant that American Jewry, more than any other Jewish community in the world, could create a new and salutary form of Judaism from scratch, so to speak. As Israel Zangwill had asserted in his 1898 address to New

York's Judeans—his first speaking engagement before an American Jewish audience—prior to the mid nineteenth century, American Jewish life was a tabula rasa. And this newness of organized Jewish life granted American Jewry a unique opportunity to create the Judaism of the future. He argued that American Jews had a “chance of evolving a Judaism that combines a modern standpoint with a medieval poetry.” And in a 1902 speech, Zangwill divided the history of Jewish life into three periods—the territorial (when the Jewish people were still in possession of territory in Palestine), the Ghetto (the lengthy diasporic period when Jewish life was isolated from the mainstream societies of its host countries), and the American period (a new era in which Jewish customs and observance would be forced to adapt to the relative freedom of emancipation and social acceptance). So central was the novelty and possibilities of American freedoms and the development of American Jewish life to Zangwill's hopes for Diaspora Jews that in his 1902 address he boldly predicted that the United States would soon set the standard for all aspects of Diaspora Judaism.<sup>9</sup>

To be clear, Israel Zangwill's assertion about the “newness” of American Jewish life was, in some ways, too narrow an interpretation of the American Jewish experience. Undoubtedly when Zangwill first began his American career, a nationally organized American Jewish life was only decades old. The Reform Movement's earliest national conference, in Philadelphia, for example, had taken place in 1869, just twenty-three years before the publication of *The Children of the Ghetto*. While the most significant Reform Synod of the nineteenth century, the 1885 Pittsburgh conference which created the Pittsburgh Platform—the document

which outlined the basic tenets of American Reform—occurred just thirteen years before Zangwill’s first visit to America. Other American Jewish institutions such as the Conservative Movement’s Jewish Theological Seminary, and Orthodoxy’s Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America (the OU) occurred even later in the century. Further, the latter third of the nineteenth century witnessed the creation of several important institutions to promote Jewish learning and scholarship, such as the Reform Movement’s Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati (1875), Conservative Judaism’s Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York (1886), the Jewish Publication Society of America in New York and Philadelphia (1888), and other institutions. But this narrow focus on the history of a few significant American Jewish institutions ignored a deeper American Jewish past. Indeed, as works by Jacob Rader Marcus, William Pencak, Hasia Diner, Jonathan Sarna, and others have demonstrated, Jews have formed communities, built synagogues, and established institutions in America since the mid seventeenth century. What is more, as the Jewish historian Salo Baron, makes clear in his *Social and Religious History of the Jews*, many of the key institutions in European Jewish life first emerged in the mid to late nineteenth century, as well. And so Zangwill’s belief in the comparative newness of American Jewish life was a misinterpretation of both American and European Jewish history.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, Israel Zangwill’s understanding of the American Jewish community represented a kind of American Jewish exceptionalism. His belief in the absence of an American Jewish spiritual inheritance was very similar to the ways in which the Puritans viewed the North American continent in the early seventeenth century—

that is as a spiritual wilderness upon which they would build a city on a hill, a religious exemplar to instruct the morally and spiritually bankrupt churches of Europe. The historian Andrew Heinze has argued that this vision of America as a religious tabula rasa was uniquely Protestant and that America's Jews did not see their mission as an "errand in the wilderness...but into modern culture." By Heinze's account Jews did not seek to build a city on a hill, but rather they attempted to "create a moral space from which [they could secure the freedoms of citizenship and] purge the evils they associated with Christian society."<sup>11</sup> Heinze's sensitive reading of the American Jewish psyche is invaluable, and his assessment of American Jewry's perceived mission may indeed explain much of the American Jewish rejection of Zangwillian prophecy. It is quite clear that for Israel Zangwill, though, America was indeed a spiritual wilderness within which American Jews might build a new and exemplary Judaism.

Indeed, by Zangwill's account, the United States might prove an exception not only for Jews but for all peoples. He believed, for example, that in America, the continued Jewish history of alienation and oppression in the Diaspora might end and even serve as an exemplar to European peoples on how to bridge national differences. To be clear, throughout his American career, Zangwill never believed that the US had fulfilled its exceptional promise either to Jews or non-Jews. But its unique history and geography at least offered some hope. "I do not think America is the greatest country in the world," Zangwill observed in a 1908 interview, "but the greatest potentiality... If it fails it will be the last experiment of humanity. America is thus carrying mankind."<sup>12</sup>

By Zangwill's account, then, what made the United States exceptional was not necessarily its present achievements but instead its future possibilities. In America both Jew and Gentile alike could refashion their identity, culture, and even religious practice. But this was only possible if American society and the American Jewish community addressed several core problems which were unique to their culture and history. American society would need to overcome an increasingly nationalist fervor, which—especially in the years surrounding WWI—would come to resemble the narrow, racist national ideals of Europe. While America's Jews, Zangwill believed, faced significant challenges over the issues of assimilation and religious reform.

The idea that Israel Zangwill viewed American Jewish assimilation as a Jewish problem rather than a benefit to American Jews may seem surprising to those who possess a passing familiarity with his work. How could the author of "The Melting Pot," a play which applauded America for its assimilative properties, lament the melting away of Jews into the American population and polity? During his 1908 visit to the US, for example, Zangwill himself predicted that within two centuries America would culturally—and indeed even physically—assimilate its multi-ethnic and multi-racial populace into a new race of people! And as subsequent chapters will demonstrate, many American Jews of the period would interpret Zangwill's play not only as a call to integrate into the cultural and civic life of the nation, but also as a demand that Jews abandon their religion and race through intermarriage. But this interpretation of the Zangwillian notion of the melting pot is far too narrow. It ignores an evidentiary trail of essays, speeches,

and other pronouncements by Zangwill which clearly established the author's more complex and less favorable attitude towards Jewish assimilation in the United States of America.<sup>13</sup>

By Zangwill's account, the process of assimilation was an inescapable development in the formation of all national identities. His most fully developed articulation of this idea can be found in his 1917 lecture, "The Principle of Nationalities." Presented in the midst of the carnage of WW I, Zangwill's lecture inquired into the origins of the nationalist fervor that had fueled the bloody conflict. In so doing, Zangwill sketched out a model of national development which he called "the law of contiguous cooperation," the idea that national identity is created when peoples of a particular geographic area unite to respond to an outside danger. This led to the formation of what Zangwill termed a "simple nationality," a racially and ethnically unified group of people. But such national groups invariably encountered other racial and ethnic groups, either through conquest or through the immigration of outsiders into the new nation. Ultimately, all peoples in the national territory become part of the national group, that is, they all melt into the culture and race of the nation. This would be achieved, Zangwill believed, through either "tyranny or tolerance," but ultimately all peoples in the nation embraced a unified national identity and largely rejected the language, culture, and religion of their old land.<sup>14</sup>

Though Israel Zangwill's ideas about national identity had achieved their fullest expression during WWI, clearly he had thought about these ideas several years earlier. His 1908 play, "The Melting Pot," addressed in dramatic form the way in which America—whose relatively liberal immigration policies, by Zangwill's



account, had sped up the typically glacial pace of the melting pot process—could, through tolerance and acceptance, overcome national differences. Such toleration would lead to the creation of a new, complex and variegated form of nationality, or at least in the creation of a new national ethos which tolerated cultural and ethnic difference. Yet in his “Afterword” to the published edition of “The Melting Pot” Zangwill made clear that despite the inevitability of the assimilative process, the results of melting were not invariably beneficial. The process of melting ultimately led to a lamentable homogeneity. In considering the effects of the English melting pot, for example, Zangwill exclaimed, “alas the loss of local colour!” While in the same essay he regretted the way in which first generation Argentines of British descent were ashamed of “the English spoken by their British parents.”<sup>15</sup>

For America’s Jews, though, the assimilative process posed a far greater threat than a mere loss of local color. Like the prophets of the Old Testament, who deplored as idolatrous the obsession with wealth and position, Israel Zangwill railed against the comfort and complacency of America’s upwardly mobile and assimilated Jews.<sup>16</sup> He admonished them for their increasing materialism and their excessive interest in blending into their host societies. In so doing, Zangwill proclaimed, American Jews had abandoned the Jewish position as a distinct and significant people. In his speech to New York’s Judeans’ club in 1898 he termed such materialistic and assimilative Jews, “new Jews.” He deprecated America’s new Jews as vulgar and snobbish. The new Jew’s “defiant assertion” of social equality, his demand, for example, to be admitted into America’s summer resort hotels, was foolish and ill advised. Such efforts failed to account for the Jews’ long history as a

people apart. "The old Jew," Zangwill proclaimed, "was never vulgar; he never claimed equality with the Christian—he claimed superiority...Israel ha[d] always been a nation of aristocrats, working out its own conception of the common life." To abandon this group distinctiveness, Zangwill argued, was "an inglorious surrender to contemporary civilization."<sup>17</sup>

Zangwill argued that after some eighteen centuries of oppression and violence directed at Diaspora Jewry, America's Jews were too grateful for their unparalleled social acceptance. Under such circumstances new Jews became timid and unwilling to assert themselves as a distinct people. In a 1904 address at New York's Cooper Union—in a speech intended to promote the Uganda plan—Zangwill labeled the timidity of the American Jewish community "Marranoism," thereby equating the assimilative impulse with the actions of the Jews of fifteenth century Spain who chose to convert to Christianity rather than face expulsion. Zangwill observed how, the Marrano impulse, that is, the desire to emulate the behaviors and religion of the Jew's host society, continued even after the onset of emancipation in the West. The Jew, according to Zangwill still viewed himself as "a hunted creature...His whole public life became ostentatiously identical to that of his neighbors." Even in America's universities, Zangwill exclaimed, "young Jews are not anxious to proclaim their race. If you want to compliment a Jew, tell him you would never have taken him for one. What a depth of degradation for a people to have reached!"<sup>18</sup>

The American new Jews' Marranoism deeply concerned Zangwill. The loss of Jewish dignity and of equal significance the American Reform movement's

opposition to Zionism signaled the decay of a distinct, Jewish identity. Indeed, so troubling was this phenomenon, that in a 1907 article entitled, "The Jewish Trinity," he equated American Jewish assimilation with euthanasia, a characterization which led to an objection from Zangwill's friend and colleague Joseph Jacobs. In his response to Jacobs, Zangwill maintained his concern about the nature of Jewish assimilation in America. "My remarks about euthanasia are perfectly logical," Zangwill wrote. "America is a physical, but not spiritual salvation."<sup>19</sup> Almost two years later, at the conclusion of his stay in America for the premiere of "The Melting Pot," Zangwill lamented to the American press that "The American Jews are in the melting-pot, if not bodily, then spiritually. I am certain that nothing can prevent them from becoming enthusiastic Americans even if their religious or racial isolation is preserved. The Jews in America constitute a Jewish problem not an American problem."<sup>20</sup>

And so even after the premiere of "The Melting Pot," Zangwill's well known melodrama which applauded the assimilative powers of American society, Israel Zangwill expressed concerns over the effects of the melting pot on America's Jews. Indeed, the widely held belief that his play promoted complete assimilation as a solution to the problems of American Jews so confounded Zangwill that in a 1921 letter to the American Jewish Committee's Louis Marshall, Zangwill called the play his "much misunderstood 'Melting Pot.'"<sup>21</sup>

The assimilative powers of the United States of America, its geography, culture, and political policy, were of great benefit to the peoples of Europe and even to the oppressed Jews of Russia. But the physical safety the US offered could not

provide America's Jews with the spiritual haven required for the continued group life of a distinct people. What is more, in the years following World War I, America's increasingly restrictive immigration legislation eliminated even a physical safe harbor for oppressed Jews, while an increasing chauvinism threatened to alter American culture in particularly dangerous ways. In a 1922 essay, for example, Zangwill lamented the ways in which "America, instead of holding fast to the faith and spiritual vision of her founders, is hardening into a nationalism all the narrower for her prodigious physical breadth, and is falling back for the solution of her problems on the barbarous old methods whose futility has been proved in Europe."<sup>22</sup>

To be sure, Zangwill's Zionist leanings compelled him to argue for the centrality of a Jewish homeland as one solution to the problems of assimilation and European-style, nationalist fervor. Unlike the cultural Zionists of the era, such as Ahad Ha'am, though, Zangwill did not seek to "negate the *Galut*"—or to put it another way, he did not deny the Diaspora—that is, he did not believe that Jewish culture could only thrive with the existence of a geographic Jewish center in Palestine. Indeed, often in his Zionist writings Zangwill argued that the Jews of the Diaspora and the Jews of a new Jewish State would be politically and culturally distinct peoples, going so far as to suggest that the Jews of Palestine not be called Jews at all, but rather Judeans.<sup>23</sup>

Like the renowned diaspora nationalist historian Simon Dubnow, and of equal significance Dubnow's foremost American proponent, the Jewish Theological Seminary scholar Israel Friedlander, Israel Zangwill believed that Palestine and

America could, and indeed would, exist simultaneously as important sites of Jewish refuge and culture. Dubnow's most succinct articulation of his belief in the centrality of America was written in the years following the Kishinev Pogrom—an event which, as the reader will recall, had a profound impact on Zangwill, as well. Following the events of Kishinev, Dubnow argued that America, which he called a "quantitative center" of Jewish life, would need to become a "qualitative center" of Jewish culture and religion, replacing the old and threatened Eastern European sites of Jewish cultural hegemony. By Dubnow's account, this could be accomplished through the formation of Jewish national enclaves in lightly populated areas of the United States. Such enclaves would create their own Jewish national schools and elect Jewish nationalist candidates to local office. Dubnow believed that only through the creation of such Jewish nationalist institutions could American Jewry create their own "National Judaism."<sup>24</sup>

Israel Zangwill shared Dubnow's belief in America's potential to become a "qualitative center" of Diaspora Jewish life, but he strongly differed with Dubnow about the feasibility of semi-autonomous Jewish enclaves in the American polity. By Zangwill's account the US Constitution simply would not accommodate the presence of politically distinct national groups within the broader American polity, and so the only way in which America's Jewish community could become a site of Jewish cultural hegemony was through the development of a unique American Judaism. In numerous essays, speeches, and other pronouncements, Zangwill would sketch out the essential precepts of this Americanized Judaism. He called on Americans to concomitantly conserve the liturgical traditions of the Jewish ghetto,

adapt Jewish law to the realities of the modern Diaspora, and, ultimately, engage in political action to advance the Hebrew Prophets' vision of Jewish social justice.<sup>25</sup>

In Zangwill's 1898 address to the Judeans, for example, he severely critiqued American Reform Judaism. Though tempered with the somewhat mistaken acknowledgement that America had lacked a significant Jewish tradition prior to the nineteenth century, and that the rabbis of the Reform Movement had done much to remedy this dilemma, Zangwill still found the movement's reforms, particularly their liturgical innovations, wanting and suspect. By his account America's Reform Movement had merely adapted Jewish rituals to the restrained practices of the nation's mainline Protestant churches. Reform innovations such as the creation of a ministerial rabbinate who provided their congregations with weekly sermons, and the presence of an organ and choir in many Reform temples altered the congregants role in worship, turning temple members into an audience and the rabbis, cantors, and others on the pulpit into performers. While the abolition of any reference to a Jewish national character or a yearning for Jewish restoration to Zion from the movement's *Union Prayer Book*, detached American Reform from an older Jewish tradition, specifically the practices of Orthodox, ghetto shuls.<sup>26</sup>

In and of themselves the differences between American Reform and ghetto Orthodoxy were not problematic. Indeed, Zangwill believed that the future of Judaism lay in its ability to adapt still older Jewish traditions—the literature and ethics of the ancient Jewish texts—to the realities of modern existence. "The soul of the Jewish race," Zangwill would write in 1911, "is best seen in the Bible."<sup>27</sup> But in Zangwill's 1898 assessment of American Judaism, the Jews had abandoned the

Bible and Jewish texts in favor of the mere performance of Christian ritual. In his address to the Judeans he exclaimed that:

The Reformed American Jews seem to have lost the old spirit and have not yet acquired the new. Judaism is not Christianity minus Christ. It has an inner spirit of its own, according to which it must grow. If true Reformed Judaism is not the old Judaism with pounds of Kosher flesh cut away, still less is it Christianity with pounds of trifah [unclean] flesh cut away!<sup>28</sup>

In essence, Zangwill argued the American Reform movement had only come half way in the creation of a new and adaptive Jewish tradition. It had adapted its observance to an American environment, which was no small feat, but in order to ensure the survival and relevance of Jewish thought and observance in the United States, it would need to do more. It would need to link the traditions of the past with the realities of modernity.<sup>29</sup>

Israel Zangwill's biting critique of American Reform Judaism led one of the movement's leading rabbis, Kaufman Kohler, to accuse Zangwill of favoring Jewish orthodoxy, but orthodoxy in America surely did not escape Zangwill's critique. In his 1898 assessment of American Judaism, Zangwill admonished both reform and orthodoxy, noting that the former abolished Jewish law while the latter ossified it. As we shall see, the Zangwillian alternative to this failed dichotomy was the creation of an evolutionary approach to Jewish law which Zangwill associated with the Talmudic scholars of the sixth century, CE. Since orthodoxy still engaged in Talmudic study and had closer links to the traditions of the Jewish past, Zangwill may have found its failure to evolve more disturbing than the American Reform Movement's innovations. Zangwill lamented, for example, the fact that the American Jewish community had made almost no effort to introduce a Sunday

Sabbath in America to accommodate the economic realities of the Jewish working class. To be clear, a number of American Reform congregations had experimented with the creation of Sunday Sabbath services, but American orthodox Jews had not. And yet, Zangwill would make clear in a 1918 essay specifically intended for the American Jewish community that had Orthodoxy merely taken this one small step towards the recognition of the realities of American life, it would insure its relevance in American culture for centuries to come.<sup>30</sup>

As the reader may recall, in 1917 a host of prominent American Jews joined forces to invite Israel Zangwill to attend the fifth annual Intercollegiate Menorah Convention, but the dangers of the war, and the professional demands on Zangwill in England compelled him to turn down the request. Still, Zangwill would offer written comments to the convention, which were printed in the February 1918 issue of *The Menorah Journal*. In his article, "The Dilemmas of the Diaspora," Zangwill argued that the institution of an Orthodox Sunday Sabbath would play a central role in the establishment of an adaptive American Judaism. "I shall be told," Zangwill wrote, "that a Sunday Sabbath has been tried all over the United States and failed. But that is a popular error."

What has been tried is a Sunday-Sabbath not a Sunday *Shabbos*. There have been Reform services on Sunday—not very unlike Church services—but there have been no orthodox services on Sunday. Nobody has turned Saturday night into the old-fashioned Friday night. Strange that orthodox Rabbis have not seen the one way to save their religion.<sup>31</sup>

Blind adherence, then, to a Saturday Sabbath, or any other tenet of Jewish law, ignored the realities of American Jewish life and indeed all of Diaspora Jewish existence. In order to create a meaningful and sustainable Jewish existence such



laws would need to be studied closely and, when applicable, altered, not to abolish tradition, but rather to maintain it.

To be sure, Israel Zangwill's aspirations for the institution of an Orthodox Sunday Sabbath were utopian, at best. As American Jewish historian Jeffrey Gurock has observed, even the most accommodationist of Progressive era Orthodox rabbis undertook efforts to convince Jewish business people and local and state governments to adapt American culture and law to suit Jewish ritual needs rather than asking Jews to alter drastically their ritual practices. And, as Gurock makes clear, throughout the twentieth and twenty first centuries, the more conservative rabbis in the Orthodox movement have steadfastly refused any efforts at accommodation and acculturation for fear that any alliances with mainstream American society would "dilute traditional faith and practice."<sup>32</sup>

Ultimately, Zangwill argued, the assimilative, Marrano impulse of the new Jew and the failures of both American Reform Judaism and orthodoxy had resulted in the de facto creation of a secular, racialized form of American Jewish life which ignored religious thought and practice and focused almost exclusively Jewish racial purity through the prohibition of intermarriage. In Zangwill's estimation this creation of a racialized American Jewish identity was problematic, self defeating, and—in some sense—decidedly un-Jewish. By ignoring the religious aspects of Judaism, Zangwill argued, American Jews had taken a complex and rich philosophical tradition which attempted to address the timeless challenges of humanitarianism, personal behavior, and other essential ethical precepts, and reduced it to a mere racialized club, so to speak.<sup>33</sup>

Such racial conservation seemed meaningless to Zangwill, who argued in an 1898 interview with *The American Hebrew* that though he disapproved of intermarriage as a rule, since most American Jews “have no religion,” they should be permitted to marry a similarly non-religious spouse regardless of their race. In truth, though, Zangwill found several forms of interracial and inter-religious marriage to be quite acceptable. After all, Zangwill himself married a non-Jewish woman; an act which he later argued was, in part, a conscious effort to demonstrate that “Judaism was not racial.” Understanding why he approved of such unions provides important insight into Zangwill’s beliefs about the unity of race as well as Abrahamic religions.<sup>34</sup>

The notion of “interracial marriage,” for example, did not trouble Zangwill at all, and he made very clear that the idea of so-called Jewish racial purity ignored the contemporary science as well as the historical realities of Diaspora Jewry. In a 1911 address to the First Universal Race Congress, held at the University of London, Israel Zangwill proclaimed that, “Not only is every race akin to every other, but every people is a hotch-potch of races. The Jews, though mainly a white people, are not even devoid of a coloured fringe, black, brown, or yellow. There are the Beni-Israel of India, the Falashas of Abyssinia...the negro Jews of Fernando Po, Jamaica, Surinam, etc...” Here we see that Israel Zangwill’s understanding of race was ambivalent, divided between the fairly commonplace thinking of his day, while also displaying a more progressive and nuanced appreciation of universality of all peoples. Like other thinkers of his age he still differentiated peoples by certain physical markers—specifically skin color. And yet he also believed in the shared

“kinship” of all peoples regardless of the color of their skin. Further, by Zangwill’s account, the belief in a racially distinct Jewish people ignored the global realities of Jews in Diaspora. The Jews were, quite literally, a variegated people. And so the American Jews’ belief in a racially pure Jewish community was, by Zangwill’s account, a fallacy.<sup>35</sup>

What is more, Zangwill believed in the essential Hebraic foundations of Christianity and Islam, asserting that not only did both faiths derive from a Jewishly informed worldview, but that many of Christianity’s most salutary attributes—the belief in divine love and the universality of man, for example, were, and continued to be, central tenets of Judaism. In his 1920 essay, “The Voice of Jerusalem,” Zangwill wrote that “Christianity is...a form of Judaism,” and that were it not for theological splits which arose around the time of the ministry of Paul, Jesus’ followers might “have carried Judaism forward on that path of universalism which its essential genius demands.”<sup>36</sup> And so those Christians that followed Jesus’ teachings, uncorrupted by the intersession of a westernized church, were—in reality—Jews. And since a religious Jew and a religious Christian, in theory, shared a Jewish worldview, the marriage of two such people would not be an intermarriage at all.<sup>37</sup>

And so the American Jewish community’s creation of a racialized, non-religious, Jewish identity rejected the central genius of the Jews—namely their role in articulating the central tenets of Western monotheism. By ignoring this component of Jewish identity, American Jews had contributed to withholding the important lessons of Judaism and its ethics from a damaged world in desperate

need of religious and ethical instruction. In 1908, for example, Zangwill and Daniel Guggenheim—an American mining magnate and close friend of Zangwill’s—granted a joint interview to *The New York Herald*, a published debate, of sorts, on a host of topics of interest to the American Jewish community. In the article Zangwill argued that Jews should openly proselytize, seeking converts among the Catholics and Protestants of America and Western Europe. When asked what Judaism could offer its neophytes, Zangwill responded that “It offers a religion as old as the world—high ideals of family life and state life. It preaches the brotherhood of all men and the fatherhood of one God.” During World War I Israel Zangwill would see Judaism as, perhaps, the only religion which could remind humanity of its common origins. Indeed, according to Zangwill, the war had proven “so-called” Christians to be so incapable of proper moral behavior, that in 1919 he argued that “we Jews today are the only race that would not crucify Jesus.”<sup>38</sup>

Aside from the ethical implications of American Jewry’s abandonment of Judaism in favor of a racialized, secular Jewish identity, Zangwill believed that such practices would ultimately contribute to the Jews’ demise. Only in a Jewish territory, Zangwill argued, could Jews even hope to preserve some sense of racial purity, and even then, the history of the Jewish conquest of Palestine, as told in the Bible, suggested that the maintenance of such racial isolation seemed unlikely. In order to survive outside of a Jewish homeland, though, Judaism would need to universalize. On more than one occasion Zangwill asserted that Diaspora Judaism should de-nationalize, and that “race-Jews...must be lost in the multitude of their converts, white, black, and yellow.” What is more, in a 1903 essay Zangwill argued

that conditions in the US logically pointed to “exogamy and the welcome of converts.” The American Jewish community’s failure to recognize this logic, Zangwill argued, had proven detrimental to the faith, and instead of American Judaism becoming “expansive and spiritual,” it had instead become restrictive and insular. The American Jewish focus on the restriction of intermarriage also failed to recognize a lengthy and successful Jewish history of intermarriage. In his 1908 debate with Guggenheim, for example, Zangwill noted that Moses himself had married a Gentile woman and that King David was descended of Ruth, a Moabite woman who married an Israelite man and accepted the faith and the lot of Israel.<sup>39</sup>

The American Jewish community, then, by Zangwill’s estimation, faced significant challenges—challenges which would need to be addressed if it was to fulfill its role as a diasporic center of Jewish life. The community’s inability to create a Jewish identity which rejected crass materialism and embraced an evolutionary, forward thinking Judaism as a central component of Jewish identity, called its ascendancy into question. Similarly, the broader American society’s insularity in the years surrounding World War I threatened the nation’s exceptional promise to offer a new cooperative and collaborative approach to the formation of national identity. In a number of important essays, speeches, and other pronouncements, as well as his artistic endeavors, Israel Zangwill articulated solutions to some of the daunting problems he had identified within the American Jewish community and the broader American society.

### Adaptive Hebraism: The American Jewish Solution

Israel Zangwill's solution to the multiple problems which challenged the American Jewish community, his prophetic instruction meant to console his American audience and direct them towards the path of redemption, entailed a delicate balance between the liturgical practices of the Jewish ghetto, the central precepts of Jewish thought, or Hebraism, and the diasporic realities of modern American society. This balance between Jewishness and Americanness, between the past and the present I will term "adaptive Hebraism." My choice of words, here, is deliberate. I have chosen to use the term "adaptive" rather than assimilative because in late nineteenth and early twentieth century American discourse, assimilation was often used exclusively to describe intermarriage. This was particularly true among America's Jews. For example, in 1909 St. Louis' Rabbi Leon Harrison, in critiquing the assimilative aspects of Zangwill's play "The Melting Pot" argued that "unless we keep our race separate from others our religion also will soon cease to be." In July of 1914, Pittsburgh's Rabbi Rudolph Coffee observed that more often than not, intermarriage had failed to assimilate the best features of bride and groom. And in a 1915 article by renowned American Jewish jurist and Zionist Louis Brandeis for *The Menorah Journal*, Brandeis defined assimilation as the moment when "Jewish blood had been so thoroughly diluted by repeated intermarriages as to result in practically obliterating the Jew."<sup>40</sup> Since Zangwill did not see interracial marriage as a particularly grave threat to Jewish identity, and since the term assimilation possesses an historically contingent meaning which is

not fully in keeping with Zangwill's own thinking, I believe that "adaptive" will better capture his intentions rather than "assimilative."

My use of the term Hebraic or Hebraism over, say, Judaic or Judaism is also deliberate and reflects Zangwill's own linguistic choice as well as his philosophical intent. Popularized in Matthew Arnold's 1869 work, *Culture and Anarchy*, Hebraism describes the central contribution of ancient Jewish thought to modern Western societies. For Arnold, that contribution addressed man's desire for correct and righteous behavior, while Hellenism—the other significant ancient influence on contemporary Western society—offered a clear perception and appreciation of the natural world as displayed and explored in the classical arts and sciences.<sup>41</sup>

As Zangwill biographer Maurice Wohlgernter has observed, a great many nineteenth and early twentieth century thinkers and critics were profoundly preoccupied with the cultural and intellectual dialectic between Hebraism and Hellenism. The renowned Jewish poet Heinrich Heine, for example, famously proclaimed that "All men are either Jews or Greeks." In America, a host of scholars from philosopher Henry James to literary scholar Lionel Trilling (the first Jew to receive a professorship in literature at an Ivy League university) expressed a profound interest in the works of Arnold. Indeed, by literary scholar John Henry Raleigh's account, "No other foreign critic, and perhaps few native ones, has...exercised such a palpable influence on American culture [as Matthew Arnold]."<sup>42</sup> Arnold's influence in American Jewish circles is clearly evident in the work of American Jewish philosopher Horace Kallen, who, in 1909 and 1910, wrote two significant essays in which he challenged Arnold's conclusion that both

Hellenism and Hebraism sought the same ultimate ends, that is man's perfection or salvation. And numerous studies have documented the ways in which Kallen's interest in Hebraism was first inspired by his mentor's (Harvard English professor, Barrett Wendell) engagement with Arnoldian thought.<sup>43</sup>

Like so many other thinkers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, then, Israel Zangwill was profoundly interested in, and made significant use of Matthew Arnold's Hebraic/Hellenic paradigm to help describe his own understanding of the Jewish legacy in Western society. Indeed, in an 1892 speech before the Maccabeans—a London-based association of Jewish professionals and intellectuals which would serve as the model for New York's Judeans—Zangwill distinguished between Hebrew, Jew and Israelite, noting that Hebraism, the essential ideals of the Bible, "had conquered the civilized world." Judaism, according to Zangwill, was a concrete religious system based on the precepts of Hebraism, while the term Israelite referred to a national form of Jewish identity.<sup>44</sup>

And so "adaptive Hebraism," Zangwill's prescription for addressing the problems of the American Jewish community, can be understood as an evolutionary effort to adapt the behavior and practices of American Jews to American society while still maintaining the essential precepts of Hebraic thought. Clarifying the precise balance between adaptation to the diasporic realities of American life and the adherence to an Hebraic essence, or rather Zangwill's understanding of that balance, is assuredly a difficult task. After all, in articulating his vision of adaptive Hebraism, Israel Zangwill did not prescribe an entire code of law. That is to say he did not explicitly lay out the litany of rules and regulations required to maintain the



Hebraic legacy in an American milieu. This would have been impossible for a number of reasons. The first, of course, is the sheer magnitude of reinterpreting millennia of extant Jewish law. But of far greater importance was the temporal relativism of such laws. Indeed, the very point of Zangwill's call for an evolutionary and adaptive Jewish life in the United States stemmed from his recognition that times and circumstances change, and that in order to adjust to these changes, Jewish law could not be written in stone, but would need to adapt and evolve continually while still maintaining an essential Hebraic spirit. Therefore, while this study cannot articulate in detail a body of Zangwillian law, so to speak, it can provide a sense of the religious ethos Zangwill hoped to see evolve in the American Jewish community.

To be clear, the absence of a complete corpus of Zangwillian law should not be taken to mean that Israel Zangwill lacked abilities in textual analysis, Hebrew, and the other scholarly prerequisites necessary to perform such a task. In addition to the many other facets of his reputation, in his day Israel Zangwill was a noted expert on Jewish texts—especially in his native England. He was part of a team of British writers and scholars who translated the Festival Prayer Book into English. And his translations of the poems of the eleventh century scholar Solomon Ibn Gabriol were hailed as masterpieces on both sides of the Atlantic. Indeed, Zangwill's opinions on Jewish text and law were so widely respected, that he was frequently cited in the commentaries of the *Hertz Bible*, a translated and annotated edition of the Torah and the Prophets, created by the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, Dr. Joseph Hertz, and which served as one of the central texts in English

speaking congregations for the majority of the twentieth century. In short, Zangwill surely possessed both the skills and reputation of a biblical scholar.<sup>45</sup>

Generally speaking, Israel Zangwill's writings on adaptive Hebraism centered on two issues, the observance of the Sabbath and the general interpretation of Jewish law. Israel Zangwill viewed Sabbath observance as perhaps the most important component of Jewish identity. He dedicated an entire chapter of *The Children of the Ghetto* to describing ghetto Sabbath customs as well as indicating the significance of the Sabbath in the formation and preservation of Jewish identity. "The Sabbath is the hub of the Jew's universe," Zangwill wrote. While the Jews' neighbors sought distraction from their daily woes in drunkenness and its concomitant violence, the Sabbath offered Jews of all socio-economic backgrounds a respite from labor and a chance to ponder the wonder of God and the world to come. The Sabbath had, according to Zangwill, redeemed the Jews "from the grosser vices [they were] a little human islet won from the waters of animalism by the genius of ancient engineers."

Zangwill's belief in the psychological and sociological impact of the Sabbath illustrates several recent observations about the nature of Judaism in Progressive era America. In *Jews and the American Soul* Andrew Heinze argues that Zangwill's fictional works contributed to a new understanding of the rabbinate as experts on human nature rather than Jewish legalism. For Heinze, Zangwill, and a number of other late nineteenth and early twentieth century writers, signaled a turn in American Jewish thinking toward an ethic of personal satisfaction and psychological growth. And like Heinze the historian Lila Corwin Berman sees in the writings and

thought of a number of Progressive era Jews a revolution in Jewish thought, what Berman has termed, "the social scientific turn." This sociological understanding of Jewishness, Berman argues, largely ignored theological difference between Judeo-Christian faiths and enabled Jews to explain their differences "as a set of collective patterns and behaviors...Religion, according to this model, was a functional Jewish identity marker, no different from education level, neighborhood or friends."<sup>46</sup>

In a number of ways, Zangwill's understanding of the Sabbath as a social institution, a series of customs and behaviors engineered to redeem Jews from the animalism and the "grosser vices" of poverty, undoubtedly resonates with the ways in which both Heinze and Berman have described the Progressive era psychological and sociological turns in Jewish thinking and practice. Equally important, Zangwill's understanding of the Sabbath anticipated the work of the American Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, who, in his 1934 book *Judaism as a Civilization*, argued that religious ritual practices, especially the Sabbath, contributed to "the social and humane qualities of men."<sup>47</sup> It is perhaps more accurate to say, though, that Israel Zangwill was a transitional figure between a more spiritual and theological understanding of Judaism and the psychological and sociological understandings which, Heinze and Berman tell us, would come to dominate twentieth century perceptions of Jewishness and Judaism. For while Israel Zangwill undoubtedly believed that Sabbath observance could promote both psychological and sociological goods, he saw in the Sabbath a profound spirituality. On the Sabbath, Zangwill proclaimed, "Angels...whispered words of hope and comfort to the foot-sore hawker and the

aching machinist, and refreshed their parched souls with celestial anodyne and made them kings of the hour."<sup>48</sup>

And yet the realities of the American work week, in which workers received a break from their labor on the Christian Sabbath (Sunday) rather than the Saturday Sabbath prescribed by Jewish law, prevented a great many Jews from observing this most central tenet of Hebraic life—the commandment to rest on the Sabbath and to keep it holy. Indeed, in a 1920 essay in which Zangwill considered the cultural and social differences between Jews in Palestine and in the Diaspora he asserted that the average American worker was literally forced to choose between “Sabbath desecration and starvation.”<sup>49</sup>

But Israel Zangwill found the distinction between Saturday and Sunday Sabbath observance to be totally arbitrary and not all in keeping with the realities of a global Jewish community. “There is nothing of which we have a vaguer sense than of Time,” Zangwill wrote in *The Menorah Journal*. “Often, especially on a voyage, one does not know what day of the week it is.” Indeed, Zangwill argued, if the Jews of the Diaspora depended on Jerusalem time for the ushering in of the Sabbath, then the Jews of New Zealand, for example, and indeed much of the globe, kept almost the entire Sabbath at the wrong time “through a blind adherence to the letter [of the law].” The ephemeral nature of time and the realities of life in Diaspora—which required that Jews adhere to at least some of the culture and customs of their host societies—rendered the strict adherence to a Saturday Sabbath an unreasonable demand for the majority of the Jewish world. As noted above, in his 1917 *Menorah Journal* essay on the “Dilemmas of the

Diaspora,” Zangwill argued that the “unhappy artisan of America” who was forced to choose between earning a living or observing the Sabbath “was impaled on the dilemma of Sabbath desecration or starvation.” The solution to this predicament was remarkably simple, American Jews of all stripes—Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform—should observe a Sunday Sabbath, an idea which Zangwill attributed to his friend and patron, Mayer Sulzberger. “I can imagine no religious change so imperceptible,” he wrote. “Once a single *Shabbos* slipped over into Sunday...the change would not again be noticed.”<sup>50</sup>

Zangwill’s claim about the ease with which American Jews would adapt to a Sunday Sabbath is questionable. Still, his thoughts on the subject make clear his desire to see the American Jewish community “adapt Judaism continuously to life.” The failure to do so would lead to the creation of an ossified Jewish behavioral code, which American Jews would largely ignore, choosing instead to preserve their identities through, what Zangwill believed to be, the meaningless prohibition against so-called interracial marriage. In his 1898 address to New York’s Judeans he warned that such blind adherence to the ban on intermarriage while flouting other essential precepts of Jewish law—which Zangwill frequently referred to as the Mosaic code—would lead to the development of an “ossified” American Jewish orthodoxy “mitigated by oysters.” In other words, Zangwill feared American Jews would create an identity defined by a narrow, tribal understanding of racial purity while ignoring the far more important focus on Hebraism’s ideological precepts, such as Jewish dietary laws.<sup>51</sup>

To be clear, Israel Zangwill did not disapprove of the American Jewish community's rejection of the dietary prohibition on shellfish. Rather, he objected to the utter lack of thought given to such choices. In April 1902, shortly before the Passover holiday commemorating the Jews' liberation from slavery, Zangwill delivered a speech honoring Solomon Schechter, the Cambridge Talmudics scholar who had just been appointed the director of New York's Jewish Theological Seminary of America. In his "Send-Off to Dr. Schechter," Zangwill clarified his earlier remarks on American orthodoxy and oysters. "[A]ssuredly they are aware they [America's Jews] have set aside the Mosaic code. If they had only remained true to its spirit!" Zangwill exclaimed.

Had they, while permitting oysters, still forbidden lobsters, because lobsters are boiled alive, they would have developed Judaism consistently on its humanitarian side. Or had they forbidden unexamined water or milk—the most fertile source of microbes—or made vaccination a mitzvah [a Biblical commandment], they would have developed Judaism consistently on its hygienic side. Despite all that Dr. Schechter has told us of the beauty of the yoke of the law, a conscious adoption of the sociologically best would be a higher Judaism than that military Mosaism which the Egyptian slaves undertook. The autocratic law produces only the automatic soldier, and the proof is the levity with which the soldier throws off the yoke the moment he doubts the authority of the commander. Discipline may be the military virtue, but self-discipline is the spiritual virtue, and only such a Judaism can celebrate a Passover of Freedom.<sup>52</sup>

Zangwill's comments give greater detail to his vision of an American Jewish community engaged in an adaptive understanding of Hebraism. If Americans adhered to the Mosaic code solely through a sense of tradition and obligation, then observance would quickly diminish, and the code would be dismissed as outdated and irrelevant. Only through a conscious effort to understand the intent of the Mosaic code and to integrate its principles into contemporary life could the

American Jewish community insure a vital and sustainable Jewish life in the most tolerant country in the entire Jewish Diaspora.

Israel Zangwill's interest in the continual interpretation of Jewish law was likely informed by his exposure to the ideas of Solomon Schechter. As the above cited quote makes clear, Zangwill was familiar with, and admired, Schechter's work. And like Zangwill, Dr. Schechter fully recognized that the contemporaneous interpretation of Jewish law was an essential component of a vibrant and engaged Jewish existence. In the introduction to an 1896 collection of Schechter's essays, for example, Rabbi Schechter observed that, over the course of Jewish history, the interpretation of Jewish law had shifted from a literal understanding of the Bible to a "Secondary Meaning" which was the product of continually "changing historical influences." This continued interpretation of the Bible and biblical law emerged from a broad, and somewhat undefined, collective of "prophets, Psalmists, Scribes...Rabbis, Patriarchs, Interpreters...Teachers," and others. Schechter termed this continually evolving, historical body of Jewish, biblical interpreters, "Catholic Israel." Thanks to the efforts of Catholic Israel, Schechter explained, Judaism had never become a stale and ossified body of impractical law and custom. Instead, the practice of Judaism was continually able to change and adapt, thus harmonizing "with the existing institutions" and practices of its contemporary moment.<sup>53</sup>

Although he was likely influenced by Rabbi Schechter's conception of Catholic Israel, Zangwill did not employ Schechter's term in describing his own understanding of the need for continual interpretation of Jewish law. Instead, Zangwill termed his approach "Talmudism," thereby linking—perhaps somewhat

inaccurately—the practice of adaptive Hebraism with the interpretive scholarly tradition of rabbis from the famed Jewish academies of Babylon and Palestine during the early centuries of the Common Era. Like Rabbi Schechter, Israel Zangwill did not define a specific group of biblical interpreters to determine the applicability of Jewish law in its modern American context, nor did he provide a detailed mechanism for the institution of American “Talmudism.” Instead, Zangwill broadly described the creation of an “American Sanhedrin,” which can be loosely defined as a court or assembly of rabbis, convened to discuss and interpret the meaning of Jewish law and its application in an American milieu.<sup>54</sup>

Those familiar with Zangwill’s ghetto literature would likely be skeptical of his call for an American Talmudic tradition. After all, one of the central themes in his premiere novel, *The Children of the Ghetto*, concerns the heartbreaking story of Reb Shmuel’s daughter Hannah, who is forbidden to marry the man she loves because of a narrow Talmudic interpretation of the laws concerning marriage and divorce. When, for example, New Orleans’ rabbi Max Heller reviewed the stage version of Zangwill’s novel, he criticized the playwright for an unfair indictment of “Talmudism.” Zangwill rejected Heller’s assessment, though. He argued that the narrow interpretation of Talmud depicted in *The Children of the Ghetto*, and which characterized the rabbis of his day, was not at all in keeping with the true spirit of Talmudism. On more than one occasion Zangwill argued that the rabbis of the Talmud were not hidebound dogmatic autocrats, but rather “progressive reformers.” Indeed, by Zangwill’s account, the true “Reform rabbis” were not the westernized Jewish clerics of nineteenth and twentieth century Europe and America,



but the "Rabbis of the Talmud who carried on the evolution of the Pentateuch [five books of Moses] in correspondence with the changing thought and need of the day."<sup>55</sup>

This last statement, Zangwill's characterization of the Talmudic Rabbis' temporal adaptability, is likely the most succinct expression of Israel Zangwill's prophetic vision for America's Jews. While much of Zangwill's writing on American Judaism seems difficult to pin down, while in his day he seemed to ask more of the Reform and Orthodox movements than either would or could accept, at the core of Israel Zangwill's belief in the American Jewish future was a consistent and powerful demand for continuous adaptability and evolution from American Jews. By Zangwill's account, if American Jews failed to revisit and reassess routinely the meaning of Jewish law and ritual, if they were not like the "Rabbis of the Talmud who carried on the evolution of the Pentateuch in correspondence with the changing thought and need of the day" then Judaism would become moribund and eventually die, and with its passing would go the central tenets of ethical monotheism, the expectation of morally upright behavior, the Hebraic belief in the universality of humanity and, in a sense, the founding ethos of the United States of America.

My assertion about the consistency of Zangwill's thinking on American Jewish life is no small point. As we shall see in a later chapter, scholars who study the life and works of Israel Zangwill have frequently described the author's philosophical outlook and his opinions on Jewish life and culture, Zionism, Territorialism, and other topics as inconsistent and mercurial. "Consistency was not one of

[Zangwill's] virtues," wrote one biographer, "except, perhaps, that he was consistently inconsistent."<sup>56</sup> Meri-Jane Rochelson has reasonably challenged this characterization by noting the ways in which Israel Zangwill's ideas were "pragmatic responses to changing conditions, dictated by immediate concerns."<sup>57</sup> While there is much to recommend Rochelson's assessment of Zangwillian thought and activism, I would argue that in at least one phase of Israel Zangwill's career, his prophecy for America and its Jews, Israel Zangwill proved ideologically and intellectually consistent. To be sure, Zangwill's vision of America and his aspirations for American Jewry were grounded in a mistaken, exceptional perception of the newness of American and American Jewish life. And to be sure, one may reasonably question the feasibility of his radical demands to alter Jewish life. But as Heschel reminds us, the prophet's expectations are rarely reasonable. Indeed, Heschel tells us, "The prophet's message sounds incredible" and his vision is rarely realized.<sup>58</sup>

But though Israel Zangwill's perceptions of America and the American Jewish past were faulty, and despite the audacity of his demand for a radically adaptive and evolutionary American Judaism, still, over a three plus decade career, Zangwill's prophetic vision for American Jewry was consistent. From his 1898 address to New York's Judeans until his 1924 departure from the American scene, Israel Zangwill articulated a single vision of America as a unique place devoid of a Jewish past. This break with Jewish, and indeed global, history enabled America and its Jews to end historic patterns of nationalism and anti-Semitism and create new ideas about national identity and Jewish tradition. The US, by Zangwill's

account, was much more than the melting pot. It represented an entirely new chapter in the history of humanity and the history of the Jews.

But America's Jews had yet to write the next chapter of Jewish history, and throughout Zangwill's career he consistently admonished America's Jews to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the nation's relative tolerance and historical novelty. In virtually every address directed towards the American Jewish community, Zangwill offered criticisms and cautions about the direction of American Jewish life. He called for the advent of an American led, Jewish renaissance. But such a rebirth depended upon American Jews' rejection of crass materialism, craven efforts at assimilation, and an exclusionary, racist understanding of Jewish identity. Concomitantly, America's Jews would need to embrace a creative, adaptive, and progressive approach to the practice of Judaism, an outlook that synthesized the essential tenets of the Hebraic legacy with a modern sensibility. This was the prophetic vision Israel Zangwill articulated in his numerous essays, speeches and other public pronouncements delivered in, or to, the Jewish community of the United States of America.

And yet, many of America's Jews—as well as a great many non-Jews—failed to perceive accurately Zangwill's vision for the establishment of a creative, adaptive, and forward looking American Jewish life. Indeed the American Jewish critique of Zangwill, as displayed in the editorial pages of the nation's newspapers (both Jewish and non-Jewish), as well as in numerous rabbinic sermons, portrayed him as a promoter of intermarriage and the creation of a new American race which would, in essence, end the distinctiveness of the nation's Jews. Ironically, in

describing Zangwillian thought in this manner, many of America's Jews actually confirmed Zangwill's critique of the American Jewish community—specifically his belief that America's Jews sought to preserve their Jewish identity through a racialized conception of Jewishness while largely rejecting the religious aspects of Judaism. These critiques, which are the subject of the following chapter, would continue to define Zangwill and Zangwillian thought in his day and for many decades after his death.

### **Chapter Three: Debating the Prophet and his Prophecy: Americans on Zangwill**

In Abraham Joshua Heschel's study of the Old Testament prophets he notes that it is surprising that they were "tolerated at all by their people. To the patriots they seemed pernicious, to the pious multitude blasphemous; to the men in authority, seditious."<sup>1</sup> One might reasonably apply the same descriptions to the American public's reception of Israel Zangwill at various points in his career. The relationship between Zangwill the prophet and his American public was often contentious and contradictory. Put simply, Israel Zangwill made Americans (both Jewish and non-Jewish) uncomfortable. It is, perhaps an overstatement to suggest, as Heschel says of the prophet Jeremiah, that Zangwill's words were fire and his people wood. It would, however, be entirely reasonable to argue that the American Jewish idea of Israel Zangwill— that of a bold Jewish polemicist and a widely acknowledged expert on Jewish peoples and affairs who spoke his mind to both Jew and Gentile alike and cared little for the repercussions of his caustic criticisms and audacious assertions—often raised anxieties among America's Jews. The contradiction here, of course, is that, as previously argued in my first chapter, American Jews played a tremendous role in forming that idea of Zangwill.

What is more, Israel Zangwill's American Jewish ideals stirred controversy in the American Jewish community. His celebration of Jewish distinctiveness directly countered the social and political efforts of many American Jews to fit into American society for their own sake and the sake of subsequent waves of Jewish immigrants. His efforts to unify American Judaism through the creation of a non-denominational, adaptive and evolutionary form of Judaism challenged America's denominational

establishment. And Zangwill's 1908 production of "The Melting Pot" would provoke a defensive response from an American Jewish community which, as Zangwill had long asserted, largely believed Jewish identity to be racially, rather than religiously, defined.

How did America's Jews respond to Zangwill in light of these discursive challenges? This chapter will explore the ways in which the American Jewish community received, reconfigured, responded to, and, on more than one occasion, rejected Israel Zangwill's ideas about Jews and Judaism in America. In so doing it will make clear that a number of historical factors contributed to American Jewry's concerns about, and dismissal of, Zangwill's prophetic vision. And it will also argue that Zangwill's mistaken sense of American Jewish exceptionalism, his belief in the absence of a lengthy American Jewish history prior to his engagement with the American Jewish community, contributed to the contentious relationship that existed between the prophet and his people. It argues, then, that in some sense the discourse between Zangwill and America was based on mutual misperception and misunderstanding.

These misperceptions and misunderstandings do not invalidate the discourse between Zangwill and America. An examination of the American discourse surrounding Zangwill's works and ideas, even a misinformed discourse, explains a great deal about the history of the American Jewish community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A close reading of American Jewry's reception of Zangwill's novels, speeches, and plays reveals an anxious community concerned about their acceptance in American society, divided by denominational differences, regional divides, and even internecine squabbles between various

members of the American Reform movement. And the American Jewish response to Zangwill's 1908 play "The Melting Pot" vibrantly illustrates Zangwill's argument that the American Jewish community was far more concerned about the racial preservation of Jewish identity than they were about the evolution of American Judaism.

#### Anxiety Over Tradition: Debates on *The Children of the Ghetto*

Israel Zangwill catalyzed debate in the American Jewish community the very moment that he burst onto the American literary scene with the American publication of his premiere novel, *The Children of the Ghetto*. In his book, Zangwill offered a thick description of Jewish ghetto life, providing minute detail into the daily lives of ghetto Jews and the ritual observance and practice of ghetto Judaism. And while the novel portrayed several admirable and noble Jews, his cast of characters included numerous, negative ghetto stereotypes, as well—such as the fervent Zionist who viewed his country of residence as a mere "stepfatherland," the Jewish scholar and poet who intensely studied the letter of the law but then violated its spirit, the *schnorer* who arrogantly insisted on communal charity without a shred of shame or humility, and the shrewish and covetous wife who became obsessed with material wealth and dismissed her fellow ghetto dwellers as beneath her. Nor did wealthy or upper middle class Jews fare any better in the book's second volume. Here Zangwill described an intensely insular and snobbish Jewish community, devoid of any depth of Jewish spirit and thoroughly mortified by the behavior and culture of their ghetto coreligionists.

The revelation of such peoples, as well as some of the book's pointed criticisms concerning the restrictive nature of Jewish law—or at least the Orthodox

interpretation of that law—raised concerns within the American Jewish community and led to a number of forceful denunciations of Zangwill’s premiere novel. But not all American Jews objected to the book. As we know from this dissertation’s first chapter, many American Jews applauded the book’s publication and their reception of the novel helped establish Zangwill’s reputation as an expert on Jewish affairs. And so, the American Jewish response to Zangwill’s first novel proved divided and contentious. Indeed, American Jewish debates surrounding *The Children of the Ghetto* proved so impassioned and so divisive that Rabbi F. De Sola Mendes observed in the pages of *The American Hebrew* that, “Opinions the most opposing have been uttered about it: criticisms the most conflicting have been pronounced...By the one it is praised to the skies, the wisdom of the author extolled...By others the book is dourly denounced as inimical to the best interests of Judaism, the author almost accused of sinister motives.”<sup>2</sup>

A close reading of the debates surrounding *The Children of the Ghetto* confirm Mendes’ reports about the furor raised over Zangwill’s novel, as well as its subsequent dramatization. Of equal, if not greater importance, though, the discourse surrounding *The Children of the Ghetto* demonstrates a critical point about the way in which American Jews perceived Zangwill’s role in American discourse. American Jews believed that Israel Zangwill’s work—in this case his unabashed description of ghetto life—had a palpable effect (for good or ill) on the relative acceptance of Jews in the broader society, and as such, the debates surrounding the Zangwill’s novel were not a mere literary discussion, but rather a debate about the extent to which America’s Jews could, or should, declare Jewish distinctiveness in Progressive era America.



One of the earliest and most vitriolic objections to the publication of *The Children of the Ghetto* came from Cyrus Sulzberger, the cousin of Israel Zangwill's American benefactor Mayer Sulzberger, and a successful New York merchant, as well as a prominent leader of the city's Jewish community. As the reader may recall, in 1895 Zangwill's fame in America proved so significant that Sulzberger had asked Zangwill to donate an autographed copy of one of his books for sale at a charity fundraiser. But in early December 1892, almost immediately after the novel's American release, Sulzberger had a less sanguine opinion of Zangwill's work. Shortly after reading *The Children of the Ghetto*, Sulzberger wrote a letter to the editors of *The American Hebrew* in which he excoriated not only Zangwill for writing the book, but also the JPS for publishing it. For Sulzberger, Zangwill's depictions of the ghetto, be they "well or illfounded," were attacks on the entire Jewish race. And while Zangwill may write whatever he cared to, the JPS had no business publishing such slanders. By far Sulzberger's greatest fear concerned the way in which the book's publication would increase, or at the very least reinforce, anti-Semitism. "No charge that has been made by anti-Semitism but will find substantiation in 'The Children of the Ghetto,'" Sulzberger wrote. "No reproach that has been uttered by the snobs of the Four Hundred, but its echo is heard in this book."<sup>3</sup>

Sulzberger's fears that *The Children of the Ghetto* would exacerbate anti-Semitism in the United States were shared by other American Jews. Numerous letters to the *Hebrew* supported Sulzberger's assessment of both Zangwill and the Jewish Publication Society. A December 1892 letter, for example, argued that it was unacceptable for the JPS "to spend its means disseminating among the reading

public of all faiths a work...which, written by a Jew, charges a certain class of his own people with being particularly susceptible to...moral delinquencies." And in January 1893 a reader of the *Hebrew* argued that Zangwill had no need "to write the work in the interest of truth, because...thanks to our Christian friends, we are in no danger of overlooking our weaknesses," this assessment despite the fact that the author of the letter openly admitted he had not read the novel.<sup>4</sup>

Protests about the revelatory nature of Israel Zangwill's work and its effect on the broader American society surrounded the American dramatization of the novel, as well. As Rabbi Maurice Harris would observe in a sermon on the play, "Great alarm is expressed by many Jews at [Zangwill's] revelation." In the late fall of 1898, shortly after Zangwill announced his intention to write the play and then produce it in America, a reader of *The American Hebrew* questioned the wisdom of such a plan. Indeed, the author of the letter took such offense at the potential staging of *The Children of the Ghetto*, that he asked the question, is Zangwill "really one of us [i.e., Jewish]?" And once the play was produced in New York, a number of Jews registered their outrage in the pages of the *Hebrew*. One correspondent was so offended by the revelatory nature of the play that he compared Zangwill's actions to those of Noah's son Ham, who had shamed Noah by exposing his father's nakedness. While another reader of the *Hebrew* claimed that when she attended the play, three fourths of the audience was Gentile, all of who believed that Zangwill had "written the play as a farce to amuse them," rather than as part of an effort to reveal faithfully the life of the ghetto to the broader world.<sup>5</sup>

The American Jewish public's concerns over the ethno-specific content of the play and the Gentile world's reaction to it would prove so great that the editors of

*The American Hebrew* invited a non-Jew to view *The Children of the Ghetto* and to offer his impressions of the play for the paper's readers. In that column, Judge Thomas L. James dismissed concerns that Gentiles would find the subject of the play to be an object of ridicule and mockery. James proclaimed the play "a strong, sinewy" work which revealed "phases of life entirely new to [him]." And James argued that the "sternness and rigidity" of Jewish Orthodoxy in many ways paralleled the orthodoxy of the nation's puritan founders.<sup>6</sup>

James' assessment notwithstanding, a clear —though often not fully articulated— anxiety emerges from these critiques of *The Children of the Ghetto*. Specifically, expressions of concern over the revelatory nature of Zangwill's book, and its subsequent dramatization point to a deep-seated fear concerning the perceived fragility of Jewish acceptance in America. Perhaps the most fully expressed sense of this fear emerged in a December 1892 letter to *The American Hebrew* from a J.C. Levi. In his comments, Levi questioned the need of Zangwill and the JPS to expose Jewish faults to an unwelcoming non-Jewish public. He noted that historically the behavior of the individual Jew had always implicated the Jewish collective. With this in mind, Levi observed that, "We must never lose sight of our anomalous position among the peoples of the earth, and that nowhere are we permitted to be judged by the same standard as other faiths."<sup>7</sup>

This concern over Jewish acceptance in American society was not completely unfounded. Cyrus Sulzberger's critique of *The Children of the Ghetto* raised the issue of recent Jewish exclusion from resort hotels, for example. But of greater importance to Sulzberger was the way in which the response to the novel might limit Jewish immigration to the United States. Here, he cited the Chinese Exclusion

Act, which had been signed into law ten years prior to the publication of *The Children of the Ghetto*. The Exclusion Act, which emerged from a decade of anti-Chinese sentiment in the American West, barred the immigration of all Chinese laborers into the country—though merchants, scholars, and other professionals could still be admitted. In 1892, the year that *The Children of the Ghetto* was first published in the United States, the Exclusion Act was renewed and made even more severe by Congressional passage of the Geary Act. That act denied Chinese aliens the most basic Constitutional protections. It refused them the right of bail, required Chinese people to obtain a certificate of residence—what one scholar has described as a sort of internal passport—and it dismissed the jurisprudential convention of presumption of innocence, asserting that people of Chinese descent were assumed to be in the United States illegally unless they could prove otherwise.<sup>8</sup>

Clearly such a forceful and discriminatory stance towards a community of American immigrants influenced Sulzberger's reception of, and response to, *The Children of the Ghetto*. Like the Chinese of the 1870s, most Jewish immigrants throughout the great migration of 1880-1924 came to the United States to work as industrial laborers. The massive influx of industrial migrants would lead to significant anti-immigrant sentiment in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. In his letter to *The American Hebrew* Sulzberger asked, would a Chinese Publication Society operating at the height of the anti-Chinese agitation in the 1870s-1880s have, merely for the sake of artistic expression, published a "Children of the Joss-house" or would they have believed that discretion was the better part of valor at that moment in history? Sulzberger went on to note that "[E]very

intelligent observer of current events has noted the growing spirit of opposition to the further influx of Russian Jews." How much longer, he wondered, could America's gates remain open to Jewish immigration, and what role would Zangwill's book play in further turning the tide against these migrants?<sup>9</sup>

Cyrus Sulzberger's attacks on *The Children of the Ghetto* and his concerns over the possible effects of the book's widespread publication vividly illustrate historian Hasia Diner's recent argument about the shifting nature of American Jewish discourse in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In her important survey of 350 years of American Jewish history, Diner argues that in the late nineteenth century, American Jews shifted their political focus away from the "defense of Judaism"—meaning the social, legal, and political effort to legitimize the practice of Judaism in American culture and society—and directed it towards the "defense of Jews." According to Diner, by the end of the nineteenth century, Judaism "had become ensconced in America as an acceptable, if unusual, religion." Concomitantly, though, American social scientists had begun to depict Jews as a distinct, biological, and likely inassimilable, race. Such racist thinking, which as we shall later see experienced the height of its American popularity in the first quarter of the twentieth century, threatened both the acceptance of Jews into American society, as well as the relative open immigration of Jews to America. In response, American Jewish institutions engaged in two lines of defense. Prominent American Jews such as banker Jacob Schiff and Louis Marshall, the head of the American Jewish Committee, strenuously lobbied Congress to allow continued Jewish immigration to the United States, while other Jewish individuals and institutions sought to play down, rather than promote, Jewish difference. Indeed

1892 not only witnessed the American publication of Israel Zangwill's premiere novel, but also the formation of the American Jewish Historical Society—an organization originally dedicated to demonstrating American Jewry's essential "Americanness" by highlighting its lengthy history in the United States and Jewish contributions to the development of the US and its institutions. And so American Jewish protests about the revelatory nature of *The Children of the Ghetto* were, in fact, part of a broader effort to "defend Jews" in the face of growing, racially based, anti-Semitism.<sup>10</sup>

But not all participants in the debate about *The Children of the Ghetto* objected to Israel Zangwill's revelations about the so called darker side of the Jewish ghetto. Some argued that the book did not reveal Jewish failings, but rather the damaging effects of poverty and isolation. When Rabbi F. de Sola Mendes examined the so-called Jewish faults publicly aired in Zangwill's novel, he pronounced them to be "the faults bred of the hovering miasma of centuried [sic] persecution."<sup>11</sup> The "foibles and follies" portrayed in the book, wrote another observer in 1898, were "not the result of moral corruption...[but] rather the natural excrescences caused by isolation and shutting out of light forced on the Jews by the Christian world in the spirit of love."<sup>12</sup>

Still others actually applauded the revelatory aspects of the book. For some, Zangwill's novel and its depiction of Jewish ghetto life actually affirmed a distinct and thoroughly modern Jewish identity. Zangwill's book, these voices argued, allowed the reader the opportunity to compare the backward-looking, and perhaps unfortunate, practices of the Children of the Ghetto with the progressive lifestyle of the modern, Western (but most notably American) Jew. An editorial in *The Reform*

*Advocate*, for example, argued that “It has well been observed, that knowledge of the ‘Children of the Ghetto’ magnifies the merit of their latest descendants who have outlived the dwarfing influences of such a past.”<sup>13</sup>

And still another cohort of the book’s proponents argued that although Israel Zangwill had exposed the so-called dark side of Jewish life, such exposure actually improved Jewish standing within America’s multi-ethnic landscape by countering the unreasonable claims of Jewish exceptionalism. In a March 1893 lecture on *The Children of the Ghetto*, for example, Rabbi Maurice Harris argued that Zangwill’s was but one book in a growing body of ethnographic novels by such figures as Brett Harte and Rudyard Kipling. Such revelatory works were essential toward the understanding of diversity of human experience. As for the fear that *The Children of the Ghetto* might increase anti-Semitism, Harris argued that such fears were a vestige of a more dangerous past, and that the “fear of anti-Semitism must never rob us of our...independence.” One response to Cyrus Sulzberger’s critique of the novel dismissed Sulzberger and others like him as “scary patriots and zealots” who feared revealing that Jews, like all peoples, were not perfect. While Max Cohen of the Maimonides library argued that, “The case of the Jew will have a much better standing... when we admit at the outset that Jews are human beings, with human frailties, weaknesses, and follies.”<sup>14</sup>

The American Jewish community’s debates over *The Children of the Ghetto*, both in its novel form and its stage production, reveal the discursive boundaries of a phenomenon which Israel Zangwill would later term “Marranoism”— a deep-seated fear that the Jewish position in a host country was tenuous at best and that the only hope for Jewish survival was for Jews to not draw undue attention

(especially negative attention) to the community. As the reader will recall, Zangwill argued that such behavior, particularly in America—the most accepting community in the entire Jewish Diaspora—was unnecessary, undignified, and if perpetuated would ensure the disintegration of a distinct Jewish identity.

Here, the reader might see the proponents of the novel as sharing Zangwill's assessment of the American Marranoist impulse, but in some sense, we find in the words of Jewish supporters of *The Children of the Ghetto* an anxiety about the ghetto which paralleled the fears of the book's detractors. Opponents of the novel decried its revelations of the most unsavory aspects of a discounted way of life, while the book's proponents argued that its revelatory character made clear to both Jew and non-Jew alike the extent to which a great many American Jews had distanced themselves from their coreligionists in the ghetto. In both instances, though, the behaviors of the Children of the Ghetto were perceived as an embarrassment to be overcome or a backwards inheritance by which one could measure the advances of modern Jewish "civilization," rather than a powerful legacy upon which American Jewry could build its future culture and observance.<sup>15</sup>

Israel Zangwill, however, believed that America was the most appropriate site for the creation of a new and evolutionary form of Judaism which embraced the most salutary traditions of the Children of the Ghetto and synthesized them with the realities of modern existence. Concomitantly, he argued that American Jews had failed to take advantage of this remarkable opportunity. From 1898 through the early years of the twentieth-century he would alternately lament the Marranoist timidity of America's Jews, as well as, what he believed to be, the ossified dogmatism of America Judaism. Whether Zangwill had conceived of the notion of



American Marranoism prior to the publication of *The Children of the Ghetto*, or whether events such as this moment of critical response to his work informed his understanding of American Jewry is not clear. It seems likely that the latter is probably the case. What is clear, though, is that the American publication of *The Children of the Ghetto* challenged the comfort of a number of American Jews uncertain about the extent of their community's acceptance in the United States of America.

### Zangwillian Prophecy and America's Denominational Divide

Central to Israel Zangwill's prophetic instruction for American Jewish life, was his vision of a new, unified, diasporic form of American Judaism, an idea which he articulated throughout his engagement with American Jewry. But in his day, Zangwill's hopes for American Judaism proved largely futile. His steadfast belief in American Jewish exceptionalism—that is, his perception of America as a place devoid of a Jewish past and therefore capable of building a Jewish future without the baggage of established Jewish institutions and denominations—ignored the realities of Progressive era American Jewish life. By the late 1890s, the moment when Israel Zangwill first travelled to the United States, American Jews had built important religious and educational institutions, and Jewish Orthodoxy, Jewish Reform, and the recently developed Conservative movement (which sought to adjust Orthodox Judaism to American norms through the "scientific" study of Jewish texts) had already fostered significant denominational divides which would prove insurmountable. American Jewish responses to Zangwill at the fin de siècle reflected these divisions in Jewish life, as well as regional and intra-denominational divisions. Despite Israel Zangwill's quest for a unified American Judaism, the

American Jewish debates which surrounded Zangwillian prophecy would actually further divide American Jews.

One of the simplest ways to perceive this division is through the way American rabbis characterized Israel Zangwill's denominational loyalties. Put simply, several prominent members of the American rabbinate could not agree on whether Zangwill's works advocated for Orthodox or Reform Judaism. Orthodox rabbi Bernard Drachman, for example, objected to the publication of *The Children of the Ghetto* because, according to him, its depiction of Orthodoxy demeaned Orthodox Jews. By contrast, shortly after Zangwill's address to New York's Judeans, Reform rabbi Kaufmann Kohler of Temple Beth-El in Manhattan claimed that Zangwill's speech promoted "official Orthodoxy." One week later, Sephardic Rabbi, Henry Pereira Mendes, a key figure in the institutional development of Orthodox Judaism, countered Kohler's remarks by applauding Zangwill's supposed critique of Reform. And Samuel Schulman, then an assistant rabbi to Koehler, offered a sermon on the stage production of "The Children of the Ghetto" in which he asserted that the play's central message was that one "must either be a Ghetto Jew, or cease being Jewish altogether."<sup>16</sup>

Israel Zangwill, of course, had taken no side on the issue of denominationalism. As demonstrated in previous chapters, he criticized both Orthodoxy and Reform in equal measure—the former for its unwillingness to adapt Judaism to the conditions of the Diaspora and the latter for being so adaptive that the practice of Judaism had come to resemble mainstream, American Protestantism. Zangwill's notion of "adaptive Hebraism" demanded synthesis, not division. Clearly, though, the persistent attempts of American rabbis to categorize

Zangwillian thought into existing denominational categories, reveals that the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century American rabbinate had very little interest in religious synthesis and had instead become obsessed with denominational division.

This was particularly true of rabbis from the American Reform Movement. As Jonathan Sarna has observed, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, patterns of Jewish religious deference in America had shifted, and the American Reform Movement—once the sole institutionalized variant of Judaism in the country—faced significant challenges from a wide array of Jewish movements, ranging from Jewish Orthodoxy to various forms of Jewish national and cultural revival. “For half a century,” Sarna writes, “progressive American Jews had marched under the Reform banner and had viewed its program as...the only viable direction for Judaism in the New World.” However, the large influx of Jewish immigrants into America from 1880-1924—many of whom had been raised either as Orthodox Jews or as products of an Eastern European ghetto culture which defined Jewishness largely through a common language (read: Yiddish) and community—challenged Reform’s vision. As well, the creation of several organizations associated with Jewish Orthodoxy and the nascent Conservative movement, threatened Reform’s seeming institutional monopoly on American Jewish practice. In response to these developments in American Jewish life some of the most prominent minds in American Reform Judaism attempted to redefine the movement or at the very least assign blame for its demise.<sup>17</sup>

Both the novel and theatrical versions of *The Children of the Ghetto*, as well as Zangwill’s 1898 address to New York’s Judeans seem to have struck a chord with

these rabbis, who were in the midst of both attempting to justify Reform as intellectually and spiritually superior to other denominations, as well as articulating their own vision of a more perfect American Reform Judaism. A close reading of their responses to Zangwill reveals not only a certain sense of status anxiety within the movement, but also some of the means by which these prominent rabbis hoped to distinguish, or even redeem Reform Judaism in America.

In some cases America's Reform rabbis sought to redefine their movement by promoting its intellectual and spiritual superiority over its Orthodox and Conservative counterparts, while also arguing for the centrality of Reform in the creation of a modern American Jewish identity. In his sermon on the stage version of *The Children of the Ghetto*, for example, Samuel Schulman chastised Israel Zangwill for not promoting Reform Judaism in the play. Schulman characterized Reform as an emancipatory movement, essential to the development of modern Judaism. While Maurice Harris in his sermon on the novel applauded Zangwill's recognition of Reform as the "ideal religion." And Kaufmann Kohler in his response to Zangwill's works hailed Reform as the antidote to the hypocrisy of the so-called observant American Jew who proclaimed the centrality of Jewish law while concomitantly disregarding its most basic precepts.<sup>18</sup>

In other cases, though, rabbinic responses to Zangwill's work reveal a more searching effort to redefine the essential meaning of American Reform Judaism. As the historian Naomi Cohen has observed, American Reform rabbis at the turn of the century faced a significant intellectual crisis. The movement's ideological underpinnings were deeply grounded in the European Enlightenment's apotheosis of rational thought. But in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries such

rationalist trends as “popular faith in science and scientific research—including the currents of Darwinism and biblical criticism—” actually diminished interest in, and enthusiasm for, Reform Judaism. In response to this ideological, and indeed demographic, challenge, some of the finest minds in the Reform Movement sought to restore its spiritual vigor. As Cohen observes, such rabbinic efforts did not seek to thoroughly eliminate rational thought from Reform Judaism, but rather to establish “a balance between intellect and spirit.”<sup>19</sup>

The crisis of spirit in American Reform Judaism and the intellectual efforts to restore spirituality to the movement were clearly present in two responses to Zangwill’s works from Rabbi Maurice Harris—the first piece, his 1893 sermon on *The Children of the Ghetto* and the second, an editorial on Zangwill’s 1898 address to the Judeans. In his 1893 sermon, Harris argued that Zangwill’s book had articulated a profound identity crisis which had troubled all segments of American Israel. “We have been for some time in a hopeless muddle, as to just what we are and just what we ought to be,” Harris wrote. “What was Judaism, what is Judaism, what should be Judaism? At what point does Conservatism cease to be Orthodoxy; at what point does Reform cease to be Judaism?” By Harris’ account, *The Children of the Ghetto* provided such a complete survey of the “problems and conditions” facing emancipated Jews that it could serve as “a text-book for the discussion of the Jewish question.”<sup>20</sup> But while Harris applauded the questions raised in Zangwill’s premiere novel, the Rabbi did not believe that the book had offered any significant solutions.

By Rabbi Harris’ account, Israel Zangwill would finally articulate a set of solutions in his 1898 address to New York’s Judeans. As the reader may recall, in

Zangwill's 1898 speech—his first specifically delivered to American Jews on the topic of American Judaism—the author severely criticized Reform Judaism in America, arguing that it had adapted so much of its ritual practice to American social and cultural norms that its services resembled those of American Protestant churches. Zangwill encouraged American Reform Jews to abolish its Protestant conventions, such as the wearing of clerical robes by rabbis and cantors and the presence of a professional choir, and he encouraged the restoration of traditional prayers and a greater use of Hebrew in the service.

By and large, Rabbi Harris concurred with Zangwill's assessment of American Reform Judaism, and even approved some of the British author's proposed solutions. In his editorial response to Zangwill's address, Harris acknowledged that Reform Judaism had, in some sense, "lost the poetry of Judaism." But he contextualized that loss as part of an historical process of reformation, a process not that different from Zangwill's own vision for American Judaism. Harris argued that after centuries of evolution in diaspora, Judaism had become bogged down in unnecessary practices and rituals acquired from a life in the shtetl, the Pale of Settlement, and elsewhere. And so the Reform movement's first phase was, necessarily, an "analytical phase" in which practice and ritual were assessed in relationship to the "essential [elements of] Judaism." Harris recognized that such a process had removed from Reform Judaism some level of sentiment and spirit. But having moved through the analytical phase of reformation, Reform Judaism in Progressive era America was on the cusp of a "synthetic stage" which would, as Zangwill advised, unite the essential spirit of Judaism with its modern observance.

"In entering our second...stage," wrote Harris, "we shall value much Mr. Zangwill's encouragement and his helpful suggestions."<sup>21</sup>

In some sense, Rabbi Harris' response to Israel Zangwill's 1898 address was unique. His willingness to acknowledge the validity of Zangwill's critique stood in stark contrast to the responses of other Reform rabbis who either rejected Zangwill's opinions entirely, or who argued that whatever points he may have made, they were applicable to others and not to their own variant of Reform Judaism. At least one rabbi in the American Reform Movement, for example, Rabbi Samuel Greenfield of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, believed that the staid and overly decorous practices which Zangwill observed in the synagogues of the East Coast, and criticized in his remarks to the Judeans, were a regional problem and not a nationwide crisis.

Greenfield, the editor of Pittsburgh's *The Jewish Criterion*, offered a two page reply to Zangwill in October 28<sup>th</sup> edition of the paper. He mocked the pomp and circumstance of the Judeans, proclaiming them to be "gods...assembled in classic Olympic fashion." And he argued that the East Coast synagogues Zangwill had attended, and rightfully criticized for their cold formality, hardly represented the true spirit of the American Reform Movement. Indeed, by Greenfield's account it was the Jewish merchant experience in the American interior that had led to the creation of the truest and most creative reformation of American Judaism.<sup>22</sup>

Faced with the conditions of the frontier, Greenfield argued, a place devoid of an institutional Jewish life, or even other Jews, the peddler Jew of the American West pared away the trappings of Judaism and found its essence. During their early years in the American interior, Reform Judaism became a great gift to these

isolated Jewish peddlers, connecting them to the traditions of their ancestors, while still allowing them the behavioral freedom to become prosperous merchants. In return, once settled and established in their new communities, this new, Jewish merchant class of the American West would sacrifice much to maintain the few traditions and practices which they deemed essential to their religion (such as the circumcision of their sons, weekly Jewish education, and observance of the Jewish High Holidays). By contrast, the ease by which the Reform Jews of the East Coast—with its much larger Jewish population—could practice their religion, in some sense robbed them of the missionary zeal needed to perpetuate a vibrant and creative Judaism, thus contributing to their crisis of spirit.<sup>23</sup>

Greenfield's comments on the development of Judaism in the American interior echoed an oft repeated trope in nineteenth-century American Jewish discourse. As Jonathan Sarna argues in his important study on the history of American Judaism, through their establishment of synagogues and other Jewish institutions in the American interior, western Jews envisioned themselves as spiritual trailblazers who tamed the wilderness through their tireless efforts to gather together the "scattered sons of Israel." What is more, Greenfield's vision of the West as a spiritual frontier resonated with Israel Zangwill's sense of American Jewish exceptionalism. Indeed, Zangwill's prophetic vision for America's Jews was based on his assumption that America was a place largely bereft of an established Jewish tradition. This despite the fact that by the time Zangwill made his comments, self conscious, culturally creative and religiously observant Jewish communities had existed in America for over 200 years.<sup>24</sup>



Ironically, despite the similarities in their rhetoric, Rabbi Greenfield's comments on western Jewry actually disprove Israel Zangwill's exceptionalist reading of American Jewish history. Indeed, central to Greenfield's editorial on Zangwill's 1898 address was an abiding belief that the Jews of the American East were participants in a longstanding, ossified variant of Reform Judaism. Such an argument implied, of course, a lengthy American Jewish past, an idea which Zangwill's prophecy failed to recognize.

Perhaps the most thoughtful, searching, and aggressive response to Israel Zangwill's admonition of American Reform Judaism came from another rabbi serving in the American interior, Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch of Congregation Sinai in Chicago. The similarities between Greenfield and Hirsch end with their geographic locations, though. While Greenfield applauded the Americanization of Reform, Hirsch lamented the diminishing influence of German ideals on the American Reform Movement. The son, and son in law, of two important figures in American Reform Judaism—Rabbis Samuel Hirsch and David Einhorn—Emil Hirsch was arguably the most powerful proponent of Judaism as a force for social justice in the Progressive era. Indeed, Hirsch's record as a social activist in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Chicago is impressive even by twenty-first-century standards. But Hirsch's religious views also had a powerful influence on his congregants, as well as the body of American Reform Judaism.<sup>25</sup>

In particular, Hirsch was a forceful partisan on behalf of the German influenced, radical Reform Judaism, which had been advanced by Einhorn in the mid-nineteenth century. Einhorn and his cohort of radical reformers had promoted a significantly altered version of Jewish observance, one which rejected many of the

traditional conventions of Jewish practice such as Saturday Sabbaths, the use of *tallitot* (prayer shawls), the hierarchical practice of offering *Kohanim* (members of the Jewish priestly caste) the privilege of being the first to read from the Torah, the addition of a second day of observance to Jewish festivals celebrated in the Diaspora, and other longstanding Jewish traditions. Of even greater religious importance, Einhorn and other radical reformers rejected the binding nature of a wide swath of Biblical commandments (such as dietary restrictions) as well as the authority of the Talmud (the compilation of ancient rabbinic writings which serve as legal precedent in the interpretation of Jewish law).<sup>26</sup>

Hirsch's response to Zangwill's address, a full front page article in *The Reform Advocate* titled "Zangwill or Einhorn?" argued that Israel Zangwill's critique applied not to Hirsch and his radical reformers, but rather to other rabbis and congregations in the American Reform movement who had forgotten or discarded the teachings of Einhorn. Despite the title of the piece, which seems to compel the reader to choose either Zangwill or Einhorn, Hirsch was actually quite complimentary of Zangwill's comments in New York. Like Zangwill, Hirsch lamented the assimilationist tendencies of most Reform congregations. But Hirsch went even further, arguing that in an effort to appease all elements of American Israel, and indeed even all Christians, America's Reform Rabbis had abandoned their role as teachers and instead become soda jerks, offering each congregant the Judaism of their choice "with ice-cream and the flavor of Unitarianism or Episcopalianism, or Methodism."<sup>27</sup>

This commercialization of Judaism and its betrayal of Jewish ideals, according to Hirsch, was directly attributable to the abandonment of Einhorn's principles. "Mr. Zangwill has seen fit to give us some good advice," Hirsch wrote.

We are grateful for his strictures. It is always profitable to study the opinions which other men hold of us. But one thing is sure, Mr. Zangwill in his search for light on our American reform has neglected to acquaint himself with the works, the methods and the ideals of Dr. Einhorn... The deplorable shortcomings of our Judaism may all be traced to the disregard of Einhorn's methods and ideas and ideals.<sup>28</sup>

But while Hirsch attributed much of Reform's shortcomings to the Movement's failure to embrace Einhorn's principles, he also argued that the rise of Conservative Judaism, as a middle way between the extremes of Orthodoxy and Reform, had siphoned off many younger Jews, sapping Reform of new congregants and spiritual energy. Hirsch attacked Conservatism as, quite literally "stupid." And so despite his forceful, internal critique of his own movement's doctrinal failures, like many other Reform rabbis, he too would respond to Zangwill's admonition by lashing out at American Judaism's other denominations.<sup>29</sup>

Clearly, Israel Zangwill's early works in America catalyzed a contentious debate within the American Reform rabbinate, as well as sparking dissension and confusion among rabbis of all denominational stripes. This confusion points to fundamental misunderstandings both on the part of Zangwill and of American Jewry. Zangwill's belief in the "newness" of American Judaism, in its absence of institutional divides and in the promise it held for the creation of a unique, synthetic Judaism which linked the traditions of the past with the realities of the present was an illusion. Over a 200 plus years history, American Jewry had created a significant Jewish institutional life, filled with the cross-denominational animus and doctrinal

disputes which tend to plague any well established, modern Jewish community. In short, American Judaism was not the tabula rasa that Zangwill had envisioned.

But if Zangwill was mistaken about the nature of American Judaism, in many ways American Jews were mistaken about Zangwill, at least those Jews in the late 1890s who participated in the debate about the Zangwillian admonition of American Judaism. Despite their claims to the contrary, Israel Zangwill was not an advocate for any specific denomination. His prophetic vision required the American Jewish community to create a new kind of Judaism, one which called on people to look beyond denominational borders and even the constraints of historical time, to shape a creative and evolutionary form of Jewish observance. American Jewry clearly paid some attention to Zangwillian prophecy. At the very least they had taken enough notice of Zangwill to debate publicly the meaning of his vision. Still, their denominational biases, limited the extent to which they could, or would, comprehend and embrace his ideas.

#### The Melting Pot and Inter-marriage in America

The limits of American comprehension of Israel Zangwill's American Jewish ideals were most evident in the response from both American Jews and, non-Jews, to Zangwill's most well known work, "The Melting Pot." Here, Americans of all stripes arrived at their conclusions about Zangwill's vision—most notably as it related to the subject of Jewish intermarriage—solely through their interpretations of his play. In so doing, they ignored a body of other writings and pronouncements from the author in which he had established a fairly complex and nuanced understanding of Jewish intermarriage.

Paradoxically, despite his belief in the political neutrality of the artist and his

art, Zangwill's own comments about the play encouraged America's perception of "The Melting Pot" as his answer to the Jewish problem, specifically the problem of large Jewish populations in countries which found their presence intolerable—most notably Russia and Romania. In an effort to promote the nascent ITO movement, Zangwill granted several interviews in the American press in which he made clear that the play was written as an intellectual exercise to help pass the long months spent waiting for the results of an ITO geographical expedition to North Africa. In those same interviews, Zangwill suggested that in some ways "The Melting Pot" reflected his political thinking on the promise of America, as well as the challenges of Zionism and Territorialism. And so despite his very public claim that "art knows no answer—can give none. There is no answer to anything in art,"<sup>30</sup> in a very real sense, Israel Zangwill had promoted his play as an important political statement about the Jewish Problem, and the role of America in its solution. Still the American reception of "The Melting Pot" from both Jews and non-Jews ignored the fact that Zangwill's play offered numerous ideas about America and American Jewry. Above all, most American audiences, and surely most American Jewish audiences, failed to recognize that the play was not an uncritical celebration of intermarriage and the erasure of Jewish ethnicity.

"The Melting Pot" recounts the story of David Quixano, a survivor of the Kishinev pogroms who came to America with his grandmother, the only other member of the family in Russia to survive the massacre. David and his grandmother live with his uncle Mendel, a musician and music teacher who had arrived in America several years earlier. Like his uncle, David is a musician, a talented violinist with an extraordinary gift for composition. In America David is

free to develop his talents. Though "The Melting Pot" makes clear that America is not completely free of prejudice, in Zangwill's American tale David's talent, not Old World notions of race and class, determine his success. His uncle Mendel encourages David to travel to Europe to study music but a chance encounter with a German maestro living in New York results in the premiere of David's first major work, the *Sinfonia America*. As the play closes David's symphony is played on the roof of a Manhattan *salon*, so that Quixano's music may be heard by all Americans, not just the wealthy WASP patrons of the arts, but by the entire melting pot of New York City. The teeming masses of "Celt and Latin, Slav and Teuton, Greek and Syrian—black and yellow—Jew and Gentile" all of whom would soon be fused together in the American crucible.<sup>31</sup>

To be sure one theme to emerge from the play was the idea that Americans would culturally (and yes, physically) unite to create a new race of people. As a previous chapter has demonstrated, Israel Zangwill believed that this was an unavoidable fact in the development of all large nation-states. What distinguished America, though, was the way in which the nation's largely unrestricted immigration sped up the melting pot process.

Although the theme of assimilation has long been considered the only significant message to emerge from "The Melting Pot," the play actually offered a number of possible interpretations of the melting pot paradigm.<sup>32</sup> The drama begins, for example, with the Quixano's Irish maid, Kathleen, expressing her disdain for Jews and Jewish customs. Yet by the middle of the play, her exposure to Jewish tradition makes her more mindful of Jewish custom and ritual than most of the Jewish characters in the play. To celebrate the Jewish festival of Purim, for

example, Kathleen and Frau Quixano buy costume noses, which Kathleen wears about the house as she performs her duties. When asked by a visitor why she is wearing a false nose, Kathleen proudly proclaims "Bekaz we're Hebrews! [and] It's our Carnival today! *Purim* [sic]." <sup>33</sup> Here Zangwill makes clear that the American melting pot need not eliminate all racial and ethnic differences and result in a homogeneous American identity. Indeed, in an afterword to the published edition of the play, he explicitly stated that, "The process of American amalgamation is not assimilation of simple surrender to the dominant type...but an all-around-give-and-take." <sup>34</sup>

Perhaps the play's most powerful, if somewhat melodramatic, use of the melting pot metaphor occurs when David confronts Baron Revendal, a Russian noble who led the pogrom on David's village. The Baron is the father of David's love interest Vera. Upon learning of Vera's parentage David ends their relationship. Yet by the end of the play David and Vera reunite. David has come to realize that the American crucible can turn the "blood of battlefields [into] spring daisies and buttercups. In the divine chemistry the very garbage turns to roses." David comes to understand that America offers a blank slate to the peoples of Europe, an opportunity to move beyond age-old hatreds. In the American melting pot, "The sins of the father shall not be visited on the children." <sup>35</sup> So Zangwill's understanding of the melting pot was hardly monolithic. He certainly envisioned America as a place where the races might mix together to form a new homogenous whole. Yet his melting pot also allowed for creative methods of intercultural exchange and provided a space to for immigrants to overcome Old World hatred and prejudice.

The various forms of melting suggested in the play were not lost on Bernard Richards of *The American Hebrew*, who observed of Zangwill's mind that it was "no melting pot," but rather it allowed for a variety of controversial, and perhaps contradictory, thoughts to exist simultaneously. Still, Richards, as well as a wide swath of the American public, especially the American Jewish community, could not, or would not, accept or understand Zangwill's variegated vision of the American melting pot. Their responses to the play represented a fairly limited range of opinions. The most complimentary of these emerged from a cohort of Americans who applauded the play as a paean to American exceptionalism. The most well known example of this came from President Theodore Roosevelt, who attended the debut of "The Melting Pot" and after the final curtain offered a standing ovation, proclaiming, "It is a great play, Zangwill." Shortly after Roosevelt's accolades, *The Unity*, a Chicago paper, applauded the play for its clear message that America "is the land of the free and the home of the brave." And in another Chicago daily, *The Chicago Evening American*, Zangwill was hailed for writing the great American play. "It is Zangwill, who is not of ours who has written the great American play," wrote the *Evening American's* Constance Skinner, "for he has shown us the white soul of America and interpreted to all lands her message."<sup>36</sup>

Interestingly, another, smaller cohort of non-Jewish critics (and even a few American Jews) criticized the play because they believed that it promoted Jewish customs and ideals. At the very least this critical cohort objected to the staging of Jewish custom and ritual, arguing, in essence, that the play was "too Jewish," echoing critiques which had earlier been directed at the stage production of *The Children of the Ghetto*. In the pages of *The American Israelite*, for example, Tobias



Schanfarber, a Reform rabbi from Chicago, who would succeed Emil Hirsch as the editor of *The Reform Advocate*, upbraided Zangwill for his staging of Jewish customs.

To the Jewish mind it comes like a shock and seems like irreverence; there is an instinctive revulsion when he sees his sacred traditions and customs produced on the stage. To the non-Jewish mind these customs and traditions mean absolutely nothing, they seem ridiculous. One needs but to watch the audience when these customs are gone through and the snicker that is upon their faces will tell the whole story. Zangwill should have learnt his lesson from his production of the "Children of the Ghetto."<sup>37</sup>

And Charles Collins of *The Inter-Ocean* called Zangwill a trickster. By Collins account, hidden behind Zangwill's supposed homage to the United States, was yet another age-old and "anguished cry" of the Jew for deliverance from anti-Semitism. Indeed, Collins argued, that the play's Americanism was incidental and that, in truth, "The Melting Pot is really Semitism run rampant."<sup>38</sup>

By far, though, the greatest response to the play came from a segment of the American Jewish community who condemned Israel Zangwill and "The Melting Pot" because they feared that the playwright and the play endorsed intermarriage and complete racial assimilation as the solution to the Jewish problem. Others in the same community countered this criticism, noting that Zangwill's play merely observed the issue of Jewish intermarriage in America without promoting it. In the pages of the Yiddish paper, *The Jewish Courier*, for example, Leon Zolotkoff, who hailed Zangwill as a prophet, argued that "Zangwill did not preach [intermarriage] but merely reports what is going on." This assessment was echoed by Rabbi Isaac Landman, who described Zangwill as a philosopher, and suggested that the play did not promote intermarriage, but rather speculated on the conditions in which it thrived. And Rabbi Emil Hirsch, in a lengthy sermon on the topic of intermarriage

made clear to his congregation that “the play of Zangwill’s” did not advocate for intermarriage, but instead “called our attention to a topic of more than passing interest.”<sup>39</sup>

Still, the most widespread and prominent newspaper editorials, letters to the editor, theatrical reviews, rabbinic sermons, and other commentary on “The Melting Pot” argued that the play unequivocally promoted and endorsed the intermarriage of Jews and Gentiles. As *The Washington Post* observed in October of 1908:

If Mr. Zangwill’s play means anything it means that the hopes of his own people lie in their being completely absorbed by the American nation through marriage. This means, of course, the utter obliteration of their race history, their religion, and those separate institutions which they have cherished for forty centuries...surely nothing less can be adduced from his play.<sup>40</sup>

Indeed, public discourse on “The Melting Pot” and intermarriage proved so prevalent that in a 1908 letter to his American benefactor Mayer Sulzberger, Israel Zangwill despaired of the American response to the play. “I see an epidemic of Sermons etc. has broken out on the subject of intermarriage,” Zangwill wrote, “the bulk of it in misunderstanding my meaning.”<sup>41</sup>

Zangwill’s frustration over the American public’s inability to comprehend the meaning of his play is understandable. As noted above, the melodrama offered a variety of melting pot paradigms (not solely intermarriage), and as the reader may recall, Zangwill’s thoughts on intermarriage were fairly nuanced and complex, reflecting his belief in the universality of humanity and the essential Hebraic roots of Christianity. As well, Zangwill argued that rather than dissolving the Jewish presence in the United States, intermarriage could, and in fact should, serve as a tool for swelling the ranks of American Judaism through the religious conversion of non-Jewish spouses. In light of these facts it is important to ask why American

Jews were so obsessed with, and afraid of, the idea of intermarriage. Zangwill, of course, had offered one answer, that American Jews had largely abandoned their religion and had come to define "Jewishness" solely in racial terms. But a closer examination of the historical circumstances surrounding the American production of "The Melting Pot" reveals that other factors, particularly the out-marriage of Jewish women and the national press coverage of prominent inter-faith unions, had propelled the idea of intermarriage into the discourse on the future of American Jewry and Judaism, as well.

The history of Jewish intermarriage in America began almost immediately with the presence of the first Jewish communities on the North American continent. Simple demographic factors (specifically the absence of marriageable Jewish women) made the phenomenon a fact of life for many Jewish men. Indeed by one account, from 1776-1840, 28.7% of all Jews who married in the interior of the nascent American republic married outside of their faith. But in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the intermarriage between prominent American Jewish women with wealthy Gentiles, coupled with widespread media coverage of these events, catapulted the topic of intermarriage from an internal, communal debate to a national phenomenon—this despite the fact that intermarriage rates nationwide were fairly low (somewhere between 2%-5% depending upon how one interprets the data).<sup>42</sup>

In 1878, for example, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise's daughter Helen married an Irish attorney, an event which was widely covered in the American press. And in the years immediately preceding the premiere of "The Melting Pot" two extremely prominent marriages between a Jewish woman and a Gentile man provoked

significant press coverage and outcry. In 1905 Rose Pastor, the first woman to write for the daily Yiddish language paper, *Der Yiddische Tageblatt*, married James Stokes, the scion of a wealthy Episcopalian family from Connecticut. And in 1907 Irma Stern, the daughter of Samuel Stern, a prominent member of the board of New York's Temple Emmanu-El, married a Swiss nobleman in two ceremonies at her father's home, the first, a civil ceremony, and the second a Catholic ceremony officiated by a Monsignor from St. Patrick's Cathedral (the seat of the Archbishop of New York's Archdiocese).<sup>43</sup>

The Stern case was accompanied by a lengthy congregational debate about intermarriage, including a sermon opposing the phenomenon by the Temple's recent rabbinic hire, Judah Magnes, which was reprinted in the press. In response to Magnes' sermon, Stern threatened to resign from the board of Emmanu-El, a move that several board members opposed. However, Louis Marshall, also a member of Emmanu-El's board, threatened to resign if Stern remained. In January of 1908, ten months before the premiere of "The Melting Pot," Stern resigned. The New York and national press offered extensive coverage of the Pastor-Stokes and Stern weddings. In particular, several papers including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and *Zion's Herald* (a national magazine) paid close attention to the intra-denominational struggles surrounding the Stern case. And so the American Press' interest in intermarriage took what might have been a family matter or a congregational squabble and elevated it to the level of local and national news, thus propelling intermarriage into the headlines and a national American Jewish discourse, a discursive moment which surely tempered the American Jewish response to "The Melting Pot."<sup>44</sup>

Equally important to the American Jewish focus on intermarriage and Zangwill's play, was the press coverage of the 1909 convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), the institutional body of the American Reform Rabbinate, held in New York City at the same time that "The Melting Pot" was in the middle of its New York run. The issue of intermarriage had been raised and tabled at several CCAR conventions in the early twentieth century. But at the 1909 convention in New York, Rabbi Samuel Schulman pushed the issue to the fore by presenting a paper at the convention in which he opposed intermarriage. What is more, Schulman offered a resolution to the convention stating that Reform Rabbis "ought not" officiate at the marriage of a Jew and a non-Jew. The resolution resulted in a robust debate about the biblical prohibition on intermarriage, the sincerity of non-Jews who convert to Judaism for the sake of marriage, as well as the ways in which such a resolution might infringe on rabbinic autonomy. Ultimately in an effort to keep the peace, the resolution was altered, observing the Jews' historic resistance to intermarriage, and a weak statement discouraging rabbis from performing such rites. The American press paid close attention to the CCAR debates about intermarriage. Articles about the convention debates could be read in newspapers in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C, as well as in national periodicals like *The Independent*.<sup>45</sup>

To be clear, American Jews were not alone in their objection to intermarriage. An editorial response to "The Melting Pot" in *The American Hebrew*, for example, argued that "all religions are opposed to intermarriage...Quakers, Baptists, Episcopalians, and especially Roman Catholics," like Jews, were concerned about the ways in which intermarriage might, through conversion, diminish their

ranks. This assertion was confirmed in a November 1908 response to Zangwill's play from a Catholic priest, who warned that "mixed marriage" threatened the Catholic Church with "spiritual ruin." According to Father McCloskey, a priest at New York's St. Francis Xavier Church, "Statistics show that 60 per cent of men who marry non-Catholics give up their religion." And *The American Hebrew* editorial on "The Melting Pot" argued that, "The Catholics in Germany are just now lamenting the loss of no less than a quarter of a million members by mixed marriages."<sup>46</sup>

It is perhaps worth noting that, like Father McCloskey, those who objected to the marriage of peoples of different religions often called such unions "mixed marriages" rather than "intermarriages." This was particularly true of the rabbis of the CCAR who made quite clear that "intermarriage" (the marriage between people of two different races) was not necessarily a threat to Judaism, but "mixed marriages" (the marriage between peoples of different faiths) were.<sup>47</sup> An in a 1908 sermon on "The Melting Pot," Rabbi Samuel Schulman made clear that his concerns about mixed marriages lay in their threat to the Jewish religion rather than, say, a Jewish race or people. "Zangwill's plan [mixed marriage] if carried out," Schulman proclaimed, would "efface Judaism ...[annihilating] the purity and integrity of the Jewish religion and the unity of the home."<sup>48</sup>

Still, most in the American Jewish community did not make such a linguistic distinction, and indeed most American Jews who objected to the supposed promotion of "intermarriage" in Zangwill's play did so largely on racial grounds. As the historian Eric Goldstein has argued in his important work on American Jewish conceptions of race, "More than perhaps any other single issue, intermarriage provoked discussions that revealed the strong emotional attachments Jews still had

to a racial self-understanding during the twentieth century.” And, as Goldstein further observes, “As the play [“The Melting Pot”] toured the country, the columns of Jewish newspapers were filled with articles and rabbis’ sermons critical of the play’s advocacy of intermarriage.”<sup>49</sup>

Such opinions misinterpreted Zangwill’s beliefs about the nature of intermarriage while confirming his sense that Jewishness for many American Jews had ceased to be a religious inheritance and had instead become a racial trait, one that many Jews had come to guard jealously in the American melting pot. Indeed, American Jewish responses to the theme of intermarriage in the play demonstrate quite clearly that many American Jews believed Zangwill’s play, in essence, promoted the elimination of the Jewish people. As one early review of the play in Philadelphia’s *Jewish Exponent* put it, Zangwill’s play, with its celebration of intermarriage, promoted the “race suicide” of the Jews. And in a 1910 editorial in *The Chicago Israelite*, Tobias Schanfarber similarly described Zangwill’s supposed plan as “wholesale suicide” and an “infamous way of ending the life of a people which has given to the world the highest conception of God and of man.”<sup>50</sup>

In characterizing Zangwill as a promoter of “race suicide,” several American Jews dismissed as meaningless the distinction others had made between mixed marriages and intermarriages. By these accounts, intermarriage between someone of the “Jewish race” (however they defined the term) and a non-Jew inevitably led to the destruction of Judaism. St. Louis Rabbi Leon Harrison, for example, an important voice on the Chautauqua circuit, offered a sermon on “The Melting Pot” at New York’s Free Synagogue in which he argued that “if we do not keep our race separate from others, our religion will soon cease to be.” And this belief was

shared by renowned American Zionist and rabbi, Judah Magnes. In a 1909 sermon on "The Melting Pot" Magnes rejected Zangwill as a "false prophet," and stated that "when [a Jew] gives up his race he gives up his religion."<sup>51</sup>

By contrast, Hebrew Union College's Gotthard Deutsch paradoxically argued that Zangwill's play, through its supposed message that Jews should obliterate their religion through intermarriage, actually promoted Judaism as an exclusively racial religion. Deutsch took exception to this characterization of racial Jewishness, citing a lengthy history of the way in which intermarriage could actually advance the spread of Judaism. As the reader will recall, Zangwill's own thinking on intermarriage and the spread of Judaism was very much in keeping with Deutsch's, and yet Deutsch, an extremely bright and erudite scholar, seemed incapable of recognizing this fact.<sup>52</sup>

This notion of racial dilution, of the purity of Jewish blood and the belief that it carried with it certain inherent Jewish traits was a frequent trope in Progressive era, American Jewish discourse about both the maintenance of Jewish identity and intermarriage. Throughout the first quarter of the twentieth century, a wide range of highly intelligent, broad-minded, and progressive American Jewish figures, from political philosopher Horace Kallen to Jewish Theological Seminary rabbi and scholar Israel Friedlander to American Jewish jurist Louis D. Brandeis (perhaps the most well-known Jew in America at the time), articulated the notion of a Jewish race defined by inherent, and biologically determined characteristics. Ironically, in so doing, these prominent American Jews employed a rhetorical trope of racial integrity and purity remarkably similar to the anti-Semitic historians and philosophers of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe.<sup>53</sup>



Perhaps the most prominent use of this racialized language in relation to Zangwill's play came from Rudolph Coffee of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a prominent rabbi who also held a Ph.D. in social work from the University of Pittsburgh. Several years after the initial production of "The Melting Pot," Coffee offered a lecture at Los Angeles' Wilshire Boulevard Temple in which he challenged, for racial reasons, Zangwill's supposed endorsement of intermarriage. Coffee argued that miscegenation in places like Hawaii and Mexico had produced unfortunate racial "half-breed[s]." And while science suggested that intermarriage could produce beneficial racial results, this could only occur when both sides were genetically "equal." The best traits of the Jew, Coffee argued, was his inherent genius for spirituality, a trait which was "more often than not lost when intermarriage occurs."<sup>54</sup>

Coffee is a prime example of the inherent contradictions present in the racially motivated objections to Zangwill's play—specifically of the well documented Progressive American Jewish impulse to recognize a shared sense of humanity across the racial spectrum, while still possessing a deep seated belief in distinct, biological racial difference. Coffee was, for example, a powerful proponent on behalf of the civil rights of all peoples. Indeed, upon his departure from his pulpit in Pittsburgh, he was honored by the city's African-American community. And yet, Coffee was an ardent eugenicist. He was a founding member of The Human Betterment Foundation, for example, an organization which promoted "race betterment by eugenic sterilization." But such language and ideological contradictions were not limited to avowed eugenicists like Coffee. Indeed, some ten years after the Washington, D.C. premiere of "The Melting Pot," Louis Marshall,

a prominent attorney and leader in the American Jewish community, as well as a close friend of Zangwill's, said of the play that it "promoted mongrelism." And yet in that same address, Marshall claimed that "we are all seeking the civilization of human brotherhood."<sup>55</sup>

Marshall's contradictory statement was just one in a series of contradictory critiques of Israel Zangwill from his American public. The very same reading public which had applauded Israel Zangwill's first novel for its detailed insight into Jewish ghetto life heavily criticized those insights as a threat to the acceptance of Jews in America. American Reform rabbis rejected Zangwill's assessment of, and vision for, the development of American Jewry, while simultaneously accusing others in the Reform movement of the very absence of spirituality which Zangwill had objected to. Clearly the American Jewish reception to Zangwill reflected that community's confusion, division, and anxiety. Zangwill alone did not cause this anxiety nor did he precipitate the divisions between and within American Judaism's denominations. What Zangwill's works and ideas did do, though, was give greater passion and focus to existing debates in the American Jewish community and polity. This was particularly true of the intra-denominational debates in the American Reform movement, as well as the often overwrought and racialized discourse surrounding intermarriage.

In some sense, Israel Zangwill's ignorance of the history of American Jewry helped catalyze this response, and one might reasonably argue the force of the American Jewish response limited the community's willingness to consider seriously Zangwill's ideas. As we have seen in previous chapters, Zangwill believed America

to be a place devoid of an earlier Jewish history. American Judaism, by his account, had only recently come into existence, brought there through a decades long effort by a few Reform rabbis who, in their zeal to assimilate into American society, had transformed Jewish observance into mainline Protestantism. But the debates within American Reform Judaism and even the discourse surrounding intermarriage and “The Melting Pot” makes clear that American Jewry was not new, nor was it bereft of ideological and doctrinal vigor. The discussions surrounding Zangwill’s works and ideas were clearly part of a longer history of discourse in American Israel.

Despite the mutual misperceptions between Israel Zangwill and America, the author’s American public continued to grant him considerable deference. As we have seen in earlier chapters, long after the premiere of “The Melting Pot” some of American Jewry’s most important leaders and thinkers continued to request Zangwill’s insights, as well as his presence in the United States. But after Zangwill’s sojourn in America for the premiere of “The Melting Pot,” he would not return to the United States for almost fifteen years. Although Zangwill would continue to comment on the American Jewish experience, for a number of reasons—including the rigors of transatlantic travel in the early twentieth century, the pressures of fame, and the outbreak of World War I—he would not return to the United States until 1923.

By 1923 the discourse between Israel Zangwill and America had gone on for approximately thirty years, and in that time Zangwill saw little or no improvement in the American Jewish community. At the very least to Zangwill, American Jewry

seemed completely incapable of creating the kind of Jewish culture and observance he had envisioned for them. Pointed and aggressive attempts at immigration reform and limited though significant moments of anti-Semitism had made the American Jewish community even more anxious and concerned than it had been when Zangwill first engaged American Jewry. And the continued institutionalization of Orthodoxy and Conservatism hardened the existing denominational boundaries, rendering trans-denominational synthesis a virtual impossibility.

These factors, coupled with the failures of the ITO and the Zionists to create a secure, and sustainable Jewish homeland would change Zangwill. His comments during his 1923 sojourn contained far fewer celebrations of American Jewish exceptionalism, and instead he condemned American Jewry, American Zionism, and even the general American culture for its failure to live up to his ideals. The nature of Zangwill's comments and the American response to them are the subject of the following chapter.

## **Chapter Four: The Zangwillian Upheaval: Israel Zangwill's Final Engagement With America**

In his deeply moving study on the Old Testament prophets, Abraham Joshua Heschel reminds his readers that, "To be a prophet is both a distinction and an affliction." The prophet's mission is unpleasant, difficult, and alienating, "no reward is promised him and no reward could temper his bitterness."<sup>1</sup> As with the biblical prophets, Israel Zangwill's experience as a prophet in America would bring with it distinction and affliction. His American audience would elevate his reputation and his works to a great height and also utterly denigrate the author as uninformed, unaware, and uninvited to offer his prophetic vision. Nowhere was the dynamic of distinction and affliction more apparent than in Israel Zangwill's 1923 American speaking tour, his final engagement with American Jewry and the broader American society. During his final sojourn in America, Zangwill's career would reach both its zenith and its nadir, as the American Jewish idea of Zangwill would come into conflict with Israel Zangwill's American Jewish ideals. The conflict between the prophet and his people would, in a sense, end Zangwill's contract of fame in America, dampening American enthusiasm with, and appetite for, the author's presence and prophecy.

In the years following Israel Zangwill's American visit to oversee the 1908 production of "The Melting Pot," the author's reputation in the United States continued to grow and evolve. As we have seen in chapter one, throughout the 1910s, Americans recognized Zangwill as an expert on Jewish affairs and life, a spokesman for Jewish causes, a statesman in the continuing efforts to create a

Jewish homeland, and the premiere writer of English language Jewish fiction. This despite the fact that Zangwill's failing health, the rigors of transatlantic travel, and the outbreak of World War I precluded his return to the United States for another fifteen years. Nevertheless, American Jews, despite their disagreements with his vision for the future of American Jewish life, continued to honor Israel Zangwill in absentia, soliciting both his presence and his opinions. In 1914, Bernard Richards, of *The American Hebrew*, chaired an event in celebration of Zangwill's fiftieth birthday. Speakers at the event included the renowned scholar Joseph Jacobs, as well as Louis Lipsky, a well known figure in the American Zionist movement. And in a previous chapter we have seen how a wide array of prominent American Jews overwhelmingly and repeatedly requested Zangwill's presence and comments at two events sponsored by the Intercollegiate Menorah Society in the 1910s—invitations which Zangwill declined. Clearly the American Jewish community's perceptions (or misperceptions) of Israel Zangwill's ideas did not diminish its enthusiasm for, or interest in, his opinions and insights.<sup>2</sup>

And so, in 1923, when Israel Zangwill finally agreed to return to the United States in order to speak to the American Jewish Congress, the expectations of American Jewry were high. His appearance in America commanded the attention of all the major institutions of American Jewish life and a great many non-Jewish institutions as well. The American Jewish Congress, The American Jewish Committee, the leading rabbis and scholars of the age, all of the major press organizations, the Boy Scouts of America, the National Security League, indeed even the Ku Klux Klan, all paid close attention to Zangwill's words. In short, the author's fame in America had reached its zenith, and, as is often the case, having

achieved a great height, the author's reputation would experience a precipitous fall. With the eyes and ears of America upon him, Israel Zangwill offered his most significant and critical remarks in the history of his engagement with the United States, providing prophetic instruction to American Jews to employ their Judaism in the political arena. But by and large, Americans, both Jewish and non-Jewish, would reject Zangwill's ideas, and what is worse, some portion of his public would reject Zangwill himself as a misinformed and dangerous outsider, a man who had risked not only his reputation, but perhaps his life, by overstating his case and overstaying his welcome. By the time the author offered his farewell remarks in February of 1924, the American public had soured on Zangwill and he had soured on America, as well. Americans in general, and most specifically American Jewry would have little use for Israel Zangwill's insights and opinions on the significance of the United States and US Jewry, and the author's once hopeful vision of the United States as the site of a new and exceptional nation and of a new and inventive variant of Judaism were, for the most part, dashed.

This chapter will document and analyze Israel Zangwill's 1923-1924 visit to the United States, assessing the ways in which the historical events in the years surrounding World War I and the actions of the British Mandatory government in Palestine influenced Zangwill's opinions on the future Zionism and the role of American Jewry in domestic and global political affairs. It will also make clear the shifting dynamics in the relationship between Zangwill and America. As we shall see, the author's witty and sensational oratory and his candid cultural critiques, once prized hallmarks of Zangwillian rhetoric in America, would, in the post World War I era, prove less acceptable to Zangwill's public, both Jewish and non-Jewish.

In so doing, this chapter provides important insight into the Zangwillian prophecy for American Jewry, and it reveals a disturbing shift in American culture away from the optimistic cosmopolitanism Zangwill had celebrated in "The Melting Pot" towards a more insular and less tolerant American society. Indeed, Israel Zangwill's postwar prescription for American Jewish activism, and his critique of American society would prove so controversial to his American public that Rabbi David Phillipson, a prominent figure in the American Jewish discourse of the age, characterized Zangwill's 1923-1924 American tour as, "The Zangwillian Upheaval."<sup>3</sup>

To understand the contentious nature of Israel Zangwill's final visit to the United States of America and the ensuing uproar from his American public, this chapter documents the reasons for the author's 1923 visit to the United States—an invitation extended by the pro-Zionist, American Jewish Congress—as well as the pre-visit publicity which heralded the author's arrival in America. Following that, this chapter will closely read Zangwill's comments in America, examining a trail of speeches, interviews, press reports, and other documents which make clear the author's biting critique of, and radical vision for, America and its Jews. This will be followed by a detailed look at the public's response to Zangwill's commentary, revealing both the American Jewish community's continued misunderstanding of Zangwillian prophecy, as well as the ways in which Zangwill's inability to comprehend America's postwar culture resulted in the overwhelming rejection of the author's greatest challenge to American Jewry, to organize politically to advance Jewish ethics in the American polity. Finally, this chapter reveals the ways in which post WWI American intolerance would manifest itself in a remarkably xenophobic and potentially dangerous reception of Israel Zangwill—a man who had



once been celebrated and admired by a host of Jewish and non-Jewish Americans—and finally it will document and assess the author’s parting words to American Jewry and the broader nation.

### Coming to America

Israel Zangwill’s 1923 invitation to the United States, the first he had accepted in some fifteen years, came from Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, the outspoken and nationally known Reform Rabbi and President of the American Jewish Congress, a recently re-formed and to some extent controversial institution. The original American Jewish Congress had formed in 1917 in an effort to assist European Jews during World War I. Following the conclusion of the Paris peace talks, though, a significant number of American Jewish leaders who believed the Congress’ mission to be complete and who opposed both Zionism and any form of an American Jewish national identity left the Congress. In 1922, the Congress re-formed. The resulting body no longer served as a unified advocacy group for Jewry abroad, but became instead an American Zionist organization.

But as we shall see, in the years following World War I, Zionism’s popularity in American Jewish circles had decreased precipitously. That shift in public attitudes towards Zionism and the schism between Jewish Zionists and non-Zionists would harm the standing of the Congress, which non-Zionists who had left the Congress in 1918 characterized as unrepresentative of American Jews and Jewish interests. By inviting the popular Zangwill, one of the early leaders of the Zionist movement, to speak to the Congress at Carnegie Hall—New York’s premiere venue—and by arranging for that speech to be broadcast across the country via the

relatively new technology of radio, Wise appears to have used Zangwill's popularity and reputation to improve his institution's standing and credibility.<sup>4</sup>

The American Jewish community eagerly anticipated Israel Zangwill's arrival in October of 1923. Numerous newspaper articles and wire services hailed his return to America as "monumental." And a number of journalists writing for Jewish and non-Jewish papers bolstered Zangwill's reputation as the preeminent scholar and English language author of the Jewish people. Indeed, one article in *The Los Angeles Times* suggested that Zangwill should receive the Nobel Prize. And a month before Zangwill's arrival, Samuel Untermyer (an important member of the American Jewish Congress) organized a reception committee to greet Zangwill as he disembarked from the *S. S. La France*. The committee included some of the most prominent figures in American Jewish life, including renowned rabbis such as Stephen S. Wise and Jewish Theological Seminary scholar and teacher Mordecai Kaplan; important Jewish intellectuals such as philosopher Horace Kallen, Felix Adler, the founder of the ethical culture movement, author Waldo Frank, and *Menorah Journal* publisher Henry Hurwitz; and key leaders of the American Jewish laity such as the American Jewish Committee's Louis Marshall, former Secretary of Commerce Oscar Straus, Nathan Straus—an important merchant, philanthropist, and Zionist—and Henrietta Szold, the founder of Hadassah (the American women's Zionist organization) just to name a few. Clearly Israel Zangwill's return to America after a fifteen year absence was a significant occasion.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast to the American Jewish community's excitement, Zangwill was less sanguine about his return to the United States. On several occasions he made clear that his preparation for his Carnegie Hall speech, which he characterized as

the most important of his career, caused him many sleepless nights.<sup>6</sup> Rabbi Wise had asked Israel Zangwill to provide the Congress with assessment of the state of global Jewry, and Zangwill believed that Jewish communities across the globe, both in Palestine and in Diaspora, were physically threatened and, at least in the case of the United States, bereft of spirituality. In the years following the Balfour Declaration, Zangwill had grown increasingly dubious of the possibility for the creation of a Jewishly distinct homeland in Mandatory Palestine. The Declaration's guarantee of the civil and religious rights of all people, Zangwill reasoned, would favor the cultural development of the majority population in the region—which was, of course, Arab and Muslim. Events on the ground confirmed Zangwill's doubts. In 1919, for example, Palestinian Arabs held a conference at which they called on England to repudiate its promise of a Jewish homeland in the region. While British tolerance of violent Arab protests in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and the Galilee in the early 1920s made clear to Zangwill that the Zionist project could never succeed in British Mandatory Palestine. And In Europe, the aftermath of World War I and increasing anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe threatened the safety and survival of entire Jewish communities.<sup>7</sup>

Of equal significance were Zangwill's concerns about the overall state of postwar American culture and politics. In September 1922, almost a year before his final visit to the States, Zangwill wrote to *The American Hebrew*, expressing concerns that, despite his earlier vision of American Jewish history as an exceptional chapter in the Jewish experience, the United States was about to descend into the same kinds of anti-Semitism which had plagued Jews across the globe.<sup>8</sup> And just prior to his Carnegie Hall address, Zangwill lamented that, "The

America today is not the America I wrote of in my book, 'The Melting Pot. That America is gradually dwindling away.'"<sup>9</sup>

Zangwill's assessment was surely accurate. From the standpoint of Jews and other ethnic minorities, 1920s America proved an unwelcoming place. As the historian John Higham has observed in his seminal work on American nativism, the early 1920s proved an intensely "tribal" era in US history. The brutality of WWI and the failure of the Versailles Peace Conference to end the petty nationalisms and intrigues which had led to the conflagration in the first place, disillusioned a generation of Americans, resulting in a deep sense of insularity and a mistrust of all things foreign. The consequent American isolationism and nativism manifested itself in a number of disconcerting cultural trends, which Zangwill took note of and critiqued in his address to the American Jewish Congress.<sup>10</sup>

Racialism, the pseudo-scientific and hierarchical conception of distinct biological races, which had been advanced in the US prior to the war in the works of racist historians such as Madison Peters and Charles Gould, would, in the early 1920s, become a respectable and widely accepted conception of racial difference in America. Of particular concern to Zangwill and America's Jews was the way in which racist thinkers advanced the notion of a three-tiered hierarchy of white race— the Nordic, the Alpine, and the Mediterranean. In the histories of Peters, Gould, Lothrop Stoddard, and others, Nordic peoples, that is those who could trace their roots to northern and western Europe, were at the top of the racial hierarchy and represented the true American racial stock. American acceptance of this racial hierarchy led to the widespread characterization of Southern and Eastern Europeans, who formed the bulk of early twentieth-century, American immigrants

(and specifically the bulk of Jewish immigrants to America) as not only culturally undesirable, but also racially inferior to the American (read: Nordic) race.<sup>11</sup>

Equally ominous was the advent of automobile magnate Henry Ford's virulent anti-Semitic campaign in the pages of his weekly paper, *The Dearborn Independent*. Higham has called Ford the "standard-bearer" of a new American anti-Semitism which blended the scientific racism of the day with anti-Germanism and anti-radicalism. Ford's doctrine resonated with existing contemporary American concerns about Jewish Bolsheviks' supposed plans for world domination, but Ford expanded on this fear by arguing that Jewish plans for global conquest emerged from both sides of the political spectrum. His anti-Semitic tracts argued that although Communist global revolution was indeed a frightening phenomenon, it represented just one of several approaches towards the establishment of Jewish global hegemony. In the early 1920s, Ford printed some 500,000 copies of the fraudulent and libelous anti-Semitic tract, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, as well as creating his own anti-Semitic manifesto, *The International Jew*, in which he argued for the existence of a global Jewish conspiracy in the press, banking, politics, and other institutions. Americans took Ford's ideas quite seriously. He was, as Higham observes, "enormously popular as America's greatest industrialist, as a folk philosopher, and as a potential politician. In 1923 he was one of the most widely discussed candidates for the next Presidential nomination."<sup>12</sup>

Also of concern to Zangwill was the emerging national power of the second Ku Klux Klan. The initial Klan had formed in 1865 in response to Federal Reconstruction of the South. Using terrorist tactics, the first Klan sought to intimidate and silence recently freed and politically empowered African-Americans.

The end of Reconstruction in 1877, though, resulted in the removal of Federal troops from the South, thus ending Federal enforcement of African-American civil rights, largely eliminating the Klan's *raison d'être* and signaling its institutional demise. The second Klan, though, arose in connection to the 1915 lynching of Leo Frank, an Atlanta Jewish man who had been accused and found guilty of killing a Gentile woman, a charge which many found to be trumped up and racially motivated. Indeed so problematic was the jury's findings that the Governor of Georgia commuted Frank's death sentence to life imprisonment. The subsequent uproar and lynching of Frank would spark the rebirth of the Klan, whose new agenda was much more in keeping with the national mood of the "tribal twenties." Troubled by the shifting ethnic and racial demographics of postwar, industrial America, the Klan directed much of their animus and agitation towards white ethnics, the twentieth century Klan, though still virulently racist towards African-Americans, was deeply anti-foreign, anti-Catholic, and anti-Semitic. Above all, in addition to the terrorist tactics of the earlier Klan, the second KKK was heavily involved in mainstream politics, assisting in the election of governors in Oregon and Georgia, and even helping to send a Senator from Texas to Washington, D.C.<sup>13</sup>

Particularly problematic for the American Jewish community, and a focus of Zangwill's comments in 1923-1924, was the way in which this climate of nativist sentiment manifested itself in repeated attempts to limit immigration to the United States. The anti-Semitic outrages in postwar Europe, which Zangwill would observe in his speech at Carnegie Hall, resulted in a massive influx of Jewish refugees into the United States. Fueled by popular nativist and racist fears, the US Congress annually passed various forms of immigration restriction in the early 1920s, ranging

from an outright suspension of immigration to a quota system limiting entrance into the country based on extant majorities in the US. Such quota plans favored immigration from Northern and Western Europe because of the large pre-existing communities of British, Irish, German, and Scandinavian immigrants, while excluding the immigration of newer immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, such as Polish and Russian Jews. Fortunately for the sake of the large influx of Jewish refugees, approximately 119,000 in 1920-1921, the first attempts at immigration restriction in the 1920s were either directly or indirectly vetoed by President Wilson. Still, when Zangwill arrived in 1923, anti-immigration sentiment was clearly on the rise.<sup>14</sup>

And so Israel Zangwill's intended remarks at Carnegie Hall (and in other, subsequent addresses) sounded an alarm about the Jewish future in Palestine, the consequent centrality of the United States as a demographic and cultural center of Jewish life, the ways in which American culture and politics threatened that Jewish center, and, of equal importance, the need for American Jews to embrace their religion and ethics in response to these disturbing developments. By Zangwill's account, he warned his American hosts that, at the very least, his comments at Carnegie Hall would be less than welcome, and they, in turn, tried to convince him to soften his remarks. But the prophet is uncompromising in the articulation of his vision. And Zangwill responded to his American patrons by telling the American Jewish Congress that "he must be permitted to speak his mind or he would not sail at all."<sup>15</sup>

Despite Zangwill's clear warnings about the nature of his comments, American Jews looked forward to his Carnegie Hall address with great anticipation.

Indeed, a reporter for the recently founded Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)—a wire service dedicated to distributing news of Jewish significance—described Zangwill’s upcoming speech as epochal. As we shall see, one likely reason for the continued excitement about, and interest in, Zangwill’s speech, was the existing divide in America between Zionist and non-Zionist Jews. Another important reason American Jews looked forward to Zangwill’s comments at Carnegie Hall was that his brief encounters with the American press made clear his continued hope for the future of American Judaism and American Jewish life. In a frequently reprinted JTA dispatch, Zangwill argued that the collapse of political Zionism reinforced the fact that “The future of Judaism... is in the hands of American Jews.”<sup>16</sup>

#### Zangwill on America

Israel Zangwill spoke to the American Jewish Congress on the evening of October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1923. In an effort to somewhat blunt Zangwill’s critique, or at the very least disassociate the American Jewish Congress from Zangwill’s words, Stephen S. Wise’s introduction of Zangwill endorsed the author’s reputation (thirty years in the making) as an important and critical voice in the discourse on Jewish issues and causes, while also establishing that the Congress did not sanction Zangwill’s statements. “The views of the American Jewish Congress do not bind Zangwill,” Wise proclaimed. And “Zangwill’s views do not bind the Congress...we have chosen him, the foremost living Jewish publicist to speak tonight, because we know that no one is qualified as is he to make the world listen to the word of the Jew....”<sup>17</sup>

To be clear, it was not the world, but primarily Americans and especially American Jews who listened most closely to Israel Zangwill’s words, and what they



heard would alternately confuse, shock, and offend them, sometimes validating their political goals, while simultaneously challenging their position in American society. His Carnegie Hall speech would begin a four month spree of commentary and discourse, of calls to action and harsh criticism of American society, all of which would prove too great a challenge for American Jews to accept. By the end of his 1923-1924 sojourn in America, Israel Zangwill had revealed to his American public his greatest hopes for, and frustrations with, the American Jewish community and the limitations of that community to understand or fulfill his prophetic vision. In so doing he effectively alienated a large portion of his American public, ending his American career.

Israel Zangwill entitled his speech, "Watchman, What of the Night?" a reference to an obscure, somewhat inscrutable and brief pronouncement in the Book of Isaiah.<sup>18</sup> If the passage was obscure, though, its relation to Zangwill's speech was quite clear. Israel Zangwill was the watchman, called to the American Jewish Congress to assess the condition of global Jewry. And like a watchman in a fortress tower, Zangwill hoped to offer his perspective on global Jewry from a great elevation, to spy, as he put it, "the heights and depths of the Jewish problem."<sup>19</sup> Employing a metaphor which literally did not exist when he undertook his first US speaking tour twenty-five years earlier, he compared his assessment of the Jewish community to the view of an airplane pilot. From this distance, Zangwill viewed the Jewish world as divided into two camps, Palestine and Diaspora. Zangwill pronounced the former—that is, the Zionist project in Palestine—dead, a victim of British neglect and Arab resistance. And even if the British tried to enforce Jewish rights under their mandate, the demographic realities of Palestine, its large Arab

population and the comparative paucity of its Jews, meant that Palestinian Jews could “never be masters in their own house.” In other words, Jewish self-determination in Palestine was untenable. And yet in the Diaspora, Zangwill argued, Zionism had succeeded quite well as a unifying ideal—too well. For countless Diasporic Jews, especially Americans, Zionism, not Judaism, had become their religion. “The Zionists will not live in Palestine,” Zangwill lamented, “but in the subsidence of Judaism their work for Palestine will keep alive their common Jewish consciousness.”<sup>20</sup>

Israel Zangwill’s comments concerning the ways in which Jews supplanted their religious character with a purely national Jewish identity continued his longstanding critique of American Jewry’s rejection of religion. Throughout his thirty year relationship with American Jewry, Zangwill had lamented American Jews’ obsessive focus on racial preservation, arguing that such a focus ignored both the fallacy of biological race and the millennia old mission of the Jews to articulate the central tenets of ethical monotheism. And in the wake of the world war, Zangwill believed that American Jews had an even greater obligation to advance the teachings and the mission of Judaism.

Since the conclusion of the war, Zangwill argued, Jews across Europe had suffered a host of anti-Semitic outrages. He mocked Henry Ford’s assertions of a Jewish conspiracy for global hegemony, for example, as ludicrous by noting that, “The nearest approach to [Jewish] unity is a unity in suffering over wide areas of Europe.”<sup>21</sup> This severity of Jewish suffering was compounded by increasing American nativism, anti-Semitism, and immigration restriction, which signaled the imminent close of an important destination for countless Jewish refugees.<sup>22</sup>

The death and displacement of Jews across Europe, the limitations of Palestine as a site of Jewish nationalism and refuge, and the continued stream of immigration towards the United States, which in the fall of 1923 had yet to fulfill its threatened immigration restrictions, meant that despite the recent rise in anti-Semitism and nativism, the United States was, and for the foreseeable future would be, the demographic center of Diaspora Jewry. Such circumstances placed a heavy ethical and burden on America's Jews and American Judaism. As Zangwill had argued for years, diasporic Jews could not build their identities on arbitrary, and indeed false, notions of race. Nor could Jews successfully unite based on their sympathies for the Zionist cause. The influence of the Hebraic legacy on western societies and the survival of Jews globally depended upon the return of Diaspora (and especially American) Jews to the observance of Judaism, a fact which American Jews continued to ignore after some thirty years of engagement between Zangwill and America.<sup>23</sup>

But the rising tide of nationalism and racism both abroad and in America rendered American Jewish secularism dangerous. According to Zangwill, current events placed an even greater moral imperative on the American Jewish community to embrace the ethics of their ancestral faith and employ them in concrete political action. In connection with this pressing need, he called upon the American Jewish community to direct their Judaism towards practical ends. Specifically, he demanded that American Jewry use politics and the electoral system as a means of healing a damaged country and world, and to defend itself from the rising tide of anti-Semitism. "If there is no Jewish vote today...it is a disgrace, not a policy to be commended," Zangwill proclaimed. "If Jews will neither use their vote to protect

themselves nor to express their ethical conceptions, then they do but cumber the ground. Such Judaism is...a 'living corpse.' It is in fact a disguised Marranoism."<sup>24</sup>

By a Jewish vote, Zangwill did not mean a vote for Jewish candidates, nor did he encourage the creation of a Jewish nationalist party which might represent the Jewish people broadly in the American polity. Indeed, Israel Zangwill rejected the idea of so called Diaspora nationalism, as he had for years. He believed that such nationalist aspirations in a diasporic host nation were anachronistic and quixotic. If an American Jew, Zangwill argued, wished to be considered a Jewish national who happens to live in America, and not "merely [a] sentimental sympathizer with Palestinian Jewry, as Irish Americans are with Ireland, but that are actual subjects of the 'Jewish National Home,' they must naturally give up their American citizenship." The only way to live as a Jewish nationalist was to live in a Jewish country, or to use Zangwill's words, "The only way of being a Zionist is to be in Zion." Above all, Zangwill argued, America's constitutional structure, which guaranteed rights to the individual and not to corporate ethnic groups, rendered the notion of an American Jewish national party unacceptable. As this dissertation has indicated at numerous points, by Zangwill's account, in America, "only *religious* unity was constitutional."<sup>25</sup>

No, Jewish nationalist politics had no place in the American political arena, Zangwill told his audience. Neither could it heal the problems of an increasingly inhumane and anti-Semitic world. Only Judaism, which Zangwill described as "the torch of Reason in the hand of Love,"<sup>26</sup> could address the problems facing American, and indeed global, Jewry. And in America that meant establishing an ethically Jewish political platform which opposed the racism and nativism of people

like Henry Ford, the Ku Klux Klan, anti-immigration politicians, and even the United States' Supreme Court, which had, in 1923, refused to naturalize an Asian Indian because he was not considered to be "white" despite the fact that he was, indeed, Aryan. "It is time," Zangwill proclaimed, "that we [Jews]...make religion politics." Zangwill recognized that such a stand might fan the flames of anti-Semitism, but God demanded moral courage of his people. He argued that any ethical or moral accomplishment required continual struggle and sacrifice. As he concluded his speech he reminded the assembled crowd that "Nothing in human history is finally secured. In every age it must fight to be renewed...It may be," he conceded, "that here too, the wave of Christian madness will spread from the shambles of Europe. But for God's sake stand openly and assertively for something worth dying for."<sup>27</sup>

To be sure, by calling on American Jews to express their religious beliefs through ethical, political activism, Israel Zangwill had not articulated some new Jewish tradition. In his 1934 book, *Judaism as a Civilization*, for example, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan associated such activism with the Jewish prophets. Nevertheless, this Zangwillian linking of religion and political action had limited precedent in Jewish history. As Rabbi Kaplan noted, prophetic ethics and activism, though present in Jewish texts, had not played an historically significant role in the everyday practice of Judaism. "From the traditional or rabbinic point of view," Kaplan wrote, "the ethical values are regarded as indispensable, but are not granted the primacy accorded them by the prophets." Over the centuries Jewish leaders and thinkers had, by Kaplan's account granted primacy to Jewish ritual rather than civic engagement. When viewed in this light, then, Israel Zangwill's call for a Jewish vote charted a new course in Jewish religious life, a direction which, as we

shall see, most American Jews found to be incompatible with their American existence.<sup>28</sup>

In a very real sense, Zangwill's call for a politically engaged, American Judaism would prove prescient. His belief in the compatibility, and indeed interconnectedness, of political, social action and the Jewish religion would anticipate the thinking of the American Jewish community in the years immediately following World War II. In Jonathan Sarna's important study of American Judaism, for example, Sarna has argued that though Jewish engagement with social justice was not entirely new, the extent to which it became a part of the American Jewish religious ethos in the postwar years proved a "striking cultural and religious transformation." Initially led by European refugee rabbis such as Joachim Prinz, and Abraham Joshua Heschel, the postwar linking of social action and religion would powerfully resonate with Israel Zangwill's 1923 vision of Jewish social engagement—this despite the fact that such figures did not acknowledge Israel Zangwill's contribution to this stream of religious thought. In the 1960s, for example, Rabbi Heschel protested segregation policies in the Deep South, as well as US involvement in Vietnam. Like Zangwill, Heschel proclaimed such activism an essential component of Judaism. The prophetic invocation to Jewish social engagement, Rabbi Heschel argued, was "not a recommendation but an imperative, a supreme commandment."<sup>29</sup>

But in the first half of the twentieth century, Jewish social action, and a host of other issues and ideas raised Israel Zangwill's 1923 address were considered radical and dangerous, and they caused a tremendous uproar in the American Jewish community. Zionists were up in arms over his attack on Zionism, while non-

Zionists forcefully, and very publically, applauded his claims about the supposed death of the Zionist project. Numerous American Jews with access to a pulpit or the press, loudly rejected Zangwill's call for a "Jewish vote" in America. The response to Zangwill's remarks proved so great that within a few weeks of his Carnegie Hall speech, he told an audience at New York's Judeans club that he would stay in America to respond to his critics. "I find that I have gotten into a fight," he said. "It is a fight I didn't expect and I'm going to remain and see it through."<sup>30</sup>

Israel Zangwill's claim that American response to his Carnegie Hall address compelled him to stay in the United States seems specious. After all, despite Zangwill's assertion that his speech to the American Jewish Congress would be his sole public pronouncement, the very next day at a luncheon at the Commodore Hotel he spoke to the delegates of the Congress. Shortly thereafter, Zangwill agreed to write a letter to be read at a fundraiser for Jewish education, and on October 29<sup>th</sup>, fifteen days after his address at Carnegie Hall, he spoke to the Judeans. Only then, after two additional speaking engagements and more than two weeks after his premiere address, did he vow to stay in America and respond to his critics. Perhaps Zangwill had always intended to stay in America after his initial speech. Indeed, he dedicated much of his time in late November and early December to overseeing the Washington, D.C. production of "We Moderns," his final play. Perhaps his resistance to a broader American speaking tour was a feigned posture of reticence employed to add greater hype to the upcoming production of his play or subsequent speaking engagements. Or perhaps he really did choose to stay at the last minute and respond to his critics. As we have learned in previous chapters, hesitancy is a hallmark of the prophet's character. As Schweid tells us,

"The prophetic mission is not chosen. One rails against it and seeks to escape it, but in the final analysis, the message overwhelms its bearer."<sup>31</sup> Whatever the reason, Zangwill did spend the remainder of 1923 and a brief portion of 1924 in America. His subsequent remarks would give greater clarity to his speech at Carnegie Hall, while also revealing Israel Zangwill's troubling critique of post-World War I America.<sup>32</sup>

Immediately after the presentation and broadcast of "Watchman, What of the Night?," Israel Zangwill was forced to explain what he meant by declaring political Zionism dead. His host in the United States, Nathan Straus, was an ardent and active American Zionist. So prominent was Straus in the Zionist movement that the Israeli coastal city of Netanya is named in his honor. Straus had arranged a luncheon for the delegates of the American Jewish Congress the day after Zangwill's inflammatory address, a luncheon at which Zangwill was the guest of honor. At that luncheon Zangwill backpedaled a bit from the previous night's speech and offered a slightly more encouraging vision on the future of Zionism. He blamed the moribund character of Jewish efforts in Palestine on British intransigence and incompetence, and he called on the American Jewish Congress to hold Britain accountable for the creation of a Jewish State in the region. Culturally and politically, England's mandatory rule over Palestine, Zangwill argued, favored neither the Muslims nor the Jews. In some cases, for example, Jews were forbidden from labor on Sunday in deference to the Christian Sabbath. Of the 2,500 or so government posts available in the region, half were held by British Christians, Zangwill claimed, and the remaining half were divided between Muslims and Jews. He lamented the way in which the English sought to Anglicize the holy



city of Jerusalem, which according to Zangwill was awash in “tennis and tea-parties.”<sup>33</sup>

Of equal importance, Zangwill told his audience, was the fact that Jewish settlement in Palestine was hindered by the mandatory government’s refusal to offer tracts of land for Jewish development. According to the terms of British Mandate in Palestine, the Jewish people were to receive from the British, “State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes” on which to form Jewish settlements. But, according to Zangwill, the Crown had failed to give a single acre of land to Palestine’s Jews. The end result of this policy was that the Jews were forced to purchase all of the land for their prospective state, a paradigm which Zangwill lamented as “Shylockian,” unfair, and economically unfeasible. After all, he reasoned, the law of supply and demand suggested that the more land Jews purchased in Palestine, the more expensive subsequent purchases would become. Surely, he argued, such an economic model could not sustain the creation of a Jewish State.<sup>34</sup>

Both in his Commodore Hotel address and in subsequent speeches, Israel Zangwill made clear that the promises made to the Jewish people in the Balfour Declaration, a document of which he had always been suspect, had been whittled down to the point where they had become meaningless. In his speech to the Judeans, Zangwill criticized both the British and Chaim Weizmann—a former colleague of Zangwill’s in the Zionist movement, the head of the movement in the 1920s-mid 1940s, and the first President of Israel. “When I said political Zionism was dead,” Zangwill explained, “it was because with the Balfour Declaration Weizmann, as a chemist, gave us not Zionism but `ersatz.’”<sup>35</sup> Zangwill had no faith

in the British or in the World Zionist Organization to fulfill the promise of a Jewish State in Palestine. Only America—which had emerged from World War I as a prominent global leader—and by connection American Jewry, could bring the necessary political pressure to bear on the British to enforce the terms of the mandate in Palestine. “[Y]our American Jewish Congress can do a great thing,” he told the delegates at the Commodore Hotel. “It can frame a resolution...that will insist upon the Mandate being carried out in Palestine so as to really build up a Jewish homeland.”<sup>36</sup>

But by far, the Zangwillian message to American Jewry which would most vex his American audience, continued to be his admonition of postwar America and his call for Jewish political action to counter the troubling developments in American culture and politics. Throughout the fall of 1923 and into the early winter of 1924, Israel Zangwill continued criticize the ominous rise in American nativism, anti-Semitism, and immigration restriction, concomitantly lamenting America’s failure to become a global leader for peace. He spoke at numerous venues, including New York’s Town Hall, in Washington, D.C., at the National Arts Society, and at a meeting of the Foreign Press Correspondents. And he engaged in a published debate with the Imperial Wizard of the KKK, H.W. Evans. He characterized American racist thinking as “Nordic nonsense.” He ridiculed and lambasted the Ku Klux Klan as “a perverted Boy Scout movement,” which would have been laughed out of England—a comment which led to a sharp protest from the national leader of the Boy Scouts. He lamented not only Henry Ford’s writings, but also Ford’s recent popularity in American culture and politics. And he complained of America’s failure

to join, and indeed lead, the League of Nations. His most thoughtful and sustained comments, though, concerned immigration restriction.<sup>37</sup>

Time and again in late 1923 and early 1924, Israel Zangwill criticized American efforts at immigration restriction as indecent and sacrilegious. "It is a cruel moment—the most cruel moment in history—for America to shut her gates against the immigrant,"<sup>38</sup> He wondered aloud how Americans could characterize their home as "God's country" while continuing to "shut out immigrants instead of holding out hospitable hands."<sup>39</sup> Jesus himself, Zangwill contended, would be denied passage through Ellis Island since he was "an Asiatic" and had once been in jail. Indeed, Zangwill would argue that American immigration restriction plans were decidedly unchristian. In his debate with the Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, Zangwill questioned H.W. Evans' Christian values, noting that Jesus had said that whatever one does to the least of his people, it is as if they had done the same to Him. Would Evans really treat his savior in such a fashion? In light of the cruelty of the Klan and other immigration restrictionists, Zangwill believed that American society had no understanding of Christian values at all, values which were, after all, first articulated by Middle Eastern Jews—a people that the recent immigration restrictions would largely exclude from entrance into the US. No, America's postwar values were not universal and Christian, but instead tribal and insular, far more so than the supposed insularity of Jews.<sup>40</sup>

Zangwill maintained that American Jews had a moral obligation to politically mobilize against this rising tide of racial discrimination and prejudice for a number of reasons. First was the need for Jewish self defense. At a November dinner for the Jewish Publication Society of America, for example, Zangwill indignantly asked

why American Jewry had not responded to Henry Ford's anti-Semitic publications by circulating their own literature promoting the importance of Jewish values for all Americans. And in his address to the Town Hall, Zangwill asked his audience, what if Ford was to run for President? Would Jews not have an obligation to vote against "this slanderer, this libeler?"<sup>41</sup>

But beyond the self interest of American Jewry, Zangwill asserted, Judaism imposed an ethical obligation on America's Jews to act on behalf of all the oppressed peoples of the United States. In a December address in Washington, D.C., Zangwill asserted that "when Protestant, Catholic, or negro or any other group was oppressed, the Jews should raise their voices against such oppression...I [want] the Jews to come forward as one for justice for all races and all people."<sup>42</sup> In fact, Israel Zangwill concluded his initial Carnegie Hall address by arguing that in creating a self conscious, ethically motivated Jewish political activism, America's Jews would not act solely for the sake of Jews, but for America itself. "Perhaps," Zangwill pondered "it is the role of the millions of Jews gathered here [in the United States] to help America to keep American. Thus not in avoiding a Jewish policy, but precisely in creating one would lie your truest Americanism."<sup>43</sup>

Zangwill's call for an assertive self conscious, ethical expression of Jewish political action simultaneously countered the prevailing nationalism of the age while articulating, in an unusual fashion, a common trope in American Jewish discourse. In the early twentieth century, American leaders (even American Jewish leaders) frowned on ethnic communal action, denouncing any sense of ethnic, political mobilization as un-American. The historian Gerson Cohen, for example, has argued that the American Jewish leadership of the early twentieth century proved

remarkably successful at influencing the formation of a new kind of American Jewish life, a Jewish existence singularly focused on individual Jewish identities while largely rejecting as counterproductive and dangerous any efforts to express a distinct, collective Jewish will. Cohen's assessment largely ignores the fact that at the very least Progressive era American Jews collectively organized, took political action, and publicly spoke out on behalf of Jews abroad. On issues of domestic concern, though, Cohen's point is largely accurate. Despite numerous threats to American Jews and Jewish immigrants, the Progressive era American Jewish community was strongly advised by their leadership to remain silent. This attitude is perhaps best summed up by renowned Jewish philanthropist and Jewish leader Jacob Schiff, who once called on America's Jews to be "Americans in public" and to leave their Judaism at home.<sup>44</sup>

A number of American Jews, though, argued that Jewish political action and advocacy were not at all un-American. Indeed, like Zangwill, prominent American Jews across the spectrum of Jewish belief and ideology claimed that American ideals were in fact Jewish ideals, first articulated in the Old Testament. Historian Jonathan Sarna has called this equation of Jewish and American principles the "Cult of Synthesis," and he has observed the ways in which this particular trope has been a part of the American Jewish discourse since the mid nineteenth century.<sup>45</sup>

However, Sarna's understanding of the Cult of Synthesis differs from the ways in which Zangwill and some other thinkers of the age employed the synthetic trope. For Sarna, American Jews embraced the Cult of Synthesis as a justification for their inclusion into the broader American society. In other words, America's Jews argued that Jewish and American ideals were identical in order to convince the

broader society that Jews were just like every other American. While the historical record is replete with such uses of the synthetic trope, Israel Zangwill's linking of Americanism and Judaism inverted the trope, arguing that true Americanism required that Jews maintain their distinctiveness and that non-Jewish Americans should become more like Jews. Zangwill's linking of American and Jewish principles was meant to encourage Jews to express their ethics as a means of protest, to stand out, not to blend in, and to point out the ways in which an increasingly insular and racist society departed from Jewish, and therefore American, ideals. This formulation, which is particularly resonant with Mordecai Kaplan's call for the reconstruction of American Judaism and Horace Kallen's belief in the Americanness of ethnic pluralism, suggested a path for Jews to protest and take action against the insularity and anti-Semitism of the Tribal Twenties while still claiming loyalty to an increasingly suspicious State and culture.<sup>46</sup>

Yet despite the surface similarities between Zangwill's rhetoric and the American Cult of Synthesis, American Jews (and a number of non-Jews) would reject his critique of US politics and culture and his plea for American Jewish political action, while his comments on Zionism would catalyze a host of responses both positive and negative. From the moment Israel Zangwill completed his Carnegie Hall address until his departure from the States in February of 1924, American Jews would debate and, in most instances, dismiss the author's ideas. In so doing they revealed American Israel's sharp division over Zionism and its future. What is more they demonstrated a remarkably unified and deep-seated American Jewish compulsion to proclaim publically Jewish loyalty to the American state.

## America on Zangwill

Like the words of the biblical prophets, Israel Zangwill's statements throughout his 1923-1924 sojourn in America were dramatic and incendiary, and over a four month period, his speeches, writings, and other public pronouncements, catalyzed a wide array of passionate responses and contentious debate. As a November editorial in *The American Israelite* quipped, "Talk about a bull in a China Shop! An animal weighing a ton getting into a shop ten feet square and with crowded shelves could not do more mischief in so short a time than did Mr. Zangwill."<sup>47</sup> In the immediate aftermath of his Carnegie Hall address, for example, Pittsburgh's local Jewish paper, *The Jewish Criterion*, ran a headline proclaiming "Mr. Zangwill Explodes Dynamite," and the city's Jewish community organized what it called a "Monster Mass Meeting" to debate the substance of Zangwill's remarks. In a later edition of the *Criterion*, the non-Jewish author and socialist activist, Walter Hurt, observed of Zangwill that his brutal honesty was a great benefit to the Jewish people. In fact by Hurt's account, "The Jews of the world should say, 'Thank God for Zangwill.'" In the pages of *The American Israelite*, Rabbi David Phillipson hailed "Watchman" as "an outstanding event in Jewish life." Indeed, Phillipson observed, Zangwill's prominence as a Jew and a Zionist rendered his address the most looked forward to event in American Jewish life in recent years. In that same edition of the *Israelite*, in an editorial filled with biblical allusions, British Jewish author and critic Joseph Leftwich, a friend of Zangwill's and his first biographer, characterized Zangwill and his speech as prophetic. "Israel Zangwill," Leftwich wrote, "is the voice [of the Jewish people]." Rabbi Samuel Schulman of New York's Temple Beth-El similarly lauded Zangwill for exhibiting the "spirit of the Hebrew

prophets."And George Alexander Kohut, librarian at the Jewish Theological Seminary, published a poem proclaiming Zangwill a "second Moses."<sup>48</sup>

But not all responses to Zangwill's comments were universally complimentary. In New York, at the annual meeting of the American Jewish Congress, the organization which had solicited Zangwill's insights in the first place, tempers flared, and the Congress considered drafting a resolution condemning Zangwill's Carnegie Hall address. At the first formal meeting of the delegates to the Congress, the morning after Zangwill's initial speech, his host in the States, the American Zionist Nathan Strauss, proclaimed that, "I wouldn't care if he [Zangwill] was my own son... I would denounce him for what he said last night." More ominously, an editorial in the *Outlook*, a monthly periodical run by Congregationalist minister, theologian, and activist Lyman Abbot, argued that "If the advice attributed to Zangwill [from reports of his speech] were to be followed, it would do more than anything else...to justify the existence, if not the methods, of the Ku Klux Klan."<sup>49</sup>

Beneath the public acclaim for, and condemnation of, Israel Zangwill's ideas and comments to the American public, lay longstanding debates which had troubled and divided the American Jewish community for years. American Jewish discourse over Zangwillian ideology still, after thirty years, failed to take seriously his prophetic vision for the future of American Jewish life. This despite, or perhaps because of, the rising tide of nativist sentiment in American society, a threat to American Jewish life which Zangwill hoped his ideas would help combat. Instead, American Jews focused on the ways in which Zangwill's words advanced the standing of one group of Jews over another, or they recoiled from Zangwill's call for



an assertive politically engaged Judaism for fear that his vision might threaten the acceptance of all of American Israel.

Zangwill's sensational pronouncement of the death of political Zionism became a frequently debated and much hyped talking point in an ongoing debate between American Zionists and non-Zionists. Naturally American Zionists took great exception to his statement, despite the fact that in subsequent comments, Zangwill clarified his remarks, making clear that his critique of Zionism was a critique of Zionist leadership, and above all of the Balfour Declaration and the British administration of Mandatory Palestine. As an editorial in *The Reform Advocate* observed of the address, "It is clear that Zangwill has not read himself out of Zionism...What he was really attacking was a leadership that was satisfied with broad statements and had never descended to the facts that [confront] the Jew not in mass meetings of Zionists but in the very land which the Zionists [are] talking about."<sup>50</sup> In an address at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Zangwill reinforced this idea that his attack was not meant to end Zionism but rather to spur its American leaders to action. He argued that his comments were, in fact, a conscious tactic to incite the American Jewish Congress to action, and would ultimately have a powerful effect on the British who, compelled by the Americans to take seriously their role in Palestine, would see that they were "doing more for the Arab than for the Jew."<sup>51</sup>

Still, American Zionists, not without some cause, railed against Israel Zangwill for supposedly betraying their movement. In addition to Nathan Straus' public admonishment of Zangwill and the American Jewish Congress' efforts to denounce Zangwill's comments, the Congress' Vice President, Samuel Untermyer,

the very man who had, just a few months earlier, organized Zangwill's reception committee, resigned from the Congress in protest over the author's Carnegie Hall address. In an open letter to Nathan Straus, Untermeyer called the speech selfish and not at all in keeping with the diplomacy required of a Jewish leader. Ironically, Rabbi J.T. Loeb of Washington D.C.'s Congregation Oheb Shalom similarly lambasted Zangwill as selfish, and that rather than ending Zionism in America, American Jews would, in spite of Zangwill, rally to the Zionist cause, which according to Zangwill, true or false, was his intent all along.<sup>52</sup>

It is interesting to note that despite their displeasure with Zangwill, American Zionists did not consign the author to the non-Zionist camp. Even in their denunciations of him, American Zionists such as Nathan Straus, Stephen S. Wise, and even Samuel Untermeyer continued to claim Zangwill as their own, despite the fact that, in their opinion, he was ideologically mistaken. Straus, for example, called Zangwill's ideas "counterfeit Zionism."<sup>53</sup> But by far the most articulate and detailed expression of this acceptance of Zangwill as a *mistaken* Zionist, occurred in a late October address by Zionist activist and Federal Circuit Court Judge Julian Mack. In an incredibly ironic speech delivered to the Men's Club of New York City's Temple Israel and reprinted in the pages of *The New York Times*, Judge Mack divided Zionist ideology into two camps, much as Zangwill had done almost twenty years earlier when he formed the ITO. By his own account, Mack was a practical Zionist who willingly accepted the British offer as laid out in the Balfour Declaration. By contrast, Mack asserted, Zangwill was a "maximum Zionist" who believed that any prospective Jewish state should house all the world's Jews. "I disagree with Zangwill as to the desirability of the whole Jewish people being gathered

anywhere," Mack proclaimed.<sup>54</sup>

Israel Zangwill had made a similar distinction between his ITO and mainstream Zionists years earlier. In that construction, though, Zangwill had portrayed Itoists, who were willing to accept a Jewish homeland in any appropriate location, as the practical Zionists and mainstream political Zionism, with its refusal to accept any Jewish home outside of Palestine, as fanciful and maximalist. What is more, throughout his Zionist and Itoist careers, Zangwill had quite clearly and publically stated in America, England, and Europe, in print and in person, that neither a Jewish state in Palestine, nor a prospective Itoland could ever be home to the entire population of global Jewry. Mack's description of Zangwill as a maximum Zionist, then, clearly ignored a full two decades of Zangwill's speeches and essays in addition to ignoring the substance of the author's comments in his Carnegie Hall address.<sup>55</sup>

Mack's characterization of Zangwill as a maximum Zionist, a label which Wise and Untermeyer would similarly apply to him, was likely a rhetorical tactic meant to reproach Zangwill without actually labeling him non-Zionist. Despite their fundamental disagreements with Zangwill, in 1923 American Zionists could ill-afford to lose their association with such a prominent figure. Indeed, American Zionists could hardly stand to cede even one member of their movement. As Naomi Cohen has observed in her history of American Zionism, the early 1920s marked the nadir of American Jewish support for the Zionist cause. Public questioning of Jewish loyalty in the wake of the Balfour Declaration led to a significant critique of American Zionism as dangerous to, and counterproductive for, American Jewish interests. Likely the most vocal advocates of this critique were the non-Zionists of

the Jewish Reform movement in America. Indeed, Cohen has called American Reform, "Zionism's...archenemy." Such questions and critiques had a chilling effect on participation in the American Zionist movement, and by 1922, membership in the Zionist Organization of America had plummeted from a 1918 high of 149,000 to a miniscule 18,500. Faced with such demographic realities, it seems unlikely that Zionist leadership could reasonably label as non-Zionist a man whom the American Jewish Congress had invited to address their assembly. Instead, American Zionists found ways to admonish Zangwill while still claiming him as their own.<sup>56</sup>

But despite Israel Zangwill's self-proclaimed efforts to help advance Zionist goals in Palestine, American non-Zionists would, as had their Zionist opponents, claim the author as part of their fold. Indeed, non-Zionists could not help but express their excitement over what they perceived to be Zangwill's death blow to American Zionism. Louis Marshall, for example, the head of the non-Zionist American Jewish Committee, took great pleasure in the way in which Zangwill's comments embarrassed Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, the head of pro-Zionist American Jewish Congress. In private correspondence Marshall gloated that, "The discomfiture of Dr. Wise because of his inability to muzzle Zangwill brings pleasant and amusing thoughts to my mind."<sup>57</sup> In a November address to Cincinnati's Rockdale Temple, Rabbi David Phillipson could barely contain his glee at the ways in which Zangwill, "castigated the British Government... ridiculed the present administration of Palestine [and]...held up to scorn American Zionist spokesmen and officials...Those of us who for years have been opposing the policies and doctrines of political Zionism," Phillipson proclaimed, "could not but feel satisfaction at the reinforcement our position had received from so unexpected and powerful a source

[Zangwill].<sup>58</sup> And Rabbi Samuel Schulman, in a lengthy and detailed sermon on Zangwill's Carnegie Hall address, hailed the speech as Israel Zangwill's "inevitable endorsement" of twenty-five years of Reform opposition to the Zionist idea. "We...stand with reverence in the presence of this message of Zangwill," Schulman proclaimed, "who by confessing the defeat of Zionism... only confirms what we [the non-Zionists] have maintained."<sup>59</sup>

To be clear, there was much in Zangwill's speech beyond existing debates on American Zionism which Schulman found quite salutary. A close reading of Schulman's sermon, an address which was reprinted and recounted in the pages of *The American Hebrew* and *The New York Times*, reveals the ways in which Zangwill's rejection of a Jewish identity grounded in race rather than religion resonated with Schulman's ideological interests. In his address on Zangwill's speech, Schulman rejected the notion of "the Jewish people" entirely, suggesting that the Jewish community worldwide be considered, not a nation, but "the Knesseth Yirsoel," the Congregation Israel. In other words, Schulman proclaimed to his congregation, and perhaps to a broader audience through the pages of the *Hebrew* and the *Times*, that the Jews in America and across the Diaspora were not a people but a church, and a universal church at that. "The people of Israel," Schulman argued, "stands to-day for a universal religion to which, according to Jewish law, for the last two thousand years, any man or woman, of any racial origin is perfectly welcome." And like Zangwill, Schulman believed that the goal of this Jewish church in postwar America was to stand against, "the petty nationalisms of our time."<sup>60</sup>

Yet despite Schulman's embrace of Jewish universalism, an ideal Zangwill

had espoused in America for almost thirty years, and the Jewish mission to combat the intense nationalism of the age, an essential component of Zangwill's Carnegie Hall address, ultimately the Rabbi's remarks had less in common with Israel Zangwill's ideas than he seemed to claim. First of course Zangwill's relationship with the American Zionist movement and his statements about Zionism were far more complicated than Schulman would concede. But of greater importance was that in many ways Schulman's speech was not meant to encourage Jewish distinctiveness and political dissent, as Zangwill had through his calls for a Jewish vote, but rather to enhance the sense of Jewish loyalty to, and Jewish "at homeness" in, America. Indeed, in his description of Judaism as a Jewish church, Rabbi Schulman insisted that such a church had a right is to be at home in any part of the world, and its members had an obligation to offer "wholesouled allegiance" to the land in which they lived. According to Schulman American Jews, especially non-Zionist Jews, offered this depth of loyalty. In a somewhat overwrought passage in his sermon the Rabbi proclaimed that:

Our heart and our mind are in this land in which we live and which we love. As an American I say, we belong to this great American nation. We love the streets in which we played as children. We love the schools in which our minds were opened to knowledge, we love the colleges from which we graduated, we love the glorious heritage of our land which has become part of our soul, we love that which a Jefferson and a Washington and a Lincoln and a Roosevelt bequeathed to us.<sup>61</sup>

But such allegiance was not fully in keeping with Zangwill's aspirations for Judaism in America. Central to Zangwill's hopes for American Judaism was his desire to see American Jewry engage in distinct and decisive political action but Schulman, along with many others, simply could not countenance such an idea.<sup>62</sup>

The idea of a Jewish, or hyphenate, vote was a problematic notion in postwar

American society. Political rhetoric in the years surrounding World War I, particularly the elections of 1916 and 1920 had rendered such an idea dangerously anti-American. During the 1916 reelection campaign of President Woodrow Wilson, German-Americans had threatened to retaliate at the ballot box in response to Wilson's favoritism towards England—selling the British munitions, for example—as well as his threat to cut off diplomatic relations with Germany in response to their unrestricted submarine warfare in the Atlantic. Such threats resulted in Wilson's very public and severe condemnation of the hyphen vote. In a June 14<sup>th</sup> address at the Washington Monument, a campaign kickoff event attended by some 25,000 Americans, Wilson warned the assembled crowd that "There is disloyalty active in the United States and it must be absolutely crushed...Are you going yourselves, individually and collectively, to see to it that no man is tolerated who does not do honor to [the] flag?"<sup>63</sup>

As philosopher and Jewish Studies scholar Berel Lang has observed, such assertions by Wilson, as well as similar assertions from Theodore Roosevelt, occurred at a time when "political power [still] directly affected public discourse," thus raising the stakes of such political language from mere rhetoric to the level of ominous threat. Although election results demonstrated that the so-called hyphen vote was largely a non-factor, public suspicions over divided national loyalty in electoral politics, spurred on by the public comments of high ranking political officials, would play a significant role in the 1916 election, throughout America's subsequent involvement in World War I, and the years immediately following the war.<sup>64</sup>

And yet, despite the anti-hyphenate sentiment of the WWI era, American

Jews found themselves the target of ethnically motivated campaign rhetoric in both the 1916 and 1920 Presidential elections. Wilson's anti hyphenate stance, notwithstanding, several members of the Democratic Party would actively court the "Jewish vote," reminding Jews that early in 1916, Wilson had nominated Louis Brandeis to the Supreme Court and demanding Jewish votes in payment for that nomination. Indeed, according to one report, the managers of the Wilson campaign claimed that the Jewish vote in America "belonged to Wilson because he has appointed certain Jews to office." And in 1920, the Democratic State Committee of Indiana issued a press release reminding American Jews that, as a Senator, Republican Presidential candidate Warren G. Harding had voted against Brandeis' confirmation to the bench, suggesting that he had done so for anti-Semitic rather than political reasons. The 1910s and 1920s, then, represented a difficult moment for the leaders of American Jewry. At once, ethnic Americans were warned, indeed threatened, to dispense with their ethnic ties and vote as Americans, while Jews were also reminded of their Jewish obligation to vote for the Democratic Party.<sup>65</sup>

American Jewish response to these competing lines of political rhetoric make clear how sensitive Jews had become to anti hyphenate sentiment in the United States, while also demonstrating precisely the means by which American Jews would react to Israel Zangwill's 1923 calls for a Jewish vote. They would deny the existence of a Jewish vote in America, while loudly proclaiming the Americanness and patriotism of the nation's Jews. In 1916, for example, San Francisco's Jewish newspaper, *The Jewish Times*, published a lengthy editorial condemning Democratic Party leaders, reminding them that Republicans too had appointed Jews to government posts, and that they had done so without explicitly demanding



payment in Jewish votes. The editorial denied the existence of a Jewish vote and forcefully condemned the notion of such a voting bloc as an "insult to the intelligence of every self-respecting Jew in the country.... Jewish voters are proud of their Americanism" and they would not tolerate any effort to have their votes predetermined because of race or ethnicity. In 1920, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise issued a public statement to the press in which he stated that despite his support of the Democratic ticket, he rejected the efforts of Indiana's State Democratic Committee. "There is no Jewish vote and there will not be a Jewish vote," Wise asserted. "Jews like members of all other religious and racial groups vote as Americans, passing upon the issues that come before the American people solely with regard to the question whether they serve the highest aims and ideals of Americanism."<sup>66</sup>

And so Zangwill's calls for a Jewish vote had a particular resonance in the American Jewish community—a resonance he failed to perceive. Rabbi Schulman in his sermon on Zangwill's Carnegie Hall address made this fact clear when he noted that, "Zangwill unfortunately was misled into speaking of a Jewish vote...Unfamiliar with the political atmosphere in this country, and above all, not sufficiently in touch with the peculiar tang of the words 'Jewish vote,' he said something, I believe, which he did not mean."<sup>67</sup> And in a personal letter to Zangwill the Rabbi reiterated the ways in which the American Jewish milieu colored the community's understanding of Zangwill's words. "The force of words depends to a great extent upon the apprehension of those who hear them and read them," the Rabbi wrote. "And in our country, the words 'Jewish vote' have a very definite and sinister meaning."<sup>68</sup>

The response of non-Jews and Jews to Zangwill's calls for an American-Jewish vote reflected both America's anti-hyphenate fervor in the early 1920s as well as the American Jewish community's now practiced response to previous accusations concerning a Jewish vote. In a press release to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, for example, non-Jewish socialist activist John Spargo echoed the broader society's suspicion of a hyphenate vote, observing that, "A Jewish vote would prove a great menace and would lead to an unwholesome reaction on the part of the general public...I hope that...we will not have Jewish-Americans but American Jews." As we have seen earlier in the chapter, Spargo's concerns over an "unwholesome" public reaction was shared by the Congregationalist newspaper, *The Outlook*, which warned that Zangwill's calls for a Jewish vote would justify the work of the Ku Klux Klan. Concerns over the Klan's response to Zangwill's comments were reinforced by African-American journalist and activist Roscoe Simmons, who warned that long after Zangwill had returned to England his words would have a deleterious effect on the American Jewish community, as the Klan would cause trouble for "better Jews than Zangwill."<sup>69</sup>

American Jews, anxious over continued, if not worsening, anti-hyphenate sentiment, repudiated Israel Zangwill's call for a Jewish vote. Louis Marshall, for example, in a lengthy press release to the JTA responding to Zangwill's address, attempted to allay any concerns from the non-Jewish public by assuring them that they "need not fear that Mr. Zangwill's views on this subject are shared any appreciable number of Jews in the United States. The spontaneous protest which they have voiced is sufficient evidence of that." Rabbi Schulman proclaimed that American Jews "reject the idea of a Jewish vote." An editorial in *The American*

*Hebrew* argued that in the United States, Jews had outgrown the need to organize politically. And in Rabbi David Phillipson's sermon on the Carnegie Hall address, a speech which by and large applauded Zangwill's statements to the American Jewish Congress, the Rabbi condemned the idea of a Jewish vote as "a figment of an idle political dream... there is no such thing as a Jewish vote, and there should not be."<sup>70</sup>

It is important to note that the widespread denial of the existence of a Jewish vote reflected a conditioned response on the part of the American Jewish community, a political reflex carefully honed after years of attempting to navigate between anti-hyphenate sentiment and demands for Jewish political loyalty. These responses surely could not reflect any serious consideration of Zangwill's comments in the States. After all, Israel Zangwill had not claimed that a Jewish vote existed in America. In fact he lamented the absence of such a vote as a failure of the American Jewish community and a disturbing example of, what Zangwill called, American Jewish "Marranoism," that is, excessive Jewish gratitude for their relative acceptance into American society. No, Zangwill did not seek to direct the focus of an existing American Jewish vote, but rather he called for its creation. And what is more, Zangwill had not suggested that Jews vote as a bloc, a move which might have called into question their loyalty to America, but instead he called for the creation of a political platform informed by Jewish ethics in response to an increasingly insular and tribal American public and polity. "[Jewish] ethics ought to find expression communally,"<sup>71</sup> Zangwill wrote to Samuel Schulman.

Still, American Jews, after being subject to almost a decade of anti-hyphenate sentiment in public discourse viewed any suggestion of an ethnically, or

even ethically, motivated Jewish vote, as a dangerous and anti-American sentiment. They perceived Zangwill's comments as dangerous and they loudly rejected even the suggestion of a Jewish vote while publically proclaiming the Americanness and patriotism of American Jews. Rabbi Schulman, for example, told his congregation,

[W]hen we enter the voting booth, we enter as Americans and not as Jews, We vote for policies, for men, not from any Jewish point of view, but from the point of view of the best interests for our country from the point of view of righteousness, honesty, personal character, and patriotism.<sup>72</sup>

Here Schulman's response was echoed by a number of other prominent Jewish figures. Chief among these was Louis Marshall, whose lengthy press release on the subject of Zangwill's Carnegie Hall address went into great detail on the ways in which Jews in America prized American democracy and its assumption of universal equality under the law. "It is the glory of our country that before the law all men are equal," Marshall wrote. He asserted that such acceptance and equality was unparalleled in the long history of the Jews, and Jewish gratitude towards America, as well as plain common sense, would preclude the creation of an American Jewish vote. "I am confident that there is no part of the population of this country which would with such determination oppose such an idea of political segregation as the Jews," Marshall wrote. "For centuries their ancestors in foreign lands suffered from the consequences of an enforced segregation of this character, and they would not be so fatuous as to create voluntarily a condition which in effect would establish an American ghetto."<sup>73</sup>

In some sense, Marshall's proclamation of Jewish loyalty was an ironic form of Jewish exceptionalism. In his efforts to assure the American public that American Jews were no different from other voters, he offered unique historical

reasons why Jews, more than any other segment of the population, would reject the idea of an ethnic vote. In essence, Jews were patriotic Americans *par excellence*. One can detect the same rhetorical device in Rabbi Schulman's claims that Jews entered the voting booth with "righteousness, honesty, personal character, and patriotism" on their minds. The irony, of course, is that such responses were meant to counter Zangwill's calls for Jewish distinctiveness, for Jews to act as moral exemplars to heal a damaged American society. But in their efforts to discount Zangwill and claim that Jews were just like other Americans, both Marshall and Schulman had laid claim to a unique, almost superior, brand of Jewish Americanness.

Other responses to Zangwill's calls for a Jewish vote made far less exceptionalist claims, downplaying Jewish distinctiveness and promoting the shared identity and values of all Americans. Rabbi Phillipson, for example, dismissed not just the idea of a Jewish vote, but any hyphenate vote at all. In a November 20<sup>th</sup> sermon on Zangwill's American speaking tour, Phillipson told his congregation that, "To speak of a Jewish, a Catholic, or a Protestant vote, of a German, an Irish, or an Italian vote shows a sorry misconception of the American viewpoint." Rabbi Gerson Levi, who became editor of *The Reform Advocate* after Rabbi Hirsch's death in January of 1923, offered a more thoughtful and nuanced response to Zangwill's desire for an American Jewish vote. He conceded that Jewish values should, in fact, influence voting patterns. "But it does not follow that, having these views," Levi wrote, "we would combine as a whole with one political party or another." Instead, Levi suggested, Jews form political coalitions with like-minded Americans, "citizens

of faiths other than Jewish who believe as we do about the American spirit. We shall join with them in keeping untainted the ideals of American citizenship.”<sup>74</sup>

Rabbi Levi’s suggestion was not drastically different from Israel Zangwill’s American Jewish ideals. While Zangwill’s comments to the American Jewish Congress indicated a unique Jewish role in establishing the moral ideals of America, and indeed of all western civilization, he still described those morals as emanating from a universal God which sought a unified civilization of man. Yes, American ideals, according to Zangwill, were Jewish ideals, and yes Zangwill believed that American Jews should employ those ideals politically, but Zangwill also told his Carnegie Hall audience, and subsequent American audiences, that America’s Jews should join in common cause with like minded Americans (Jewish or non-Jewish) to defend those ideals against the rise of hyper-nationalism and racism. Perhaps in describing this coalition of ethically like-minded Americans as a “Jewish vote,” Zangwill obscured the purpose of his call to action. Clearly many Americans, both Jewish and non-Jewish focused too closely on this particular turn of phrase, ignoring Zangwill’s significant vision of an American Jewish community which led its nation in the cause of social justice. It is equally clear that Zangwill did not understand the phrase’s unique and historically contingent meaning.

Ultimately, as with all of Israel Zangwill’s exchanges with America and its Jewish community, the American response to “Watchman What of the Night,” and Zangwill’s other addresses in 1923, demonstrates a missed opportunity. Zangwill came to the United States to offer a prophetic vision to the American Jewish community, to tell the community that it had become the global center of Diasporic

Judaism, and that as such the community had certain political, moral, and ethical obligations. Despite this message, though, despite Zangwill's considerable reputation, and—most ironic of all—despite the American Jewish community's continued solicitation of his thoughts and ideas, American Jews would reduce Zangwillian prophecy into mere slogans which they could alternately applaud or condemn for their own political purposes, while largely ignoring his prophetic vision of an engaged and vital American Judaism.

### Leaving America

And yet despite the similarities between Israel Zangwill's 1923 visit and his earlier exchanges with America and American Jewry, his 1923 sojourn, the last of his career, was qualitatively different. In their previous disagreements with Zangwill, Americans and American Jewry displayed a level of civility towards, and deference to, the British author, a man who had been recently hailed in the American press as one of the world's most prominent Jews. But as Zangwill had observed upon his arrival to the United States, America had changed. A perverse alchemy of nationalism, chauvinism, and anti-Semitism had produced an American populace less tolerant of criticism, less civil towards foreigners, less certain of Jewish loyalty and, therefore, less deferential to the opinions of Israel Zangwill, a man who had only fifteen years earlier been hailed as a prophet of American exceptionalism. As *The New York Times* predicted in early November of 1923, as payment for Zangwill's critique of America and Americans, he would "suffer the fate of all strangers" who, rather than mouthing trite platitudes, ventured to offer serious criticism of the United States. "He will be scolded and denounced and made the object of disdainful ridicule."<sup>75</sup> The *Times*' assessment would, in some sense,

prove an understatement. While Israel Zangwill was not without supporters, most prominently Bainbridge Colby, the Secretary of State under Woodrow Wilson, who publically concurred with Zangwill's critique of American isolationism and xenophobia, and while many Americans, both Jewish and non-Jewish, civilly debated Zangwill's ideas in the pages of the American press or in the meeting halls of various institutional bodies, others expressed their intolerance of Zangwill's critique of America in a very public and unpleasant manner. Such expressions would ultimately result in Zangwill's withdrawal from the public spotlight and the author's disillusioned and disappointed farewell to America in February of 1924.<sup>76</sup>

By early November of 1923 the American public's mood toward Israel Zangwill had turned ugly. On November 7<sup>th</sup>, the author addressed the National Arts Club in New York City. In his address, he criticized the American public for the lynching of Leo Frank. Zangwill's condemnation of the American justice system was derisively shouted down. In the middle of the address, an unknown man stood up and loudly asserted, "I think we've had enough!" According to the press, this attack on Zangwill was met with a smattering of applause. In response Zangwill left the stage, refusing to continue his address, and only relented after the entreaties of his host and some portion of the audience.<sup>77</sup>

A week later, Zangwill was loudly denounced at a meeting of the Foreign Press Correspondents. In his address, Zangwill had characterized recent efforts of war preparedness organizations, both in America and Europe, as counterintuitive and counterproductive. Preparing for war did not ensure peace, Zangwill argued, rather it guaranteed, continued warfare. Besides, the author asked, considering the state of postwar Europe, what European nation could possibly cross the Atlantic



and threaten America? In response Solomon Menken, the director of the National Security League, an advocacy group for military preparedness, stood up and loudly denounced Zangwill. "You do not know America...I am angered at your remarks and I resent your criticism." Un-phased by this particular outburst, Zangwill retorted that he criticized America because he admired the nation as humanity's greatest hope.<sup>78</sup>

Perhaps the most significant attack on Zangwill came from his longtime friend Richard Gottheil, a British immigrant, Professor of Semitic languages at Columbia University, and an active American Zionist. In a biting open letter, written just days after Zangwill's speech at the meeting of the Foreign Press Correspondents, Gottheil portrayed Israel Zangwill as a thoughtless and heartless critic whose shocking comments were not intended to improve America but to enrich Zangwill's bank account at the expense of American Jewish safety. "All of us Americans have had quite enough his inflamed views of things," wrote Gottheil. He argued that Zangwill had overstayed his welcome to America and then ominously warned the author to "Beware that thy tongue does not cut thy neck."<sup>79</sup>

After some ten days of being attacked in person and in the press, Israel Zangwill seemed to have taken all that he could stand. In a lengthy response to Gottheil's denunciations and threats Zangwill retired from public speaking from the end of November until late December. To some extent, the author's recoil from the spotlight was likely a strategic effort to concentrate on the upcoming debut of his new play, "We Moderns," his last theatrical production in the United States. In an open letter to his American audience, he announced that he would refrain from public appearances until the completion of the play. "Professor Gottheil [has] so

courteously suggested that I have overstayed my welcome," Zangwill wrote. "He and many others of your readers, especially those of my own race, will doubtless be delighted to hear that I have retired to the Ivory Tower of Art and that the rest—till my new play is finished—is silence."<sup>80</sup>

Still, a close reading of Israel Zangwill's response to Gottheil reveals more than the author's desire to complete the staging of "We Moderns." His letter to the *Times* exposed Zangwill's deep disappointment over his reception by his American audience. His so called "final reply" confirmed the author's assessment of the cultural changes which had overtaken the United States and had alienated Zangwill. In the early 1900s, when the author wrote "The Melting Pot," he described the United States as "God's crucible," a place capable of overcoming the petty tribalism and nationalism of Europe. In the 1920s, though, Israel Zangwill despaired that Americans, both domestically and in their foreign policy, had become isolated, xenophobic, and self obsessed. He wondered why Americans sent missionaries to the far corners of the earth to encourage the adoption of American values and religion, but they could not stand to hear words of advice from one of their greatest admirers. Zangwill had hoped that American Jews could stem the tide of American isolationism and moral decay, but by this time it was becoming clear to him that his use of the phrase "Jewish vote" was an unfortunate choice of words which had further exacerbated the American Jewish instinct for self preservation. In the closing passages of his letter, Zangwill expressed bitterness towards his public reception in the States, especially from America's Jews, when he observed that, "The door of the [Ivory] Tower has closed, and all my 'friends' can rend me at their mercy."<sup>81</sup>

Israel Zangwill reemerged from his self imposed exile in late December with a shocking announcement. Speaking to the national convention of the Jewish Chautauqua Society in Washington, D. C., the author confirmed the ominous predictions of Professor Gottheil and others who had warned the author to restrain his critique of America, lest he become a victim of anti-Semitic violence. He announced that he had received a death threat from the Ku Klux Klan. By Zangwill's account, prior to leaving New York for the Capital, he received a letter asking "What right have you to criticize America? We will take you out and assassinate you."<sup>82</sup> Zangwill told his audience that he paid little attention to the threat, and indeed he did continue to tour the States with his candid criticisms into early 1924, including a January address in Pittsburgh focused on the root causes of anti-Semitism in which he attacked the Klan and other racists as ignorant and irrational peoples desperately seeking a rational reason for their racist views.<sup>83</sup>

Clearly Zangwill's assessment of the threat to his life was correct. For the remainder of his time in America no such threat ever surfaced again. What is, and what continues to be, significant about the threat to Israel Zangwill's life, though, is the way in which it confirmed the author's bleak assessment of culture and discourse in postwar America. In the late 1890s, Zangwill's sharp criticisms of the American theater, the shallowness of American culture, and of American Jewish observance, catalyzed a significant response from a number of displeased Americans, but not once did any of Zangwill's detractors resort to the threat of violence, nor did any editorials or other responses to Zangwill—either public or private—warn the author that to frankly criticize America was a threat to one's safety. Clearly the America of the 1920s was a different place from the America of

the 1890s. Though Zangwill was warmly received, or at the very least politely tolerated, by the bulk of his American public, some small but vocal portion of Americans both Jewish and non-Jewish seemed incapable of understanding, or even tolerating the critiques and advice of one of the country's biggest supporters.

Denounced, disappointed, and in some sense defeated, Israel Zangwill left the United States of America for the last time in February of 1924. Prior to his departure the author, activist, and critic offered some final remarks to his American public at a banquet held in his honor and through a press release to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency both of which were billed as Zangwill's "farewell address" to the country. Whether Zangwill meant to characterize these comments as the last of his American tour or if he believed these addresses to be his final words ever to the people of America is not clear. It seems likely, though, that Zangwill sensed this would be his final visit to the States, the place which had been the site of some of his greatest literary triumphs and some of his greatest ideological disappointments. As we have seen, Zangwill had, since the late 1910s, believed travel to America to be both emotionally and physically taxing. No doubt the controversy over his 1923-1924 tour added to the emotional and physical demands he had encountered during his previous visit to the States. What is more, in the fifteen years since Zangwill had last come to the United States he had aged considerably. As Meri-Jane Rochelson makes clear in her work on Zangwill, throughout his career the author had been plagued by a series of illnesses as well as insomnia and depression, problems which only worsened with the passing of time. Contemporary accounts confirm Israel Zangwill's health problems. Just prior to his arrival in America, for

example, the *Jewish Criterion* observed that photographs of the author revealed “a different Zangwill from the one who came to this country some twenty years ago.” Although the author still possessed a sparkling intellect and wit, *The Criterion* noted, Zangwill had visibly aged. And so one may reasonably deduce that the sixty-year-old Zangwill knew that once he departed the United States in early February of 1924, he would likely never return.<sup>84</sup>

Above all there was a certain valedictory quality to Zangwill’s remarks. On the evening of February 5<sup>th</sup>, at a banquet held in his honor, the author restated his abiding admiration for the United States, reminding his audience that his criticisms of America were meant to improve the nation, a place which he continued to characterize as “the greatest potentiality in the world.” Indeed, by Zangwill’s account, for some time he had contemplated becoming an American citizen, but that he no longer had any interest in immigrating because of the way in which “a score of ignorant prejudices... [were] destroying all the ideals she [America] ha[d] stood for and the hope she offered to humanity with outstretched hands.” And yet despite these problems America was still the world’s best hope for peace. By Zangwill’s account the entire world should be joined in one massive union of states on the American model, thus eliminating all borders, nationalism, and wars. “The only way for peace,” Zangwill said, “is to make the world another United States.”<sup>85</sup>

Despite his interest in the broader mission of the United States, though, Zangwill’s most passionate and powerful vision continued to be his prophecy for the development of American Jewish life. On February 7<sup>th</sup>, a day after he sailed for England, Israel Zangwill released a farewell statement to American Jewry through the offices of the American Jewish Congress. Zangwill’s ultimate message to

American Jewry continued to stress the need for American Jewish activism to alter the racist and nativist course of American culture and society. Having been chastened by the overwhelmingly negative reaction of American Jewry to his calls for a Jewish vote, though, Zangwill's final statement articulated a slightly different vision of American Jewish ethical activism. While he still insisted that "Any propaganda or proposal savoring of injustice or intolerance...should be abhorrent to [America's] Jews," rather than demanding that American Jewry construct an ethically Jewish political platform, Zangwill instead argued that American Jews should educate their fellow citizens about the great debt the nation owed to Jewish thought and Judaism. "A campaign of enlightenment should be carried on with the all vigor and resources of the greatest Jewish community ever gathered together to reveal the complete accordance of American principles with those Hebraic ideals which inspired the founders of the Republic," Zangwill wrote. He admitted in his farewell to America's Jews that such activism might threaten Jewish security in America, a fact which his reception in the States had made abundantly clear. Still, he argued, Jewish ethics demanded deeper engagement with American culture and greater visibility in the public arena from America's Jews. Above all, Zangwill argued, in educating the American public about the Jewish character of their founding principles, America's Jews would actively stand for something, rather than merely defending their comparatively secure position in American society. "I can only say," Zangwill wrote, "that it behooves American Jewry...to assume a more courageous attitude towards life...in the words of my Carnegie Hall address, 'For God's sake stand openly and assertive for something worth dying for. That, you will find, will make life worth living...'"<sup>86</sup>

And so Israel Zangwill's concluding comments of his 1923-1924 American speaking tour ended very much the way they began, with a prophetic call for American Jewry to embrace a 4,000 year legacy of Jewish thought and observance and employ it towards the improvement of American life for Jews and non-Jews alike. Here, as I have observed before, Zangwill's vision, which some scholars have described as inconsistent and mercurial, remained remarkably true to his earliest thoughts on American Jewish life. Since the late 1890s Zangwill had written and spoken about America as a unique and exceptional chapter in the history of the Jews.

Unburdened by the discriminatory laws and restrictions which had plagued the Jews of Europe and other diasporic centers for centuries, American Jewry was free to express its collective will in the freest and most salutary fashion in the history of the Diaspora. But internal debates over denominational divides and a deep desire to protect the social and cultural benefits afforded to American Jewry, Zangwill argued, stunted the growth of American Judaism, thus limiting the influence of Jewish ideals on American society and culture.

And as they had done throughout their thirty year engagement with Israel Zangwill, the American Jewish community failed to heed the author's prophetic vision. Indeed one might reasonably argue that most American Jews were happy to be rid of Israel Zangwill. At the very least they seemed content to forget all that he had said to them. The days following Zangwill's final press release to the American Jewish community were marked by a complete lack of discussion of the author's farewell or any of his other insights and opinions. Despite the fact that a number of American Jewish institutions had requested Zangwill's presence and insights for some fifteen years since his last visit to the States for the premiere of "The Melting

Pot,” when faced with the real challenges posited by Zangwill, the American Jewish community recoiled from the audacity of his vision and the sensational character of his oratory. Until his death in August of 1926 the archival record reveals a virtual silence on Zangwill in America.

But neither a two year silence nor even Israel Zangwill’s death would signal the final chapter of the relationship between Israel Zangwill and America. Following his passing, American Jewry extensively eulogized the author, offering sympathetic and salutary assessments of his legacy. What is more, extensive reference to Zangwill would occur in a number of rabbinic sermons, articles, and books throughout the twentieth century. And even now, in the early decades of the twenty-first century, Israel Zangwill’s ideas are studied and debated. A reading of these sources is the subject of the following chapter and the conclusion of this dissertation.



## **Chapter Five: Zangwill Posthumously: A Study of Zangwillian Eulogy and Exegesis**

Israel Zangwill died on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1926 in Midhurst, Sussex, England after a brief illness. The passing of this once prominent and ubiquitous figure in American discourse was so significant, that his death was reported as front page news in a number of daily papers across the country, including *The New York Times*, *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, *The Washington Post* and several other large market dailies. Naturally, reportage in the American Jewish press was considerable. Papers like *The American Hebrew*, *The American Israelite*, *The Reform Advocate*, and others ran multi-page retrospectives lamenting the author's passing and recognizing the significant role he had played in American Jewish life. American Jews demonstrated their recognition of Zangwill's significance in other ways, as well. Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, for example, offered the eulogy at Zangwill's memorial service in the London suburb of Golders Green, and America's most prominent, national Jewish institutions, the non-Zionist Committee and the pro-Zionist Congress, overcame their ideological divisions to join together and hold a large scale memorial in his honor at Carnegie Hall, the site of Israel Zangwill's most controversial, and arguably his most significant, address to the American public. As with so many moments in the story of Zangwill and America, then, Israel Zangwill's passing was an event of public significance for Americans, both Jews and Gentiles.<sup>1</sup>

But while America's immediate posthumous tributes to Israel Zangwill represented an important moment in the community's engagement with the works of Israel Zangwill, such commemorations did not mark the end of that engagement.

In the years since his death, Americans, both Jewish and non-Jewish have returned to the words and activism of Israel Zangwill in an effort to assess his historical legacy and discern the meaning of his prophetic instruction. Indeed, as this chapter will demonstrate, the immediate aftermath of Zangwill's passing may mark the first moment when a wide array of American Jews openly acknowledged Israel Zangwill's role as a prophet. And with that recognition would come a broad effort to discern the precise meaning of his prophecy. With the passage of time the recognition of Zangwill as prophet would fade, but it would never fully disappear, nor would scholars cease to examine the life and works of Israel Zangwill and assess their meaning both for his own day and for their contemporaneous moment.

As with all efforts at historical and textual analysis, an examination of the perceived meaning of Zangwill's legacy and Zangwillian prophecy demonstrates significant change over time, reflecting the cultural and academic trends of the moment, as well as the personal agendas of the scholars in question. Still, the one constant that remained throughout the posthumous assessment of Israel Zangwill's life and works was the recognition that, at the very least, in his day Israel Zangwill was a figure of considerable prominence and influence, and his works were worthy of thoughtful and careful study and analysis.

This chapter examines the ways in which American Jews (and occasionally non-Jews) have thought about and discussed Israel Zangwill's historical legacy and his prophetic vision. It first studies the initial responses to Zangwill's death, the eulogies and remembrances from the significant members of the American Jewish community who either knew the author personally or were familiar with his works

during his lifetime. It then assesses the ways in which scholarly inquiry and analysis into the life and legacy of Zangwill has changed over time and concludes with a survey of twenty-first century studies of Zangwill and considers this dissertation's place within the field.

To be sure, such historiographic surveys are more often located within the introduction of a study of this nature rather than in its conclusion, but I would argue that this particular study is not only part of an historiographical process (that is the study of histories on Zangwill) but an historical one, as well. It is, in fact, another chapter in the continuing and often contentious relationship between the American Jewish idea of Zangwill and the late author's American Jewish ideals. And as such it should be given an integral place within the narrative of Zangwill and America rather than merely addressing the historiographical uniqueness of my work. To put it another way, this chapter acknowledges that twentieth and twenty-first-century scholarship on Zangwill, including my own, is not solely a distant assessment of an historical moment, but also represents the work of a number of American Jews who have actively attempted to assess the ways in which Zangwillian prophecy provides useful insight into their own historical moment and, in some cases, the scholars' personal engagement as American Jews.

### Eulogies

Early posthumous tributes to Zangwill provide an important glimpse into the evolution of the American Jewish perception of Israel Zangwill's legacy. Prior to Zangwill's death, many prominent American Jews, and indeed a number of non Jews, viewed the author as a gadfly of sorts. Paradoxically, despite their continued

desire to hear and read Zangwill's opinions on a wide range of topics, and indeed, despite their own role in forming the author's reputation as an expert on Jewish affairs, a large number of American Jewish leaders, thinkers, and writers dismissed Zangwill's opinions as largely unsolicited and wholly uninformed. Indeed, Zangwill biographer Maurice Wohlgelernter, observing Zangwill's dogged insistence to make his opinion known to his public regardless of that public's reception, has approvingly called Zangwill, "the conscientious gadfly of mankind."<sup>2</sup>

In the aftermath of his death, though, as the leading figures of American Jewry attempted to assess the meaning of Israel Zangwill's life and works, many of those same American Jews expressed a greater appreciation for his insights and opinions. Zangwill the gadfly became Zangwill the prophet, the champion, and the martyr—a brave man who spoke the truth, as he saw it, to his constituents, despite the cost to his reputation, his pocketbook, and his health. To be sure, several American Jews had hailed Zangwill as a prophet during his lifetime, and surely Israel Zangwill had believed that his critical writings and speeches were part of the Jewish prophetic tradition. What is more, it is certainly true that sentimentality often compels eulogizers to find their subjects more praiseworthy in death than during their lives. Still, when compared with the dramatic events surrounding the author's 1923 visit, this change in the American reception of Zangwill is notable and the characterization of "Zangwill as prophet" represented a significant shift in the thirty plus year relationship between Zangwill and America. As well, it suggests that, at least for a brief historical moment, American Jews might seriously consider Israel Zangwill's vision for the American Jewish community.

The first posthumous appraisal of Zangwill as prophet occurred at Israel Zangwill's funeral on the fifth of August, 1926 in the London suburb of Golders Green. At the time of Zangwill's passing, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise happened to be in London, and it was Wise who would offer the eulogy at the author's funeral. Recalling Zangwill's final engagement with America and American Jewry, Wise hailed Israel Zangwill as an heroic man willing to endure the insults and derision of his public in order to speak the truth. And, not unlike Moses, Wise argued, Israel Zangwill led his people on a spiritual exodus from the "lowlands of self-contempt to the heights of self-reverence." Wise's eulogy, and therefore his characterization of Zangwill would be distributed across the United States through a variety of Jewish and non-Jewish publications, thus offering the first, though not the last, assessment of Zangwill as a Jewish prophet and champion.<sup>3</sup>

Other praise soon followed. *The American Hebrew* dedicated nine pages of their August 6<sup>th</sup> edition to tributes and assessments of Zangwill and his career under the headline "Tributes to Zangwill—Lamented Social Prophet." Entries included a reprint of George Alexander Kohut's 1923 poem "Zangwill—The Clarion," a work which hailed Zangwill as "a Second Moses" and compared his 1923 message to the American Jewish community with Moses' smashing the Ten Commandments after discovering the Hebrews engaged in idol worship. Less hyperbolic entries still depicted Zangwill as a prophet and a fallen Jewish champion. Elias Lieberman, for example, the literary editor for *The American Hebrew*, saw in Zangwill's vision of the American Melting Pot, "a touch of the prophetic." And author Montague Glass lamented the fact that Zangwill had abandoned his writing of fiction and engaged in

a quixotic quest to address the most “insoluble” issues in Jewish life, such as the problems of diasporic assimilation and the creation of a Jewish homeland.

Overcome and exhausted by these challenges, Glass argued, “In some measure...he [Zangwill] died a martyr to Judaism...”<sup>4</sup>

Playwright William J. Perlman concurred with Glass’ assessment of Zangwill’s martyrdom. In a two page article in the *Hebrew*, Perlman revealed that he had spent the past three years writing a play about Zangwill, a play which the late author apparently knew about and approved of. Perlman told a reporter from the *Hebrew* that his play would depict Zangwill as a “tragic figure,” a man who, despite his commitment to fighting for Jews and Jewish causes, was completely misunderstood and underappreciated “by his own people.” Perlman lauded Zangwill as a prophet, and compared his treatment by global Jewry—and most notably by American Jews in 1923—to the treatment of Jesus received for his prophecy. By Perlman’s account, Zangwill was “a Jew who was virtually crucified ...by his fellow Jews.”<sup>5</sup>

Even those who had vehemently disagreed with Zangwill in the past, particularly those Jewish leaders who had publically criticized the author in the wake of his 1923 address at Carnegie Hall, seemed inclined to reassess their thoughts about Zangwill, offering a more complimentary appraisal of the late author and characterizing his life and legacy as heroic and prophetic. The most notable example of this came from the head of the American Jewish Committee, Louis Marshall. As the reader may recall, in 1923 Marshall issued a widely distributed denunciation of Zangwill’s calls for a Jewish vote, and in private correspondence

Marshall made clear that he believed Zangwill's Carnegie Hall speech would prove harmful to American Jewry. But Marshall's 1923 assessment of Zangwill did not preclude the American Jewish leader from playing an important role in honoring the late author. Marshall was a vice chairman on the committee that helped organize the American memorial service for Zangwill at Carnegie Hall. He contributed money to facilitate that tribute, and he offered a quite complimentary assessment of Israel Zangwill's life at the Carnegie Hall event. In his comments, Marshall hailed Zangwill as a "modern Bar Cochba," thus equating the British Jewish author with the martyred leader of a failed second century, C.E. Jewish revolt against Roman occupation. Indeed in his day, some believed Bar Cochba to be the Messiah. To be sure there is more than a touch of the hyperbolic in Marshall's address. Nevertheless, he did recognize Zangwill as a fearless truth-teller, who spoke with the "conviction of an ancient prophet..."<sup>6</sup>

Even Nathan Straus, the ardent Zionist and Israel Zangwill's American host in 1923, a man who was so appalled by Zangwill's critique of the Zionist project that he supported Samuel Untermyer's departure from the American Jewish Congress and publically condemned his British guest's intemperance, seemed willing to let go of his anger and reassess Zangwill's insights and critiques. At the American memorial for Zangwill at Carnegie Hall, an event which Straus chaired, he proudly proclaimed that he had hosted Zangwill's 1923 visit and was able to observe the author craft his "last great message." Whether sincerely felt, or merely in an effort not to speak ill of the dead, Straus actually reasserted Zangwill's own defense of his 1923 comments. Straus told the crowd of mourners that "he

[Zangwill] criticized America because he really loved America and was keenly disappointed to find here the growth of such un-American movements as the Klan." As for Zangwill's message to American Jewry, Straus observed that "Zangwill loved the Jewish people like the prophets of old, and he told them the truth like the prophets of old."<sup>7</sup>

And yet, despite such public pronouncements hailing Zangwill as a prophet, American Jewry still seemed incapable of a deeper appreciation of, or understanding for, the author's vision for American Jewry. American Jews who honored "Zangwill the prophet" could not seem to agree about the meaning of his prophecy. Some, such as Louis Marshall, argued all of Zangwill's fictional writing would be his greatest contribution. Others believed Zangwill's plays represented his greatest legacy. Still others dismissed the author's plays as too polemical, claiming that his Jewish novels and stories, which presented Jews in a new and beneficial light, represented the true Zangwillian prophecy. Above all, the vast majority of these tributes failed to see Zangwillian prophecy as applicable to American Jewish life, this despite the fact that Zangwill had continually called on American Jews to create a new form of diasporic Judaism. Indeed with few exceptions virtually all of the eulogies and tributes offered by American Jewish leaders, rabbis, writers, and others, found his fictional literature, his novels and plays, to be his greatest contribution to Jewry and the world. In so doing they largely ignored Zangwill's political activism and his significant body of essays and speeches which articulated his vision of an adaptive, politically engaged American Judaism. <sup>8</sup>



Indeed some tributes to Zangwill actually lamented the author's engagement in Jewish issues, arguing that such efforts detracted from his true talent as an author of fiction. Isaac Landman, for example, the editor of *The American Hebrew*, in a front page editorial argued that, "Generations to come will read with zest 'Dreamers of the Ghetto...and Children of the Ghetto' when Zangwill's polemical pamphlets will be unread." Indeed according to Landman, in many ways Zangwill's literary career was a tragic failure. For Zangwill's interest in cultural criticism, religious discourse, political writing, and even his ideologically driven dramas ended his career as a novelist by the early 1900s. And those "polemical writings, in which he took greatest pride, [would] least likely...survive his death." Several weeks later, in another lengthy essay in the *Hebrew*, Clarence Freed concurred with Landman's lament over the ways in which Zangwill divided himself, becoming "many persons at one time," and thus neglected his most important works, his novels and plays. Nevertheless, Freed would offer an important, though incomplete, assessment of Zangwill which, years later, continues to be forcefully and convincingly advanced by the Jewish Studies scholar, Edna Nahshon. Freed proclaimed that Zangwill's Jewish themed works of fiction rendered him "the greatest interpreter of the Jewish soul for a non-Jewish public." Freed's opinion was shared by *Chicago Tribune* theater critic Frederick Donaghey, who saw in Zangwill's work the essential themes present in a new crop of Jewish themed theater, specifically citing the 1925 stage production of "The Jazz Singer."<sup>9</sup>

Even those American Jews who acknowledged as important Zangwill's activism and engagement with the American community seemed incapable of

comprehending, or at least admitting, that the author offered prophetic instruction to address problems in America. By these accounts Zangwillian prophecy was spoken to the American people but intended to create change elsewhere, to build a Jewish homeland in Palestine and to assist Jewish refugees in Europe. Nathan Straus in his comments at the Carnegie Hall, Zangwill Memorial, for example, fully recognized Israel Zangwill as a "prophet of peace" who sought unity in "American Israel." But Straus failed to see the ways in which Zangwill hoped for American Jewish religious unity, for an end to denominational division and the creation of an adaptive Judaism which would encourage Jewish observance, and even swell the American Jewish ranks through conversion. Nor did Straus acknowledge Zangwill's belief that this new form of American Jewish observance placed a religious obligation upon American Jewry to speak out against injustice in the United States. Instead, Straus called on his audience to honor Zangwill's vision by unifying to rebuild Palestine speedily and to offer relief to Jewish suffering in "Russia, Poland, Rumania, Austria, and Hungary."<sup>10</sup>

Like Straus, Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman similarly failed to comprehend the author's specific message to American Jewry. Though a pulpit Rabbi in Toronto at the time of Zangwill's death, Isserman had received his rabbinic training at Cincinnati's Hebrew Union College in the 1910s, and served as an assistant rabbi at Philadelphia's Rodelph Shalom Congregation at the time of Zangwill's 1923 visit to the United States. In a November 1926 sermon, Isserman hailed Zangwill as the greatest Jew of his generation. Although one could find a number of very prominent Jews across the globe, such as Albert Einstein and Louis Brandeis, those

men, Isserman argued, were significant figures in their own disciplines who happened to be Jewish. Israel Zangwill, by contrast, was “first and foremost a Jewish leader and a Jewish thinker:”

[His life] was the life that the prophets of Israel would have endorsed. To Zangwill as to those spiritual heroes of all humanity, Judaism was neither a confession of a creed not a series of rites. It was the spirit of righteousness, of peace and love and of human brotherhood.<sup>11</sup>

But despite Rabbi Isserman’s appreciation for Zangwill and his positive assessment of the author’s understanding of Judaism, the Rabbi failed to comprehend Israel Zangwill’s broader conception of Jewish life and culture, of his belief in the geographic and cultural contingencies that inform the specific practices of Judaism and the ways in which those contingencies offered a unique opportunity for American Jews to create a re-formed and wholly unique American Judaism.

To be clear, Isserman was familiar with Zangwill’s belief in the need to create a new kind of Judaism, but the Rabbi incorrectly asserted that Israel Zangwill saw that new Jewish practice as only possible in a Palestinian Jewish homeland, thus ignoring Zangwill’s continued insistence that Palestinian and Diasporic Jews would be fundamentally different people with fundamentally different understandings of Jewish identity and observance. In Palestine, Zangwill had argued, Jews might be able to define peoplehood racially, and the religious restrictions that Diaspora Jews found so burdensome—such as Saturday Sabbaths, dietary restrictions, and other social and behavioral restrictions—would become the societal norm, thus removing the need for Judaism to adapt to its diasporic environment. But the creation of a Jewish homeland did not, in Zangwill’s opinion, preclude the development of a vibrant and engaged diasporic Judaism, especially in America. In the Diaspora,

Zangwill had routinely argued, Judaism could survive, and indeed even thrive, if Jews fashioned new and adaptive forms of observance which recognized the core principles of Hebraic monotheism while adjusting their religious practices to the realities their host countries. Indeed, as the reader may recall, Zangwill called on American Jews to create new forms of Jewish practice and to proselytize to their Gentile neighbors, thus swelling the ranks of Judaism and reorienting what he believed to be the American Jewish community's narrow, racial conception of Jewish identity.

Isserman recognized the initial Zangwillian distinction, that is the division between Palestine and Diaspora, but in his sermon, Isserman argued, in some sense, that Israel Zangwill envisioned diasporic Jewish observance as not particularly Jewish, and that true Judaism could only exist in a Jewish homeland. He incorrectly proclaimed to his congregants that "Zangwill wanted a Jewish territory so that Judaism could continue."<sup>12</sup> To be sure, Zangwill had dedicated much of his career to the establishment of a Jewish homeland, but he did so to ensure the safety of countless Jewish refugees, as well as for those Jews who, for whatever reason, found their diasporic homes intolerable. Throughout his thirty year engagement with America, Zangwill never once suggested that Judaism would only survive in a Jewish territory.

As with so many American Jews, Rabbi Isserman's assessment of Zangwill's message to America continued to focus on the author's 1908 play, "The Melting Pot." But even Isserman's understanding of "The Melting Pot" ignored the multiple paradigms present in the melodrama. Isserman perceived Zangwill's vision of

America as a place where intermarriage and the forces of assimilation would create a unique American race and where former Jews would abandon their religion in favor of the faith of the Protestant majority. By Isserman's account, Israel Zangwill envisioned a culturally and religiously homogeneous America. "Zangwill's dream though beautiful was fallacious," Isserman proclaimed. "Uniformity is not the ideal for nations. Nations are enriched by a society of cultures, not the suppression but the expression of culture is desired."<sup>13</sup> In so saying, the Rabbi ignored Israel Zangwill's important writings and speeches calling for the creation of a cosmopolitan and tolerant America, as well as an adaptive and diverse American Judaism.

Although a great many tributes to Israel Zangwill failed to assess, or even recognize, the author's prophetic vision for American Jewry, a few American Jews were sensitive to his message and offered a more accurate assessment of the author's place in American Jewish discourse and his hopes for America and American Jewish life. Elias Lieberman, for example, offered, by far, the most accurate assessment of Zangwill's vision of the American melting pot. By Lieberman's account, Zangwill's 1908 drama was his "greatest bid for lasting fame." In Lieberman's description of the play he rightly observed the ways in which it promoted an American unity of purpose, while still recognizing "the heterogeneous strains in our [the United States'] national makeup." And in a two page editorial in Chicago's Jewish weekly, *The Reform Advocate*, that paper's editor, Gerson Levi, described Zangwill as part of a brilliant and critical cohort of Anglo-Jewish thinkers, such as Solomon Schechter and Joseph Jacobs, who brought their insight and

expertise to America's shores. While Zangwill was surely recognized in Anglo-Jewish circles, Levi argued, his entrance into American Jewish discourse was a significant event. Levi correctly portrayed Zangwill as a champion of Diasporic Judaism and made clear the author's belief that the Diaspora would continue to be a persistent and important component of the Jewish experience and that the geographically small and politically contentious Jewish project in Palestine could never save all of the world's Jews.<sup>14</sup>

And in his eulogy to Israel Zangwill, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise explicitly recognized not only the American fascination with Zangwill, but also the fact that the author came to United States with a specific vision about the future of America and American Jewry. Wise characterized Zangwill's hopes for American Jewry as a "beauteous fancy," and he observed that the Zangwillian vision of the American melting pot did not demand a racial, cultural, and religious unity which would end Jewish life in America, but instead represented a plea for the nation to allow its Jewish citizens to achieve the fullest possible expression of diasporic Jewish life by embracing, rather than merely tolerating, "the alien in a land of aliens." As for Zangwill's final message to American Jewry, his 1923 speaking tour begun at Wise's request, the Rabbi lamented that Zangwill's hopes for America proved "too daring" and his vision "too audacious." American Jewish leaders had no interest in provocative criticism and radical reformation, but rather, "[T]he potent leaders of Israel sometimes love peace better than the right."<sup>15</sup>

Wise's assessment concerning the "potent leaders of Israel's" reception of Zangwill's 1923 address easily could have been applied to their feelings about the

entire corpus of Zangwillian prophecy on American Jewish life. In many ways it could have been applied to the response of a majority of American Jews to Israel Zangwill and his prophetic vision for American Judaism. As we have seen throughout this dissertation, the American Jewish community's relationship with Zangwill was extraordinarily paradoxical and contradictory. Despite almost continual American Jewish interest in Israel Zangwill's insights and opinions, when the nature of those insight and opinions admonished the state of American Judaism and American Jewish life, most American Jews grew tense and defensive. While it seems that many in the American Jewish community were fascinated by the idea of Israel Zangwill—a bold Jewish polemicist who spoke his mind to both Jew and Gentile alike and cared little for the repercussions of his blunt criticisms and audacious assertions—they were far less interested in his American Jewish ideals, and as Rabbi Wise observed, when confronted with the reality of Zangwillian prophecy, most of American Israel preferred peace and chose to ignore or reject the author's passionate vision for American Judaism both during his life and after his death.

### Remembrances

Peace, or at least quiet, would come after the fall of 1926. In the years immediately following his death, the ideals of Israel Zangwill would rarely trouble the American Jewish community. Indeed, once Americans had offered up their eulogies to the fallen author and activist, he virtually disappeared from American Jewish discourse for almost twenty-five years. On occasion, journalists and other authors would print a brief remembrance of the late author, offering a biographical

sketch, or a bibliographic history of Zangwill. But these works failed to take into account the author's significant engagement with America and its Jews, describing Zangwill, instead as an author dedicated almost exclusively to Jewish themed fiction.

One such example of this occurred in the Jewish women's' monthly magazine, *The Jewish Spectator* and was redistributed in a number of Jewish dailies throughout the United States. The piece, "Israel Zangwill in Retrospect," was a page and a half remembrance of the author and offered a wide overview of his life, from his humble beginnings in London's East End through his rise to prominence as an author and Zionist. Largely absent from the article was any sense that Israel Zangwill had once been a major, though controversial, figure in American Jewish life, a man who repeatedly spoke to the American nation and American Jewry, exhorting both to fulfill his vision of their important and exceptional potential. Indeed, the author of the article even failed to take note of "The Melting Pot," the one work of Zangwill's which most Americans had recognized as a unique message to the United States.<sup>16</sup>

Even mentions of Zangwill in thoughtful studies of Jewish life failed to recognize the author's place in the discourse on American Judaism. Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, for example, offered three brief remarks about Israel Zangwill in Kaplan's magnum opus, *Judaism as a Civilization*, a work which re-envisioned American Judaism as an adaptive religion fully engaged with both Hebraic ideals and modern American realities. Zangwill had proposed a similar approach to the re-formation of American Jewish life throughout his career in the United States. But despite the



resonance between Zangwill's adaptive Hebraism and Kaplan's reconstructed Judaism, Rabbi Kaplan gave short shrift to Zangwillian thought in his book. His limited references to Israel Zangwill recognized the author's linguistic flair and saluted him as an important author of Jewish fiction, but failed to consider seriously the ways in which the formation of Kaplan's own ideas—developed during the same years that Zangwill had called on American Jewry to create a new form of American Judaism—may have been influenced by his exposure to the works and activism of Israel Zangwill.<sup>17</sup>

Mordecai Kaplan's failure to engage more fully Zangwillian thought is all the more remarkable because Kaplan participated in several events which honored Israel Zangwill as an important figure in American Jewish life. Kaplan, for example, was part of the reception committee which met Zangwill at the port of New York when he arrived for his 1923 speaking tour. And he was part of the committee which organized the 1926 memorial to Zangwill at Carnegie Hall. Such participation suggests a tacit recognition that Zangwill played an important role in the life of American Jewry, and yet *Judaism as a Civilization* largely fails to acknowledge that role. Still, Kaplan's fleeting recognition of Zangwill may have been one of the few moments in the first decades after the author's death when an American Jew actually offered at least some limited acknowledgement of Israel Zangwill as a prominent figure in American Jewish history.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, the most significant mention from this era of Zangwill as an important figure in American Jewish discourse did not come from an American at all, but instead from a British woman, Zangwill's widow Edith. Shortly after the

tenth anniversary of her husband's death, the British Jewish publishing house Soncino released a collection of Israel Zangwill's speeches and letters, a volume made possible by the efforts of the Zangwill family. In the years prior to the book's publication, for example, Edith had publically called for her husband's friends and colleagues to send her any of their saved correspondence between themselves and Israel Zangwill. Oliver Zangwill, Edith's and Israel's youngest son, reviewed the work before sending it to the editorial staff at Soncino, and Edith wrote the foreword to the book.<sup>19</sup>

In that foreword Edith lamented the fact that her husband had never received the recognition due to him as a prescient prophet. Writing in 1937, over a decade after the implementation of harsh, American immigration restriction, and with the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine a seeming impossibility—both developments which Israel Zangwill had warned of in numerous essays and speeches—Edith argued that much of her husband's prophecy had come true. And yet despite these facts, Edith proclaimed, "Israel Zangwill as a seer has never got his due."<sup>20</sup>

Equally important to Edith, was her desire to make clear that her husband was fiercely committed to telling the truth regardless of the economic consequences, and this was particularly true, Edith observed, in America. "Twice in his lifetime," Edith remembered, "he [Israel Zangwill] heralded the production of a new play in America by a series of lectures criticizing Americans." She then lamented the way in which America's reception of those criticisms demonstrated a profound misunderstanding between her late husband and his American public.

“The Americans thought that the lecturer's strictures arose from a lack of appreciation of their country,” she wrote. “Rather, they arose from too intense an appreciation.” She observed the ways in which her husband had placed much of his hope for mankind’s future on the success of the American project and a growing tolerance for diversity in the American polity. When the United States failed to fulfill Israel Zangwill’s hopes, Edith observed, he was filled with “sorrow and indignation.”<sup>21</sup>

A decade after Israel Zangwill’s death, though, most American Jews were simply not aware of, or interested in, the historical misunderstandings between the late author and his American public. Interest in the life and works of Israel Zangwill would fade from American Jewish discourse for more than a decade. Indeed, it is worth observing that the 1937 collection of Zangwill’s letters, speeches, and essays was published by Soncino, a British Jewish publishing firm, and not by, say, the Jewish Publication Society of America, the American Jewish institution which first promoted Israel Zangwill as a prominent Jewish writer, or Macmillan, the American publishing house which, since the early 1900s, had published the majority of Zangwill’s US editions. However, within a few decades, a number of American Jewish writers and thinkers would take a keen interest in the life and works of Israel Zangwill. Though as we shall see, many of those who wrote and spoke about Zangwill would actually discount the author’s significant contributions to American Jewish discourse, a limited few would prove sensitive to, and appreciative of, Zangwill’s vision for the future of Judaism and America’s role in shaping that future.

### Champions for Zangwill

Ironically the first such appreciation for Israel Zangwill would come from Rabbi Ira Eisenstein, son in law of Mordecai Kaplan and one of the early participants in Kaplan's Reconstructionist movement. As the reader will recall, in his 1934 work *Judaism as a Civilization*, Rabbi Kaplan had failed to offer any explicit recognition of Zangwill as an influential thinker, and he similarly failed acknowledge the ways in which the Zangwillian vision of Judaism in America resonated with Kaplan's own ideas. By contrast Rabbi Kaplan's son in law demonstrated a much greater appreciation for Zangwill's work and an explicit recognition of the resonance between Reconstructionist philosophy and Zangwillian thought.

In a 1951 essay in the *Jewish Book Annual*, Eisenstein applauded Zangwill's sensitivity to the generation gap that existed between ghetto Jews and second or third generation, emancipated Jews. Eisenstein argued that this divide interfered with, what Reconstructionists believed to be, the essential need to create an adaptive and evolutionary Judaism. By Eisenstein's account, Zangwill not only understood the problems of "divided generations...He sensed the direction which Jewish religion would have to take if a reconciliation [between those generations] were to be effected." Rabbi Eisenstein lauded Zangwill's vision of Judaism's future as prophetic. Indeed, by Eisenstein's account, Zangwill's recognition "of the need for an evolving religious faith, responsive to basic human needs and expressed in terms of contemporary experience," anticipated the development of the Reconstructionist movement.<sup>22</sup>

As we shall see, Rabbi Eisenstein's appreciation for Zangwillian thought was rare for his day. Most mid-twentieth century scholars and critics of Israel Zangwill would dismiss the late author's ideas about creating an evolutionary Judaism as impractical or inauthentically Jewish. Still, Ira Eisenstein was not completely alone in his appreciation of Israel Zangwill's vision. Indeed, one rabbi, Charles E. Shulman, would, over an almost thirty year period, applaud Zangwill as a hero of the Jewish people. What is more, he would champion Zangwillian notions of a reformed and adaptive Judaism as a potent antidote to an increasingly secular American Jewish community. It would be misleading to suggest that Shulman wrote and spoke about Zangwill exhaustively or exclusively—five sermons or essays on Zangwill survive in a large manuscript collection of Shulman's papers, and Shulman dedicated a chapter to Zangwill in his 1960 book, *What It Means To Be A Jew*. Still, the small number of pieces the Rabbi wrote about Israel Zangwill were in depth, thoughtful works which offer a unique and salutary understanding of Zangwill's vision for modern Judaism and its role in America.<sup>23</sup>

Born in the Ukraine in 1900, Charles Shulman had come to America as a youth and began his university education in the mid 1910s, the decade when Zangwill's reputation in America had reached its greatest height. After a brief career as an attorney, Shulman entered Hebrew Union College in 1922 to train for the Reform rabbinate. He was ordained in 1926, the year of Zangwill's death, after which Shulman took a pulpit in Wheeling, West Virginia, a position he held until 1931. After his time in Wheeling, Shulman took the pulpit at, what was then, a

suburban offshoot of the late Rabbi Emil Hirsch's Sinai Congregation in Chicago, the North Shore Congregation Israel in Glencoe, Illinois.<sup>24</sup>

It was at Glencoe that Shulman first wrote about Israel Zangwill. In a November 1936 sermon entitled "Zangwill—In Memoriam," Rabbi Shulman observed the tenth anniversary of Israel Zangwill's passing with a broad consideration of the late British Jewish author's life and legacy. Shulman told his congregation that Zangwill was an extremely important figure in the history of the Jewish people. Still, at this early point in Shulman's assessment of Israel Zangwill, he could not determine precisely which aspect of Zangwill's career was the most important. "It is hard to evaluate his [Zangwill's] influence," Shulman said, "because he was so versatile, so many sided, so profound, so humorous, and withal so childlike in his desperate idealism that envisaged a time when men could dwell together in safety and in peace." And citing Zangwill's catholic interests in global affairs, Zionism, pacifism, and other prominent issues of his day, Shulman lauded Zangwill with the words of the Roman playwright Terence, arguing that, "nothing human is alien to him [Zangwill]."<sup>25</sup>

To be sure, Shulman's initial sermon on Zangwill bordered on hagiography. At points in his speech, the Rabbi made clear his awe over Zangwill's prolific career, wondering aloud, for example, how it was possible for one human being to be possessed of so many literary skills. Perhaps Rabbi Shulman's fascination with Zangwill was a reflection of his own literary aspirations. Indeed, a brief review of Shulman's publications and papers reveals a man who, like Zangwill, was interested in addressing Jewish issues and causes through a variety of literary forms. Over a

forty-two year rabbinic career the Rabbi would write nine books, as well as create a draft of an unpublished play and several poems. But I would argue that a more significant process was at play in Shulman's address than mere hero worship. In some sense, Rabbi Shulman's first sermon on Israel Zangwill was a sort of public meditation on Zangwill's life and legacy. It was an attempt by Shulman to better understand his own appreciation for Zangwill and to better determine what he deemed to be the late author's most significant contribution to Jewry and the broader world.

That determination would come at the conclusion of Rabbi Shulman's sermon. After a lengthy discussion on numerous aspects of Israel Zangwill's career, the Rabbi hailed Zangwill as a rebel, a champion of the Jews, and, above all, a powerful advocate for a universal form of Judaism. Indeed, Rabbi Shulman concluded his sermon by reciting Zangwill's poem, "Moses and Jesus," the epigraph to *Dreamers of the Ghetto*. In the poem, Zangwill described a meeting between two Jews, one the stern and wizened prophet of the Old Testament, Moses, and the other the young and "seraphic," Jesus. In the poem, the two Jews seem destined to take little notice of each other, murmuring a brief greeting without looking the other in the eye, when suddenly the sounds of "an organ hymn" from the church and a "chaunted air [sic]" from the synagogue compel them both to look up. In so doing, Moses and Jesus seem to recognize their shared heritage but also the yawning gap that exists between their followers. "[F]or the first time," Zangwill wrote, "their eyes swift-linked in one strange, silent, piteous gaze, and dim with bitter tears of agonized despair." Despite the rather despondent tone of Zangwill's

poem, Rabbi Shulman described "Moses and Jesus" as an expression of Israel Zangwill's "longing for peace and beauty in the world" through a coming together of the followers of history's most important Jews, Moses and Jesus.<sup>26</sup>

Over the ensuing decades, Charles Shulman would increasingly see Israel Zangwill as an advocate of a universal Judaism, as well as a champion of the Jewish religion as the essential element in the maintenance of Diaspora Jewish identity. In a collection of hand written notes on Zangwill's works, for example, Shulman argued that Zangwill believed Judaism's mission was "to bring about God's kingdom on Earth." And the Rabbi applauded Zangwill's belief that someday, "The God of Israel would be the God of all mankind." In those same notes Shulman correctly observed that though Israel Zangwill supported Jewish nationalism, he also believed that the critical component which unified and preserved the diverse Jewish communities of the globe was Judaism and not some national or racial identity. Indeed, Shulman observed, even in those moments where Zangwill acknowledged the existence of some kind of national or racial Jewish identity, he believed that the maintenance of that identity was only made possible through the Jewish adherence to Judaism. He recalled Zangwill's warning, for example, that it was a "mistake...to regard externals, like intermarriage, as threatening to the existence of the race. What threatens the existence of the race is the decay of Judaism."<sup>27</sup>

Like Zangwill, Rabbi Shulman was a forceful proponent for the importance of Judaism in the maintenance of Jewish identity and existence. Indeed, in some sense, Shulman believed that an understanding of, and appreciation for, the Jews' religious legacy was essential to preserving the safety and security of the entire



world. During World War II, Shulman had served as a naval chaplain and was stationed in the Pacific Theater. As such, he was part of a cohort of clergy who first heard about, and had to address the moral, ethical, and religious implications of the Americans' use of the atomic bomb over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. For Rabbi Shulman the message inherent in the destructive force of atomic warfare was quite clear; the nations of the world could no longer afford to ignore their shared humanity and their divine creation. To do so could result in the destruction of the entire world. And the only way for the peoples of America and the world to recognize and respect the universality of mankind was to embrace an Hebraically informed religion.<sup>28</sup>

Once back in America, Rabbi Shulman was given a unique opportunity to offer his religious message to the American public. In a series of five sermons broadcast on the American Broadcasting Company's weekly radio show, "The Message of Israel," Rabbi Shulman explained to a national audience the ways in which the atomic age demanded that Americans, and indeed the world, embrace religion, as well as the need for that religion to be informed by the values of the Hebrew prophets. "Of all the values we have left in our arsenal, but one remains to control the terrible force we have created," Shulman said. "That value is religion—the spirit that made the infant Moses greater in the scales of power than all the resources of Pharaoh's [sic] empire."

We have persistently ignored the warnings of our saintly characters. We have not heeded their calls to brotherhood, their summons to live in accordance with the godly spirit within ourselves. We have not understood the Hebraic formula for deep and satisfying living prescribed by Jeremiah in the words: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom; let not the rich man boast of his riches; let not the strong man boast of his strength. But if a

man boast , let him boast of this; that he understands God in the form of justice and righteousness and mercy dwelling in the heart of man.<sup>29</sup>

And so, much like Israel Zangwill had argued in the wake of World War I, Rabbi Shulman believed, in the immediate aftermath of World War II, in the desperate need for an Hebraically informed religion to heal, and indeed save, a profoundly broken world.

It would seem that in the aftermath of World War II Americans, to some extent, concurred with Shulman's belief in their need to embrace religion. As any number of scholars have observed, Cold War America witnessed a significant rise in the growth of, and membership in, churches and synagogues. But Shulman and other Jewish thinkers of the age rejected this development as a mere surface interest in the social and, perhaps, political aspects of American religious life devoid of any sincerity or spiritual content. As the historian Stephen Whitfield has observed, for example, "The theology of the fifties was based far less on, say, Aquinas's proofs for the existence of God than on the conviction that religion was virtually synonymous with American nationalism."<sup>30</sup>

For Rabbi Shulman the advent of a merely performative "sociological" Judaism largely devoid of spiritual content was an issue of deep concern. By the mid 1950s Shulman had become the Rabbi, and founder of the Riverdale Temple in Riverdale, New York, an upscale, suburban enclave in the Bronx. In his 1956 Yom Kippur sermon, traditionally the most important sermon of the year, Rabbi Shulman rejected the so-called postwar religious revival, arguing that it was, in fact a "revival without religion." Taking note of his congregation's brand new, Temple building, he reminded his congregants that "Beautiful synagogue structures and

wide distribution of ceremonial objects...ARE NO PROOF OF REVIVAL IN JUDAISM [sic].” The sincere embrace of the Judaism required much more.

HOW DO THE ACTIVITIES [of Jewish observance] AFFECT THE PERSONALITY AND THE CHARACTER OF THE AMERICAN JEW? DO THEY MAKE HIM MORE REVERENT THAN FORMERLY?...DO THEY EVOKE HIM TO SACRAFICE MORE FOR JEWISH VALUES...DO THEY GIVE HIM A NEW HEART AND A NEW SPIRIT [sic]?

The Rabbi concluded his sermon by reminding his audience of the words of Jeremiah, the same words that Shulman had employed in his “Message of Israel” radio broadcasts ten years earlier, reminding them not to boast in wisdom, strength or riches, but instead to exercise lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness.<sup>31</sup>

For Rabbi Shulman, Israel Zangwill’s defense of Judaism and its role for all peoples was every bit as prophetic as the words of Jeremiah. Shulman saw in Zangwill’s writings, a passionate defense of the Jewish religion and the need to employ Jewish religious ideals as a means of healing the world. In his 1960 book, *What It Means To Be A Jew*, Shulman lauded Zangwill as a man possessed of “prophetic intuition... a phenomenal grasp of the significance of the changes [that confronted modern Jewry], and a brilliant guide for a generation” of Jews seeking to navigate between the traditions of their ancestors and their modern, emancipated lives.<sup>32</sup>

In a 1964 sermon honoring the centennial of Zangwill’s birth, Shulman would further laud Israel Zangwill’s importance for a new generation of Jews. In that sermon, which was likely Shulman’s most significant statement on Zangwill’s life and works, Rabbi Shulman predicted that Israel Zangwill’s writings were so significant and his commitment to Jewish peoples and causes so great, that his

work would be remembered long after the “current crop of Jewish writers have had their day.” Such a claim is particularly notable when one considers that by 1964, Bernard Malamud, Saul Bellow, and Philip Roth had already established significant reputations as Jewish authors. The literary scholar Ezra Cappell has recently argued that the works of these mid century writers of American Jewish fiction represent a kind of *American Talmud*, a collection of imaginative, fictional texts which helped sustain a distinct “national (ethnic) identity in the diaspora.” But in 1964 Rabbi Shulman dismissed such authors’ works as too mundane. “His [Zangwill’s] successors,” Shulman asserted, “have...dealt only with [certain] aspects” of Jewish life rather than exploring the “essence” of the Jewish experience. “Nor have they been able to interpret the meaning of Jewishness to the new generation as he [Zangwill] did in his time.”<sup>33</sup>

Ultimately for Shulman, what distinguished Zangwill from other Jewish writers and what elevated him from a mere Jewish scholar to a Jewish prophet was the way in which Israel Zangwill championed the ideals of Judaism and American exceptionalism. “The ideals of Judaism were dear to him [Zangwill],” Shulman wrote, “and he tried to exemplify in his own life that the Jewish mission is to serve humanity.” Indeed, Shulman argued, Zangwill had hoped to advance the essential ethics of Judaism as an “instrument for the perfection of the world.” And equally important for Shulman was Zangwill’s belief that his prophetic vision would be fulfilled “in the new world of America which offered unlimited possibilities for eliminating differences in race, creed, and color.” By Shulman’s account, these twin beliefs in the universal significance of Judaism and America made Israel Zangwill a

vitaly important figure in American Jewish life. Indeed, the Rabbi concluded his sermon by observing that "A writer such as Israel Zangwill deserves the more careful attention of Jewish spiritual leaders in our day. We have much to learn from him."<sup>34</sup>

### Analyses

Jewish spiritual leaders, however, would not take up Shulman's calls to study Israel Zangwill more closely. That is not to say that people ignored the study of Israel Zangwill, but such study was not undertaken by spiritual leaders—by rabbis and Jewish educators, for example. Instead, the second half of the twentieth century witnessed a number of assessments of Zangwill's life and works by Jewish intellectuals and scholars. Indeed, one might reasonably argue that the 1950s-1960s marked the first moment that Israel Zangwill was taken seriously as a subject of historical study in the United States. But unlike the assessments of Rabbis Eisenstein and Shulman, most mid-twentieth century assessments of Zangwill's life and works did not result in a greater understanding of the late author's significant relationship with the American Jewish community. Most studies of Zangwill did not, for example, echo Rabbi Eisenstein's recognition of the resonance between Zangwillian thought and the Reconstructionist movement. Nor did such explorations advance the observations Rabbi Shulman had made on how Zangwillian notions of Judaism and American exceptionalism might help heal a postwar world. Instead, most scholarly consideration of Israel Zangwill in the second half of the twentieth century reflected what the historian Andrew Heinze has called mid-twentieth-century America's "romance with psychology."<sup>35</sup>

In the years following World War II, the idea of Freudian psychology became an important component of American popular culture. Our understanding of this phenomenon owes a particular debt to Heinze's vitally important study, *Jews and the American Soul*. In several valuable chapters in his study, Heinze demonstrates the ways in which popular self-help books, radio programs, popular magazine articles, and Hollywood films of the era all trumpeted the importance of such Freudian notions as adult regression to the child-like state, split personalities, and, of course, the importance of Freudian psychoanalysis in healing such psychic wounds. According to Heinze, even the street toughs in Leonard Bernstein's 1957 play "West Side Story" employed Freudian jargon to explain their marginalized status in society. To be sure, the majority of Americans possessed only the most surface understanding of Freud and his theories. Indeed, as religious studies scholar Ken-Koltun Fromm has observed, the neo-Freudians, as American popularizers of Freudian thought were sometimes called, applied Freud's concepts in ways that Freud himself believed were not at all in keeping with his ideas. Still, this Americanized neo-Freudian psychology would achieve what Heinze has called a "dominant position in popular thought" in the mid twentieth century.<sup>36</sup>

American Jews, in particular, became powerful proponents of neo-Freudianism in American culture and thought. By Heinze's account, American Jewish thinkers viewed Freudian psychoanalysis as an important means of addressing the supposed painful divisions in the paradigmatic American Jewish personality, an identity torn between opposing poles of American Jewish existence—the romanticized and imagined authenticity of Eastern European (or New

York's Lower East Side) Jewish ghetto life and the lived reality of an emancipated but increasingly homogeneous, postwar, American identity.<sup>37</sup>

This ascendance of neo-Freudianism in American culture and the American Jewish belief in a split, Jewish personality played a significant role in mid twentieth century assessments of the life and legacy of Israel Zangwill. Oftentimes hailed as a prophet, in the postwar era Israel Zangwill became a patient, a case study whose mental state and personality were analyzed and diagnosed by thinkers and scholars under the sway of neo-Freudian ideas. Whether they applauded or condemned Zangwill as a noble or lamentable figure, those journalists, thinkers, and scholars who turned their attention towards the study and consideration of the Zangwill's life and works ultimately undertook their own analyses of the author's mind. Through their references to widely popular ideas about the human mind and Freudian theory, these thinkers and critics, both Jewish and non-Jewish, offered diagnoses of Israel Zangwill's psychological state and his Jewish identity, and, more often than not, they found both to be wanting.

The first such evaluation occurred in December of 1951, broadcast across the country on the CBS radio network's weekly great books program, "An Invitation to Learning." The broadcast was part of a series of episodes entitled "On Grandfather's Bookshelf," a collection of half-hour episodes which explored a variety of works by a number of authors from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The December 2<sup>nd</sup> episode ostensibly featured a discussion on Zangwill's classic work, *Dreamers of the Ghetto*, between host Lyman Bryson and his guests Ludwig Lewisohn and Maurice Samuel, both prominent American Jewish

authors who had come of age at the height of Zangwill's American career. Though the stated purpose of the program was to discuss Zangwill's 1898 book, a work which was, and arguably still is, the author's most critically acclaimed work of Jewish themed fiction, ultimately the assembled panel dedicated most of their time to analyzing Israel Zangwill's personality and assessing the authenticity of his Judaism. Zangwill did not fare well on either count.<sup>38</sup>

Employing the language and ideas of popularized neo-Freudian thought, both Samuel and Lewisohn used their time on "An Invitation to Learning" to perform a sort of pseudo psychoanalysis of Israel Zangwill. This was particularly true of Maurice Samuel's comments. Samuel repeatedly accused Zangwill of suffering from a severe personality disorder which, Samuel argued, was an inherent mental defect of western Jews at the fin de siècle. Zangwill, according to Samuel, was "a schizophrenic." He was a "period piece." His "thinking and his soul" demonstrated the divided personality of late nineteenth-century, western Jewry. These internal divisions, according to Samuel, had their gravest affect on Zangwill's expression of, what Samuel called, "his Jewish side." In an effort to fit into late nineteenth-century British society, Samuel proclaimed, Zangwill would "hedge on his emotions" and suppress his Jewishness.<sup>39</sup>

Samuel's assessment of Zangwill's ambivalence towards his Jewish identity represents a significant departure from the way Israel Zangwill had been perceived in his lifetime. If anything, Zangwill's American public was often uncomfortable about the extent to which he embraced and openly expressed his Jewishness. His detailed depictions of Jewish ghetto life and his call for American Jewry to articulate



Jewish ideals in the American polity more forcefully made many American Jews profoundly ill at ease, and yet, in the 1950s, and indeed in subsequent twentieth century studies of the author, Zangwill had come to be seen as ambivalent about his Jewish identity. According to Lewisohn and Samuel, Zangwill had, in a very real sense, ceased to be Jewish. At the very least, Lewisohn and Samuel proclaimed, Israel Zangwill possessed no true belief in Judaism.

In light of Ludwig Lewisohn's biography it is astonishing that he would question the authenticity of Israel Zangwill's Judaism. A German Jewish immigrant whose family settled in South Carolina when Ludwig was eight years old, Lewisohn spent his youth and adolescence desperately searching for a cultural or religious identity which would allow him to fit into American society and later into the intellectual milieu of the American academy. In his teens, Lewisohn joined the Methodist church and accepted Jesus Christ as his savior. Indeed, Lewisohn so assimilated into Protestant American society that the historian Susanne Klingenstein has described him as "a Southern Christian gentleman." When Lewisohn found Methodism lacking in spiritual power he became a Catholic. In college Lewisohn embraced the morals and culture of Victorian England, and following that he proclaimed himself a German Romanticist. Only after Lewisohn was denied admission to Columbia University's doctoral program in English—in part because Lewisohn was, at least "racially," Jewish—did he embrace his Jewish identity. Even then, Lewisohn admitted that he "was not yet very Jewish-minded."<sup>40</sup>

Yet despite the peripatetic nature of Lewisohn's faith and philosophy, both he and Maurice Samuel—a man whose 1950 book *The Gentleman and the Jew* assessed the divisions between Gentile and Jew in ways not that dissimilar from Zangwill's—both found Israel Zangwill's Judaism to be inconstant, empty, and inauthentic. On this count, Lewisohn proved the most vociferous of the pair. At one point in the discussion, Lyman Bryson suggested that *Dreamers of the Ghetto* reflected both Zangwill's Jewish faith and his disillusionment with the Zionist cause, to which Lewisohn responded, "There was no faith; there was no real faith. There was a pretense of faith." Lewisohn went on to assert that Zangwill's Jewish fiction, works once acclaimed as remarkably accurate, almost scientific, depictions of Jewish life, trivialized the Jewish experience. And that Zangwill had no belief in Jewish life and culture.<sup>41</sup>

Maurice Samuel did not offer quite the same forceful denunciation of Zangwill's Jewish beliefs, or rather, the absence of such beliefs, but even Samuel found Zangwill's Judaism to be devoid of sincerity. He suggested that Zangwill's Judaism was, in some sense, performative and a vestigial remnant hidden within the depths of Zangwill's psyche. In a remarkably backhanded compliment, for example, Samuel noted that "a man who can imitate faith so well as he [Zangwill] did, must occasionally have twinges of it...For a man to show so much skill in portraying faith [in his books], having so little of it himself, something of the real thing must have lodged in him."<sup>42</sup>

Both Samuel and Lewisohn saw *Dreamers of the Ghetto* as a sort of semi-conscious expression of Zangwill's apostasy, or at least his ambivalence towards

Judaism and Jewish culture. By and large the book's most compelling chapters offered fictionalized accounts of the lives of historical Jewish figures who, on encountering the world beyond the ghetto, either abandoned or reconsidered their Judaism—including, for example, Baruch Spinoza, Uriel Acosta, and Shabbatai Zvi. Lewisohn believed that such chapters revealed Zangwill's true sympathies. Indeed, according to Lewisohn, all Jews who championed Spinoza did so because they too had abandoned, or at least "reduced to a minimum," their connection to Jewish life and culture, while Samuel believed that Spinoza, like Zangwill, suffered from a split personality, torn between an authentic Jewish life and the western obsession with rationalist thought.<sup>43</sup>

Ironically, in their final analyses both Lewisohn and Samuel applauded *Dreamers of the Ghetto* as a remarkable accomplishment. By their account, despite Zangwill's schizophrenia, despite his lack of true Jewish belief, indeed, according to Samuel, despite Zangwill's lack of understanding, "of the eternal values of the Jewish people," the author had written a fine work of literature. His ability to do so in spite of, what the radio panelists believed to be, such obvious personality disorders and religious heterodoxy demonstrated a certain literary greatness that was worthy of some note. Offering faint and damning praise for *Dreamers of the Ghetto*, Lyman Bryson concluded the broadcast by echoing his panelists' sentiments, noting that, "Even though other people have done it perhaps better, the great thing was to do the job when Zangwill did as well as he did."<sup>44</sup>

Subsequent assessments of Zangwill's life and legacy were far less damning than the pronouncements of Samuel and Lewisohn but surely as obsessed with the

mid-century penchant for psychoanalysis. In the July-August 1951 edition of the *Jewish Spectator*, author Philip Rubin, marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of Israel Zangwill's death, provided a brief assessment of Zangwill's life and career. In his article, Rubin displayed a considerable appreciation for Israel Zangwill's literary contributions, calling Zangwill the founder of English language Jewish fiction. What is more, Rubin applauded the ways in which Zangwill eschewed "the role of unconcerned artist-spectator and assume[d] the role of partisan prophet, when he identified partisanship with his vision of a regenerated Jewry." Rubin's assessment of Israel Zangwill's "vision of a regenerated Jewry," demonstrated a remarkable sensitivity to the Zangwill's efforts to re-form Judaism through a synthesis of Jewish distinctiveness with Judaism's Hebraic, universal mission. "Zangwill," Rubin wrote, "was at one and the same time both a Jewish nationalist and a cosmopolitan—this is the key to an understanding of his philosophy. To him Judaism was universalism but on the other hand he never forgot that universal humanitarian ideals were inherently Jewish ideals."<sup>45</sup>

But despite Rubin's insight into the ways in which Zangwillian thought attempted to synthesize a number of opposing intellectual forces, ultimately he found Israel Zangwill's mind incapable of truly achieving such synthesis. Rubin told his readers that Zangwill suffered from "what is known in the language of present day psychology as a split personality." Indeed, by Rubin's account, Zangwill's personality and identity proved so divided, he could not even be considered fully Jewish, since both Jew and Gentile warred with "each other for the soul of Israel Zangwill." Rubin argued that such division was typical of the Victorian era Jew, and

that ultimately Zangwill's life and works should not be looked to as a possible template for a regenerated and engaged American Jewish life, but rather as symbolic of an entire generation of Jews "reared in two worlds, Jewish and non-Jewish, Eastern and Western, mediaeval and modern, and...not quite at home in either."<sup>46</sup>

Diagnoses of Zangwill's "split personality" would continue into the 1960s. In their 1964 study, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*, for example, American Jewish sociologist and historian Nathan Glazer and future US Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan argued that, as a simultaneous proponent of the American melting pot and Zionism, Zangwill's ideas about the assimilability and distinctiveness of Jews, and by connection his own identity, were contradictory. Through a rather surface reading of Zangwill's life history and his 1908 play they concluded that the author had promoted a vision of a "nonreligious, intermarried, homogeneous" American Jewry, an ideal which Glazer and Moynihan argued was at odds with Zangwill's work in the Zionist movement, which, for Jews, had served as a "significant deterrent" to the "melting pot process." But their readings of Zangwill's "Melting Pot" and of his Zionist career lacked depth, and they failed to take into account the diversity of melting pot paradigms presented in Zangwill's play, as well as his complex and contentious relationship with the Zionist movement. For Glazer and Moynihan, Israel Zangwill was a symbol, a straw man for them to argue against, rather than a significant thinker on the nature of American Jewish identity with whom they might intellectually engage.<sup>47</sup>

But 1964 also witnessed the publication of a far more in depth and notable study of Zangwill. In that year, Columbia University Press published Maurice Wohlgelernter's *Israel Zangwill: A Study*, a literary biography published during the centennial of Israel Zangwill's birth and the first sustained and significant study of Zangwill to emerge from the American academy. A graduate of Columbia University's doctoral program in English, as well as an Orthodox rabbi trained at New York's Yeshiva University, itself an institution which sought to synthesize Jewish tradition with western modernity, Wohlgelernter, like Rabbi Charles Shulman, proved remarkably sensitive to the late author's prophetic vision to create a new approach to Judaism which adapted Jewish ethics to the realities of the modern world. In the introduction to his study, Wohlgelernter applauded Zangwill's willingness to take on the role of a "rebel" who "championed the cause of the forsaken." And he saw in Zangwill's openness to new ideas a kind of "'radicalism,' which, if not subversive, certainly demanded change or at least reconstruction."<sup>48</sup>

Wohlgelernter's accolades, notwithstanding, *Israel Zangwill: A Study*, was far less a celebration of Zangwillian thought than it was a product of the American public's fascination with Freudian analysis. Wohlgelernter's book attempted to perform psychoanalysis on the late author through a careful reading of Zangwill's works, primarily through an analysis of his fiction. Such an investigation, Wohlgelernter argued, would help make sense of, what he called, "the 'violent contraries' that filled his [Zangwill's] mind and spirit." He described his book as "a sort of biography of Zangwill's mind," a mind which Wohlgelernter believed to be profoundly divided. Indeed, the very structure of *Israel Zangwill: A Study* pointed

to Wohlgelernter's belief in the fundamental divisions in Zangwill's personality and soul. Over a third of the chapter titles in the book articulated some fundamental division in Zangwill's life and works—Tragedy and Comedy, Hebraism and Hellenism, East and West, Art and Reality, War and Peace. Echoing the insights of Samuel, Lewisohn, and Rubin, Wohlgelernter saw Zangwill's life and works as representative of a certain nineteenth-century, divided, western diasporic Jewish identity, a "soul...wandering between the Scylla of Hebraism and the Charybdis of Hellenism."<sup>49</sup>

But unlike earlier diagnoses, especially those of Maurice Samuel and Ludwig Lewisohn, Wohlgelernter's analysis of the Zangwillian mind proved far more sensitive to the complexity of his subject's ideas and more open to the possibility that the so called violent contraries inherent in Zangwill's worldview were less indicative of a personality disorder and more in keeping with the internal contradictions in all modern peoples. He more charitably argued that such divisions might prove to be two equal parts of a unified whole, the yin and yang, if you will, of an engaged intellectual mind which tried to view all issues "without prejudice." By Wohlgelernter's account, "Being a Jew *and* [Wohlgelernter's emphasis] an Englishman was for Zangwill the highest form of life and living." And he correctly observed how Israel Zangwill sought to unify his philosophical contradictions through the creation of a new religion which recognized the importance of Hebraic conceptions of righteousness while also acknowledging the ways in which modern developments in science and rational thought contributed to our understanding of God and God's law.<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless, Wohlgelernter believed that Zangwill was incapable of creating unity for himself or in his people. The late author's personal, internal contradictions, shaped during his formative years, were far too great. Employing popularized notions of neo-Freudian thought, Wohlgelernter deduced that Israel Zangwill's split personality resulted from his divided allegiances to his father and mother. Zangwill's father, Moses, was a peddler and a committed Orthodox Jew. He dedicated his life to the study of Torah and Talmud, and more often than not, his business took a back seat to his piety, limiting his ability to provide for his family. By contrast, Israel Zangwill's mother, Ellen, was concerned with the mundane needs of feeding and caring for her family on a limited budget. In his assessment of the Zangwills, Wohlgelernter saw Moses and Ellen as representative of the opposing forces that would divide Israel Zangwill's mind. He characterized Moses as pious and saintly, the very "embodiment of the orthodox spirit." And he described Ellen as unorthodox, irreverent, and pagan, a brilliant woman who "hankered `after the customs of the heathen.'" In his diagnosis of Israel Zangwill, Wohlgelernter pronounced that the late author was torn between the "worlds" of his father and mother. Though he loved the "traditions of his father's house," Wohlgelernter wrote, "...nevertheless he hankered after the heathen." Such division was an essential component of Zangwill's artistry and insight, Wohlgelernter asserted. As such, Zangwill's works were subject to a kind of "topsy-turvydom," a mercurial effort to understand all sides of an issue. And while Wohlgelernter admired Zangwill's "philosophical system," ultimately he found Zangwillian thought to be too divided to offer any significant philosophical contribution. "Zangwill,"



Wohlgelernter wrote, “remains...a bewildering personality...possessed of a mind far more remarkable for its breadth than its depth.”<sup>51</sup>

Despite its significant scope, Wohlgelernter’s book would not be the last book length literary psychoanalysis of Israel Zangwill. In 1990, decades after the decline of popular neo-Freudianism, literary scholar Joseph Udelson would undertake his own analysis of the Zangwillian mind. In his book, *Dreamer of the Ghetto: The Life and Works of Israel Zangwill*, Udelson would continue the work of his mid century colleagues to read the life and works of Israel Zangwill closely in an effort to present a psychological portrait of a deeply divided personality.

In some sense, Udelson’s study was, in fact, an examination of the Jewish psyche writ large. He argued that his work uncovered not only the supposed damaging fissures in Zangwill’s mind, but indeed the essential identity crisis faced by all Jews—including Udelson. In the preface to his book Udelson described for the reader his own frustration at attempts to reconcile pre-modern conceptions of Jewish identity—which linked religion, nation, and even race in a single indivisible notion of peoplehood—with post-Enlightenment understandings of discrete and compartmentalized categories of identity such as class, nationality, and religion. “How frustrating this all is!” Udelson exclaimed, “If my neighbors can readily define their own identities and I cannot define mine, then I know—and they know—that I am somehow different.” By Udelson’s account Israel Zangwill had fully recognized the dilemma of reconciling a pre-modern and post-Enlightenment Jewish identity, and his life and works were a testament to the insolubility of that dilemma. “Thus

in many ways," Udelson claimed, "the riddle of Israel Zangwill's life becomes also the riddle of contemporary Jewish identity."<sup>52</sup>

*Dreamer of the Ghetto* dedicated a considerable amount of effort to solving the so called "riddle of Israel Zangwill." After providing some historical context for Zangwill's life and literary career, Udelson dedicated the vast majority of his work towards plumbing the depths of Israel Zangwill's mind to uncover, what he believed to be, the crisis in the Zangwillian psyche. By Udelson's account Zangwill's efforts to reconcile Jewish and Western identities metamorphosed from an "exciting intellectual challenge" to "a canker" festering "in the mind of Israel Zangwill." The effort to synthesize these "twinned identities" into a unified whole would prove so torturous for Zangwill that it would ultimately "tear his sanity asunder," forcing a mental breakdown and sending Zangwill to a nursing home for the last months of his life.<sup>53</sup>

Udelson's diagnosis of the cause of Zangwill's breakdown is a problematic assertion in, what is ultimately, a deeply problematic study. To be sure, Edith Zangwill had in 1926 publically acknowledged that her husband had suffered a nervous breakdown, but Udelson's assertion that such a mental break occurred because of his inability to become fully Jewish in a "modern open British secular society" is unsubstantiated by any medical records or contemporary reports. Indeed, eighteen years after the publication of *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, Meri-Jane Rochelson's study of Zangwill, *A Jew in the Public Arena*, would provide a host of other, historically supported reasons for the late author's mental anguish ranging from a failed theatrical career, to the loss of a dear friend, to physical exhaustion

from an overly ambitious speaking tour. While Udelson correctly observed that Zangwill tirelessly thought about and promoted ways to live as a wholly Jewish person in western society, his belief that these efforts ultimately defeated or destroyed Zangwill lack veracity and merit.<sup>54</sup>

But by far the most problematic aspect of Udelson's work was his characterization of Israel Zangwill's vision of a re-formed and evolutionary Judaism. By Udelson's account, Zangwill's belief in a universal Diaspora Judaism his frequent reference to the Hebraic roots of Christianity and Islam, his steadfast insistence that divine love—not solely divine justice—was an essential precept of Jewish theology, and his inclusion of Jesus in the canon of Jewish prophets all signaled Zangwill's inability to distinguish between "Christianity and the authentically Jewish." And, as with the supposed irreconcilability of Zangwill's Jewish identity, his supposed "distorted and Christianized conception of Jewish heritage...[was] really the history of [all]...post-Emancipation Western Jews."<sup>55</sup>

Udelson characterization of Zangwillian theology as so called "Christological Hebraism," and his assertion about the inauthentic quality of Zangwill's approach towards the creation of a new Diasporic Judaism is deeply problematic for a number of reasons. First, by delegitimizing Zangwill's religious vision as somehow "inauthentically Jewish," Udelson begs the question, what precisely is authentic Judaism? Is Reform Judaism—which grants legitimacy only to ethically significant, rather than solely behavioral, laws—authentic? Is Jewish Reconstructionism—which explicitly states that the authorities of the Jewish past are entitled to "a vote but not a veto" in determining contemporary Jewish observance—authentic? Indeed, is

any synagogue based form of Judaism, rather than sacrifice-based Judaism of the ancient Temple in Jerusalem, authentic? Udelson completely fails to address this question in his study, and so it is impossible to determine what authentic Udelsonian Judaism might look like and how Zangwillian visions of Judaism fail to live up to that example. Further, Udelson fails to account for the significant body of scholarly literature which makes clear that all tradition, even religious tradition, is invented, and therefore religious thought should be allowed to evolve and take on new forms without being characterized as somehow inauthentic. As Professor Jody E. Myers has observed in her recent study of the contemporary popularization of Kabbalah, for example, "no academic should produce a definitive guide book or catalogue of genuine Kabbalah, any more than he or she should compose a list of legitimate forms of Judaism." But above all, Udelson's understanding of the Zangwillian conception of Hebraism failed to grasp the boldness of Israel Zangwill's rhetoric, which did not attempt to Christianize Judaism but rather to Judaize Christianity, to reassert the Jewish influence on the essential tenets of Christian faith and, in his more defiant moments, to assert that all committed Christians were essentially Jews.<sup>56</sup>

Ultimately all of the above cited literary analyses of the Zangwillian mind proved problematic for a number of reasons. First, the authors, journalists, and literary scholars who carried out these critiques and studies were surely not qualified to claim any professional psychological training or insight. Their diagnoses of Zangwill relied on the liberal use of pop psychology terms and concepts rather than any in

depth understanding of the human mind. But of greatest significance, by choosing to focus on Israel Zangwill's mental state, rather than his significant accomplishments as an author, activist, and Jewish thinker, these critics denied Israel Zangwill his considerable historical agency and his impressive contribution to the discourse on Judaism, Jewish literature, Jewish nationalism, and, of greatest importance to this study, the future of American Jewish culture and religion. Such assessments and studies turned this once prominent figure in Jewish affairs from an important historical actor into a synecdoche for some perceived modern, Jewish existential dilemma.

#### Israel Zangwill in the Twenty-First Century

Twenty-first century studies of Israel Zangwill's life and works represent a new and salutary chapter in the ongoing project to assess the late British Jewish author's historical reputation, intellectual contribution, and lasting legacy. Unlike the twentieth-century scholars who found both Zangwill's life and works wanting, recent studies by Edna Nahshon and by Meri-Jane Rochelson have viewed Zangwill in a more complimentary light. While others had diagnosed Israel Zangwill's mind as painfully divided, both Nahshon and Rochelson find greater unity. While some critics and academics questioned Zangwill's Judaism, Nahshon and Rochelson see the late British Jewish author's philosophy and language as Jewishly authentic and consistent with the thought and language of the Jews of his day. And while twentieth-century scholars found in Zangwill's biography merely a synecdochic device to help illustrate the supposed identity crisis faced by westernized Jews at the fin de siècle, both Nahshon and Rochelson have forcefully argued that Israel

Zangwill's life and works offered concrete contributions to Jewish life and discourse in his day. Such constructive studies have played an important role in informing this dissertation's approach to the study of Israel Zangwill. Indeed, I would argue that my work and the works of Nahshon and of Rochelson represent an entirely new and critically important approach to understanding one of the most significant figures in the history of Anglo Jewish letters and American Jewish discourse.

In 2006, over a decade after the publication of Udelson's *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, Edna Nahshon, released an edited and annotated compilation of Israel Zangwill's three, Jewish-themed plays—"The Children of the Ghetto," "The Melting Pot," and "The King of the Schnorrers." For Nahshon, these three works represented one of Zangwill's most important contributions to Jewish life and culture. Israel Zangwill, Nahshon argued, had "revolutionized the portrayal of Jews and, by extension, of subsequent immigrant groups on the mainstream stage." By her account, Zangwill's detailed depiction of Jewish life and culture, and the nobility and seriousness of purpose he portrayed in a number of his Jewish characters, marked a significant departure from the stock stereotypes of the "stage Jew" seen on English music hall and American vaudeville stages. Through his creation of more fully realized, and realistic, Jewish characters, Nahshon proclaimed, Zangwill "kicked wide the door of the English-language stage to Jewish ethnic drama." And in so doing he made possible the careers of countless Jewish dramatists who chose as their subject the lives and cultures of their Jewish contemporaries.<sup>57</sup>

But Nahshon's appreciation for Israel Zangwill was not limited solely to his theatrical works. Her study provided a much needed corrective to decades of work

which had portrayed Zangwill as an erratic, insignificant, and minor literary figure. By her account Israel Zangwill was much more than a turn of the century playwright. He was a man of letters, ideas, and world affairs. In the introduction to her collection she hailed Zangwill as a "towering figure in modern Anglo-Jewish life. His voice was heard worldwide," she proclaimed. And through his novels, plays, essays, and other pronouncements, Nahshon argued, Israel Zangwill became the foremost "cultural interpreter and advocate" of his day for Jewish peoples and causes (particularly in his native England).<sup>58</sup>

Though extremely beneficial, Nahshon's work was limited in scope. The bulk of the book, after all, is reprints of Zangwill's three Jewish plays. Nevertheless her insight into Israel Zangwill's historical significance, made clear that literary scholars and historians would be well served to reassess twentieth century characterizations of Zangwill's life and works and reconsider the late author's reputation and legacy. The first academic to undertake such a study was literary scholar Meri-Jane Rochelson, whose 2008 work, *A Jew in the Public Arena: The Career of Israel Zangwill* was the first full length study of Israel Zangwill's life and legacy which neither sought to psychoanalyze the late author's mind nor discount the unity and productivity of his thought.

Like Nahshon, Rochelson's work challenged earlier depiction of Israel Zangwill as a minor literary figure whose life and works were indicative of a divided personality incapable of reconciling his Jewish and English identities. She explicitly sought to "reclaim Zangwill's [prominent] position in late-nineteenth-and-early-twentieth-century literature and culture." And Rochelson recast earlier diagnoses of

Zangwill's supposed painful "self-division" by arguing that his works and activism were indicative of a kind of "self-multiplication," a self-assured demand that westernized and emancipated Jews be allowed to embrace fully both their Jewish and western identities without surrendering the authentic and beneficial qualities of either. If Zangwill's life and works were representative of anything, she argued, they represented a cohort of Jews who "insisted on inhabiting both the Jewish and larger worlds without compromise but on their own terms."<sup>59</sup>

Equally important, Rochelson's book rejected earlier assessments of Zangwillian thought and activism as inconsistent and mercurial. She rightly observed that the supposed "contradictions and apparent inconsistencies in [his] statements and positions" were, in fact, "pragmatic responses to changing conditions, dictated by immediate concerns and shaped by an early-twentieth-century worldview."<sup>60</sup> Through such statements, and through a compelling account of the late author's life and works, Rochelson confirmed Nahshon's earlier assessment of the position Zangwill had once held in late-nineteenth-and early-twentieth-century literary and political circles, that of a "towering figure" in Anglo-Jewish life.

But perhaps the most important point to emerge from Rochelson's 2008 study of Israel Zangwill was her corrective response to Joseph Udelson's earlier assertions about the "inauthentic" quality of Zangwill's Jewishness. Rochelson had undertaken this work years earlier as a response to Udelson's book, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*. In a 1999 article in *Victorian Literature and Culture*, the bulk of which would be reprinted in her 2008 book, Rochelson crafted a well researched and



thoughtful retort to Udelson's claims about Zangwill's "Christological Hebraism." In her essay Rochelson correctly observed that Zangwill's contemporaries did not perceive his ideals as "theological heresy." And she questioned why, if Zangwill's vision was as heretical as Udelson claimed, the Jewish communities of England and America had not objected to Zangwill's writings on religious grounds? By Rochelson's account, Zangwill's use of Christian terms, imagery, and, to some extent, ideas emerged from a shared, Anglo-American cultural inheritance. "In England and America at the turn of the century," she wrote, "Christianity was simply (though not unproblematically) part of the culture into which Jews sought to be accepted. Jewish writing became part of the literary mainstream, but the language of the dominant religious tradition was an inseparable part of the language of the dominant culture." To be sure, Rochelson recognized that Israel Zangwill's universalist approach to Judaism was unique, challenging, and "unorthodox," to say the least. But to suggest that Zangwill's efforts at re-forming Judaism were indicative of his turn towards Christianity, Rochelson argued, failed to place Zangwill and his contemporaries accurately in their historical and cultural context.<sup>61</sup>

In the conclusion to her work, Rochelson, like Nahshon, rehabilitated Zangwill's beleaguered reputation both as a figure of historical and contemporary interest and importance. She applauded Israel Zangwill for his activism on behalf of victimized Jews across the globe and for his confident and self-conscious efforts (both in his writing and his activism) to promote a Jewish identity which, at once, embraced "modern Western culture...[while] refusing complete assimilation."

Rochelson rightly observed that Zangwill's confident and aggressive assertion of his identity as a British Jew was widely admired by his contemporaries, and still had the power to "inform the debates and discussions that persist over Jewish identity in the twenty-first century." She argued that, in some sense, Israel Zangwill was the polar opposite of Woody Allen's fictional creation, Leonard Zelig. As the reader may recall, Allen's Zelig achieved considerable fame because of his uncanny ability to assimilate the appearance and behavior of the people with whom he came into contact. Such remarkable assimilative skills, Rochelson observed, offer "inescapable parallels to Jewish insecurities and strategies of adaptation." Zangwill, by contrast achieved his considerable fame because "he spoke and wrote as a Jew—because he took the lives of Jews and put them between book covers and on theater stages, and agitated for them on the lecture platforms and in newspaper columns..." Such a powerful claim to the value and legitimacy of Jewish life and culture, Rochelson suggested, might play an important role in contemporary discussions of western, Jewish identity. Indeed, in the closing passage of her work she wondered if now "with so much changed [in western culture] and yet so much that is recognizable in Israel Zangwill's story and stories, we can find renewed meaning in his powerful self-assertion."<sup>62</sup>

I began my research for this dissertation at virtually the exact moment that Wayne State University Press published Rochelson's important study of Israel Zangwill. Indeed, I was first informed of Rochelson's recently published work by an archivist at the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem, site of the largest collection of

Zangwill's papers. Upon my return to the United States I read Rochelson's book and found that its appreciation of Zangwill reflected my own thoughts on the historical and contemporary significance of this once prominent figure in Anglo, American, and global Jewish life. I also found that Rochelson, a scholar of Victorian Era, British literature, had focused much of her study on Zangwill's place in England, in British literary culture, in British Jewish Circles, in English letters, and in English literature. Somewhat absent from her study was an in depth consideration of Israel Zangwill's extensive and contentious relationship with America and specifically with the American Jewish community. To be sure Rochelson's study does more than take note of the relationship between Zangwill and America, but in an effort to recount the entirety of Zangwill's personal and professional lives, her discussion of America and Zangwill's relationship with American Jewry lacked the depth of focus present in this study.

This dissertation, then, with its focus on the relationship between Israel Zangwill and his American public has sought to build on the work of Rochelson, and of Nahshon. As with their works, I have taken seriously Zangwill's literary, political, and philosophical contributions in his own day and see value in further study and discussion of Zangwill today. Since the works of Nahshon and of Rochelson (as well as Wohlgelernter, Udelson, and others) have provided ample insight into Israel Zangwill's biography and his significance as an author of fiction and as a dramatist, I have not felt obliged to revisit those topics in detail. Instead I have turned my focus to the thirty plus year relationship that existed between Israel Zangwill and the American Jewish community.

To be clear, my efforts to provide a more in depth account of the relationship between Zangwill and America are intended to do more than afford an historiographical niche for this study. This dissertation has argued that the United States of America, its people, its reading public, its Jewish community, and the very idea of America itself all played a critical and influential role in the history of Israel Zangwill's life and works, as well as his thinking and his prophetic vision. It has argued, for example, that the American public, both Jewish and non-Jewish, profoundly influenced Israel Zangwill's considerable reputation as an expert on Jewish peoples and causes. When Zangwill first emerged on the American literary scene he was a little known British Jewish humorist writing for a nascent American Jewish publishing society, and at the time of his death, over thirty years after his initial engagement with American Jewry, many in the community hailed him as a prophet. This study has demonstrated the ways in which American Jewry helped elevate Zangwill to the role of prophet, recounting the means by which the American Jewish community granted Zangwill a pulpit, of sorts, to broadcast his ideas across the nation on a wide variety of topics, and making clear that American Jews actively sought Israel Zangwill's insights and opinions on questions of Judaism, Jewish identity, Jewish nationalism, and other topics of Jewish interest.

What is more, this dissertation has shown that the topics of America, American Jewry, and American Judaism played an important role in Israel Zangwill's thinking. Zangwill was keenly aware that significant events in the history of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—such as the rise of America's industrial economy, brutal anti-Semitic attacks in Russia, Romania, and elsewhere,

and the consequent migration to America of hundreds of thousands of Jews—made America a de facto center of global Jewry. This demographic shift demanded the attention of a number of prominent Jewish thinkers. And as this dissertation has demonstrated, Israel Zangwill was part of an historically significant cohort of intellectuals who attempted to articulate the ways in which America might move from a mere demographic center of Jewish migration to an influential center of Jewish life, culture, and religion.

And informing Israel Zangwill's efforts to reshape American Jewish life was his belief in the exceptional character of the United States of America. That exceptionalist philosophy, which has had a long history in American thought, significantly influenced Zangwill's approach to, what I have earlier called, the American Jewish problem. In many ways, Zangwill's American exceptionalism blinded him to the realities of American Jewish life, to its lengthy history, its established institutions, and its denominational boundaries; and such blindness undoubtedly limited the effectiveness of his prophetic vision. But in some sense it was his exceptionalist vision of America which made Zangwill's American Jewish ideals so audacious, so visionary, so challenging to the status quo. In other words, Israel Zangwill's exceptionalist beliefs elevated his rhetoric from merely persuasive speech to the level of prophetic vision.

Prophecy and the prophetic narrative have, of course, been another central focus and argument of this study. And so this study revisits and reengages a discursive strain about Israel Zangwill which first emerged in the early twentieth century and likely achieved its zenith at the time of his death. Perhaps, though,

this dissertation, which has linked the definition of prophets and prophecy to specific personality traits and paradigmatic narratives, has offered a less hyperbolic, and therefore more credible, view of Zangwill as prophet.

This study has argued that Israel Zangwill clearly possessed many of the personality traits of the prophet and his American career followed a fairly well established prophetic narrative path. He demonstrated a heightened level of concern for his people and the world. He admonished American Jewry in forceful, emotional language calculated to shock his audience rather than reason with them. He was an iconoclast who rejected as insufficient the significant American Jewish institutional base which existed at the time of his engagement with the American Jewish community. And he believed that his admonition and instruction to American Jews, however jarring and trying his words may have been, were necessary to advance a higher religious and social good for America and the world. And the narrative of his American career, his initial reticence to become known as a "Jewish writer," his consequent embrace of his mission, his admonition and instruction, and, finally, America's rejection of Zangwill and his departure from the American scene, all resonate with the paradigmatic, prophetic narrative.

And central to this dissertation's examination of the prophetic nature of Israel Zangwill's engagement with American Jewry, has been a study of Zangwillian prophecy. As we have seen, Zangwill's prophetic admonition to, and his vision for, American Jewry centered on the reassessment and reformation of American Judaism. Zangwill's belief in the centrality of America in the global Jewish experience set him apart from his Zionist colleagues, and his focus on religion as

the most important element in America's development as a Jewish cultural center, distinguished Zangwill's thinking from that of other thinkers who similarly believed America would continue to play a significant role in global Jewish life. And to be sure, Israel Zangwill's assertion of the universality of humanity, his insistence on the Hebraic foundations of Christianity, and his hopes for the creation of a Jewishly informed, but universally accepting, American Judaism, undoubtedly made his prophetic vision unique, but such beliefs do not support Joseph Udelson's unfortunate assertion that Zangwill had abandoned authentic Judaism.

Rather, this dissertation has argued that Israel Zangwill articulated a new kind of Judaism, an American Jewish faith which was deeply grounded in the ethical teachings of the Jewish prophets, but which assessed the applicability of all ritual practices within a modern American context. This vision of Judaism was informed by Zangwill's American Jewish exceptionalism, his belief that, Jewishly speaking, America was a *tabula rasa* upon which American Jews could build a new religion. Freed from the constraints of tradition and denominationalism, Zangwill argued, American Jewry could thoughtfully assess the applicability and significance of previous Jewish customs and laws and shape a new kind of Judaism which advanced the central precepts of Hebraic thought within modern, American society. As we have seen Zangwill's exceptionalist vision was inaccurate, and that misperception likely doomed his chances to affect significant change in the American Jewish community. Still, Israel Zangwill's prophetic vision for America and its Jews was bold and salutary, and American Jews today would be well served to revisit Zangwill's literary corpus.

Ironically, although Zangwill's prophetic vision for American Jewry was largely rejected in his day, in some sense, the Zangwillian approach to American Jewish life has been embraced by a number of twenty-first century, American Jews—most of whom have never heard of or read Israel Zangwill. As noted in my introduction, two religious movements in particular, Jewish Reconstruction and post-denominational Judaism have much in common with Israel Zangwill's vision for an adaptive American Judaism, rejecting the binding nature of past laws even as they seek to embrace a deeper connection to certain essential Jewish precepts. But in some sense all American Jews who choose to observe Judaism in some fashion must undertake the kind of deliberate engagement with Jewish religious thought that Israel Zangwill encouraged in the early twentieth century. American Jews today are confronted by a wide variety of ritual practice and learning opportunities in what the historian Jonathan Sarna has called America's "Jewish spiritual marketplace." And an even broader spiritual marketplace exists for non-Jewish religious experience. To be sure, Israel Zangwill would despair over the number of Jews who have simply chosen not to observe any form of Judaism at all, and he would likely object to the ways in which the variety of the Jewish spiritual marketplace fragments Judaism into "market segments," if you will. After all, the Zangwillian vision of American Jewish life called for a unified American Judaism which engaged all American Jews in a continual process of reassessment and reformation. Still, the variety of Jewish practice and learning today both in physical institutions and on the internet demands that most Jews make active choices about the meaning of Judaism in their lives and the extent to which past traditions and



practices of the past will influence their observance and behavior in the present. And that thoughtful engagement with the essential meaning of Judaism and its role in the lives of contemporary Jews resonates with Zangwill's prophetic instruction to his American Jewish public.<sup>63</sup>

Of even greater irony, despite the freedom of choice currently available in the American Jewish spiritual marketplace today, the prophetic admonition and instruction of Israel Zangwill is non-existent in that marketplace. As this final chapter has made clear, with the exception of Rabbis Eisenstein and Shulman, those who have studied and discussed Israel Zangwill for the past sixty years have been literary scholars and historians. To date, America's rabbis and Jewish educators have not engaged with Israel Zangwill's insights and his vision for American Jewry. This absence from American religious discourse is unfortunate. For if Israel Zangwill was wrong about the extent to which American Jews in his day could or would adapt their religious outlook to their contemporary realities, he was still largely correct about the conditions of American society and culture which allow for such invention. And those conditions persist in today's spiritual marketplace.

And so, if this dissertation serves any benefit beyond its contribution to the academic study of Israel Zangwill, I hope that it will make clear Zangwill's vision for America not solely as the melting pot but as a productive site to build a new and adaptive Judaism. I hope that American Jews of all denominations and even the non-observant reacquaint themselves with his vision and revisit the community's earlier fascination and engagement with Israel Zangwill's insights and opinions. And like Meri-Jane Rochelson, I hope that Israel Zangwill's life and works fuel

discussion and debate beyond the academic community. As Israel Zangwill once observed, we “must not imagine that prophets are a dead race...The prophets are always with us.” Indeed, prophets can and do live on through their prophecy and its power to influence and inspire subsequent generations. Israel Zangwill was not a perfect prophet, to be sure. And since the mid-twentieth century his prophecy has been overlooked and ignored. But contemporary scholarly interest in Israel Zangwill has made clear his importance in his own day, and I hope that this dissertation, in some small way, indicates the significance and relevance of Zangwill in our own day, as well.<sup>64</sup>

## Notes

### Introduction

<sup>1</sup> For a full account of Zangwill's life and works see: Joseph Leftwich, *Israel Zangwill*, (London: James Clarke & Co. Limited, 1957); Maurice Wohlgelernter, *Israel Zangwill: A Study*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964); Elsie Bonita Adams, *Israel Zangwill*, (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1971); Joseph H. Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto: The Life and Works of Israel Zangwill*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990); Meri-Jane Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena: The Career of Israel Zangwill*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Leftwich, *Israel Zangwill*, 292. In the introduction to his 1964 study, Maurice Wohlgelernter makes clear that Leftwich's book on Zangwill was discounted by many as hagiographic, anecdotal, and lacked critical acumen. As such most scholars of Zangwill have characterized the book as a memoir or remembrance, rather than a significant study of Zangwill.

<sup>3</sup> In his study, Leftwich noted that Zangwill understood his work as part of a prophetic tradition of admonition and criticism. See, Joseph Leftwich, *Israel Zangwill*, 18.

<sup>4</sup> David L. Petersen, "Introduction: Ways of Thinking About Israel's Prophets," in, Petersen, ed., *Prophecy in Israel: Search For Identity*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets*, (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2001), 12.

<sup>6</sup> Max Weber, "The Prophet," David L. Petersen ed., *Prophecy in Israel*, 99.

<sup>7</sup> Eliezer Schweid, "'Prophetic Mysticism' In Twentieth Century Jewish Thought," *Modern Judaism*, Vol. 14, no. 2 (May 1994), 142; David L. Petersen, "Introduction," *Prophecy in Israel*, 12; Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets*, 12-22.

<sup>8</sup> Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and Its History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), see section V, "The Democratization of Fame," *passim*.

<sup>9</sup> Ernst Pawel, *The Labyrinth of Exile: A Life of Theodore Herzl*, (New York: Harper and Collins, 1989), 264. Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-De- Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 151, 165. Schorske's third chapter, "Politics in a New Key," argues that Vienna's liberal establishment's efforts to liberate the lower classes, while still claiming a socially and intellectually superior role in overseeing the social and political fortunes of Austria, led to an eruption of populist discontent and counter-political movements resulting in a variety of self-assertive nationalist movements including Pan-Germanism, Christian Nationalism, "and—in answer to both of these—Zionism." Schorske's chapter studies the biographical and linguistic similarities of the leaders of these three disparate movements—Georg Von Schöenerer, Karl Luger, and Theodore Herzl. In particular, he demonstrates the ways in which each of these men "expressed in politics a rebellion against reason and law which soon became more widespread (120)."; George Santayana would characterize this reserve and sobriety as hallmarks of America's, "genteel tradition; see, Alan Trachtenberg, Introduction to *Critics of Culture: Literature and Society in the Early Twentieth Century*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1976), Santayana essay, 14-32.

It is also worth noting that prominent American writers had begun to challenge the more reserved political literary style of American Progressive activists. Perhaps the most notable of these is W.E.B. DuBois, whose 1903 work *The Souls of Black Folk* offered a direct and forceful challenge to the leadership of the African-American community (most notably Booker T. Washington), as well as the broader American society's treatment of its black citizens. Indeed, the resonance between the biographies of Zangwill and DuBois is so powerful, that Zangwill biographer Joseph Udelson has dedicated an entire section to comparing the two. See, Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 243-247;

Farah Jasmine Griffin in the Introduction to W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, (New York: Barnes and Noble Classic Editions, 2003), xv-xxviii.

<sup>10</sup> Much has been written about the meaning of discourse. Perhaps the most eloquent author on the subject is JGA Pocock who argues that a history of discourse is not merely a recounting of an intellectual exchange, but instead an effort to explore all of the ideas available to a specific group engaged in a debate or discussion on a specific topic. In order to write a history of discourse, Pocock would argue, one must have a sense of the intellectual zeitgeist of the age and explore the dizzying array of intellectual currents and undercurrents which surround the discussion of a particular idea. See *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century*, (New York : Cambridge University Press, 1985.). Pocock's definition is quite useful and reminds historians of their obligation to thoroughly examine the ideas which informed their subjects' debates. My definition of discourse, however, comes from David Hollinger's 1979 essay, "Historians and the Discourse of Intellectuals." In this article Hollinger defines discourse as a social and intellectual interaction between a group of people who seek to answer a shared set of questions. "Questions," Hollinger tells us, "are the points of contacts between minds, where agreements are consolidated and where differences are acknowledged and dealt with; questions are the dynamisms whereby membership in a community of discourse is established, renewed, and sometimes terminated." By employing Hollinger's definition of discourse, I am able to place my historical actors in a community of discourse. Both Israel Zangwill and the American Jews who responded to him were concerned with a shared set of questions about the development of Jewish life in America. As such, I believe that my work is a study of a particular discursive moment in history. See: "Historians and the Discourse of Intellectuals," *The American Province: Studies in the History and Historiography of Ideas*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 131-132.

<sup>11</sup> Israel Zangwill, *Watchman, What of the Night?*, (New York: The American Jewish Congress, 1923), 18-19. For an understanding of the works of Herzl and Ahad Ha Am see, Arthur Hertzberg, ed., *The Zionist Idea: An Historical Analysis and Reader*, (New York: Atheneum, 1977); Simon Dubnow, *Nationalism and History: Essays on Old and New Judaism*, (New York: Atheneum, 1970). For Dubnow's comments on the significance of the United States, see, "The Ninth Letter: A Historic Moment (The Question of Emigration), 192-199.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), *passim*. For more on Hirsch see pp. 77-79. Also see, Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Nineteen Letters of Ben Uziel*, (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1899). For more on Wise's *Minhag Amerika* see Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism: A History*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 98, 125.

<sup>13</sup> Reconstructionism and post-denominationalism are two recent developments in the history of American Judaism. Reconstruction emerged from the work of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan. Kaplan, who was profoundly influenced by American sociologists and philosophers, believed that in order to ensure a vibrant, engaged Jewish community, Judaism would have to return to its roots as a "religious civilization," that is, an all encompassing, social, political, and aesthetic culture and worldview built around a particular conception of God. Kaplan hoped that the reformation of Judaism as a civilization would take place in the Conservative Movement (his institutional home for more than forty years). But resistance from the institutional leaders of Conservatism, resulted in a break with Kaplanian thinkers in the 1940s, and in 1954, four Reconstructionist synagogues joined forces to become the Reconstructionist Federation of Congregations. The movement created its own seminary in 1968. See: Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism*; Mel Scult, *Judaism Faces The Twentieth Century: A Biography of Mordecai Kaplan*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993); Mordecai Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, (New York; The Macmillan Company, 1934).

Post-denominationalism is a recent development, which reflects a growing desire on behalf of disaffected American Jews, to cross denominational boundaries and create forms of observance which link traditions of Orthodoxy, Hassidism, Reform, Conservatism, and other Jewish practices. Unlike Reconstructionism, post-denominationalism is (by definition) not an institutionalized, doctrinally driven

movement, but instead a diverse, popular response to the hardened denominational boundaries of American Jewish life. See: Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism*.

<sup>14</sup> For histories and critiques on the idea of the melting pot and assimilation see, Horace Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting Pot," *The Nation*, Vol. 100, no. 2590, 18 February, 1915; Henry Pratt Fairchild, *The Melting Pot Mistake*, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1926); Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: the Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*. (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1963); Michael Novack, *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics: Politics and Culture in the Seventies*, (New York: Macmillan, 1972); Luther Luedtke, "Ralph Waldo Emerson Envisions the 'Smelting Pot,'" *Melus*, Vol. 6, no.2, (Summer 1979), David Hollinger, *In the American Province: Studies in the History and Historiography of Ideas*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); David Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*, Tenth Anniversary Edition, (New York: Basic Books, 2000); Werner Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*, (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1999); Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

<sup>15</sup> *Supra*, note 1.

<sup>16</sup> "Imaginary Interviews," *Time Magazine*, 17 September 1923. Meri-Jane Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena*, 24-34. This work is deeply indebted to Rochelson's exploration of the development of Zangwill's fame and celebrity. In her considerable opinion, Zangwill was the first "modern" Jewish celebrity.

<sup>17</sup> Leo Brady, *The Frenzy of Renown*, 9.

<sup>18</sup> Naomi Wiener Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948*, (Hanover: Brandeis University Press and the University Press of New England, 2003), *passim*.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph Leftwich, *Israel Zangwill*, 18.

<sup>20</sup> Eliezer Schweid, "'Prophetic Mysticism' In Twentieth Century Jewish Thought," *Modern Judaism*, Vol. 14, no. 2 (May 1994), 143.

## Chapter One

<sup>1</sup> Stephen S. Wise, "Israel Zangwill," *The Reform Advocate*, 4 September 1926.

<sup>2</sup> Brady, *The Frenzy of Renown*, 17, 585.

<sup>3</sup> Meri-Jane Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena: The Career of Israel Zangwill*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008), 1. Brady, *The Frenzy of Renown*, 12

<sup>4</sup> *Supra*, "Introduction," notes 3-7.

<sup>5</sup> Leo Brady, *The Frenzy of Renown*, 15.

<sup>6</sup> Mary Ellen Waller-Zuckerman, "'Old Homes, in a City of Perpetual Change': Women's Magazines, 1890-1916," *The Business History Review*, Vol. 63, no.4 (Winter, 1989), 715-716. Jonathan D. Sarna, *JPS: The Americanization of Jewish Culture, 1888-1988*, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 39. It is also worth noting that reputation and ubiquity are not easily disentangled. The one often informs the other. The greater one's reputation, for example, the more one might find opportunities to appear in the public arena, thus increasing their ubiquity. Conversely,

a person who regularly appears before the public and the press will likely be able to further establish their reputation. Therefore, even though this chapter will attempt to present reputation and ubiquity as discrete elements of Zangwill's fame, ultimately there will be a great deal of overlap.

<sup>7</sup> Zangwill published eleven books in America from 1892-1900, five of them on Jewish topics, *Children of the Ghetto* (1892), *Ghetto Tragedies* (1893), *King of the Schnorrers* (1894), *Dreamers of the Ghetto* (1898), *They That Walk in Darkness* (1899). Three of the works were humorous works of fiction, *The Old Maid's Club* (1892), *The Celibate's Club* (1898), *Merely Mary Ann* (1893). He also wrote a more serious novel about an English artist, *The Master* (1895), as well as a mystery novel *The Big Bow Mystery* (1891), and a collection of his columns from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, a London paper, called *Without Prejudice* (1896). For an annotated bibliography of Zangwill's work see, Elsie B. Adams, "Israel Zangwill: Ghetto Realist and Romancer," *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)*, Vol. 13, no. 3 (1970), 203-209.

<sup>8</sup> Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena*; Mayer Sulzberger to Israel Zangwill, 1891, Israel Zangwill Collection, Central Zionist Archives (CZA), A120/462; Edna Nahshon, *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot: Israel Zangwill's Jewish Plays*, 19-20; Joseph H. Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto: The Life and Works of Israel Zangwill*, 81-83; Sarna, *JPS*, 39. Also see Joseph Leftwich, *Israel Zangwill*.

Leftwich recounts the following anecdote from Sulzberger: "In 1889, the Jewish Publication Society of America was beginning to work, but found it almost impossible to get English writers of Jewish books. In the *Jewish Quarterly Review* of London in 1889 there appeared an article entitled 'English Judaism.' Struck with its thoughtfulness and power...[I] had never before heard the name [Israel Zangwill]. When in the summer of 1890 I spent some vacation weeks in England I fell in with the distinguished coterie that subsequently formed the nucleus of the club called 'Maccabeans.' Zangwill was among them, and though I was waiting for a chance to sound him on the question of a book for the Publication Society, the opportunity did not at once present itself. Before the moment arrived I learned something of what he had already written...It was *Satan Mekatrig*...the upshot was that he...wrote *Children of the Ghetto* and entered upon a prosperous career of literary workmanship which has placed him in the forefront of British and Jewish imaginative writers." (63-64).

<sup>9</sup> "Israel Zangwill to Mayer Sulzberger, circa 1891." CZA, A330/153.

<sup>10</sup> "Israel Zangwill to Mayer Sulzberger, circa 1891." CZA, A330/153.

<sup>11</sup> Rochelson, *Jew in the Public Arena*, 52.

<sup>12</sup> It is worth noting that the novel's English publication, by Heinemann, preceded the American publication by a few months. While the literature does not definitively state the specific day of the novel's release in England, a review of several sources makes clear that the book was released in late September of 1892. See Udelson, 106-109. Also, in a letter from Mayer Sulzberger to Zangwill dated 30 September 1892, we read the following: "Now that the book [*Children of the Ghetto*] is out in England and may not be out for another month in this country, I hope that its career may be prosperous, and that it may result in much credit, honor, and pecuniary advantage to you." See Mayer Sulzberger to Israel Zangwill, CZA, A120/462. Notices in the American papers make clear that the book was released in America in late November or early December of 1892.

Sarna, *JPS*, 40; Rochelson, *Jew in the Public Arena*, 51; Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 37-41. It is worth noting Zangwill's 1911 play "The Next Religion," would hew much more closely to the themes raised in *Robert Elsmere*, than did *The Children of the Ghetto*.

One notable exception is the *New York Times* 12 December 1892 review, which focuses on the contrasts in Zangwill's work between the Jews of the ghetto and their wealthy coreligionists, noting "In this story of the London Jews, where the lowest class, the most bigoted of ritualists, follow the narrow creeds of 2,500 years ago, is contrasted that plutocracy of the West End that plays Chopin, reads Browning... and appreciates Degas." See: "Some New Publications," *New York Times* 12 December 1892.

<sup>13</sup> Israel Zangwill, *Children of the Ghetto*, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1892).

<sup>14</sup> "Recent Novels," *The Spectator*, 26 November 1892.

<sup>15</sup> "Comment on New Books," *The Atlantic*, 1 February 1893.

<sup>16</sup> "Children of the Ghetto," *Jewish Messenger*, 31 March 1893; "Recent Fiction," *The Critic*, 11 March 1893.

<sup>17</sup> Arthur Waugh, "London Letter," *The Critic*, 19 August 1893.

<sup>18</sup> "Book Notices," *Hartford Courant*, 8 March 1893.

<sup>19</sup> "Books and Authors: The Jew in Fiction," *Outlook*, 3 March 1894.

<sup>20</sup> "Recent Fiction," *The Critic*, 11 March 1893.

<sup>21</sup> "The Children of the Ghetto," *Literary World*, 17 December 1892.

<sup>22</sup> "Children of the Ghetto," *Jewish Messenger*, 31 March 1893.

<sup>23</sup> *The American Israelite*, 29 December 1892.

<sup>24</sup> Coverage of *Children of the Ghetto* in the American Jewish press was less ubiquitous than in America's mainstream literary culture. There are a number of likely reasons for this. To begin with Zangwill's literary talents first came to attention of the elite of American Jewry. The men who founded the Jewish Publication Society were part of a small cadre of American Jewish professionals, centered in New York, Philadelphia, and, to a lesser extent, Chicago and Cincinnati. By and large what coverage we do see of *Children of the Ghetto* in the American Jewish press emanated from these cities. Further, since the Jewish Publication Society was, at this time, a subscription based service; distribution of the book was comparatively limited. Indeed, according to one report in 1895, the book had been "practically inaccessible to the general public...[and] hard to obtain even at a large price." It was not until the Macmillan reprint of the book in 1895 that we see its wider distribution. As this chapter will make clear, though, by the time of the 1895 republication, Zangwill had already become a well known figure in American literary circles and by 1899, the year that *Children of the Ghetto* was produced as a stage play in Washington, D.C., New York, and Chicago, he had become a recognized expert on Jewish issues in the mainstream and Jewish press. Finally, it is worth considering that a number of English language, Jewish weeklies began publication in the second half of the 1890s. This includes papers from cities with considerable Jewish communities such as Cleveland's *Jewish Review*, Baltimore's *Jewish Comment*, and San Francisco's *Emanu-El*. Despite the paucity of American Jewish sources in 1892, though, we cannot ignore the development in the late nineteenth-century of a large scale periodical industry which produced and distributed magazines, weekly newspapers, and other forms of mass communication to a national audience. Under such conditions, it seems reasonable to assume that literate, middle-class, American Jews had access to a wide array of mainstream American newspapers and periodicals. And so it is more than likely that the American Jewish reading public was quite aware of Zangwill's literary accomplishments without having read about them in a parochial, American Jewish periodical. Those reviews for *Children of the Ghetto* that did exist in the English language, American Jewish press echoed the reviews in the larger American society in many ways.

For comment on inaccessibility of JPS edition of the novel see, "Notes," *The Critic*, 6 April 1895. For a discussion of the JPS' subscription service and subscriber base see Sarna, *JPS: The Americanization of Jewish Culture*. For works which discuss late nineteenth and early twentieth – century literary culture see: Gary Cross, *An All-Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Steven J. Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); Samuel P. Hays, *Response to Industrialism, 1885-1914*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Michael McGerr, *A Fierce*

*Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

*The American Israelite*, 29 December 1892. In *Without Prejudice*, a compilation of Zangwill's columns from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Zangwill writes the following, "[D]espite the assurance of the official program, that I delivered an address at the Parliament of Religions, I was in England, so far as I know, the whole time." See Israel Zangwill, *Without Prejudice*, (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1896), 287.

The public recognition of *Children of the Ghetto* as ethnography and of Zangwill as a sort of social scientist is particularly noteworthy when one considers the significant body of historical literature which makes clear that this era in American history (i.e., from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries) witnessed the nascent professionalization of the social sciences, a process by which American intellectuals sought to eliminate the "quackery" and "charlatanism" of amateur scholarship by identifying intellectual competence and conferring "authority on those who possessed it." From the 1880s through the early twentieth century, America witnessed the birth of most of its professional institutions for the study of the social sciences, including the American Historical Association (1884), the American Psychological Association (1892—the same year as the publication of *Children of the Ghetto*), the American Anthropological Association (1902), and the American Sociological Association (1905). To be sure, in this period the borders between professional scholars trained in the study of social phenomena and generalists who engaged in discussions on societal problems and potential solutions was fluid. And indeed this fluidity enabled the public to make a credible assertion linking Zangwill and his work to the professional study of Jewish ghetto society. His work was likely more akin to the publicly minded intellectuals of the Progressive era such as Upton Sinclair, Lewis Mumford, Randolph Bourne and others. Such authors, activists, and essayists lacked the specific vocational training which would come to establish expert status in the increasingly rationalized and professionalized fields of social science inquiry, yet they still employed their writings as a means to address societal ills, or married their critical vocations with concrete political action. In some sense, though, the critical distinction between professional social scientist and public intellectual is meaningless in this particular instance. The reviews of Zangwill's first Jewish-themed novel make clear that, in his time, Israel Zangwill received a reputation among the reading public as something more than just an author of fiction. He was a widely recognized expert on Jewish ghetto life. Indeed, he was likely the first English language author to be recognized as such, preceding the Jewish novelist and newspaper editor Abraham Cahan by at least three years, and the widely read Edward Steiner, a popular expert on immigration and immigrant life, by at least ten.

Abraham Cahan, as we shall see, was a significant figure in American, Yiddish journalism and literature. His first ghetto novel *Yekl*, was published in 1896. In the early twentieth century, Edward Steiner, a Jewish immigrant from Hungary who converted to Christianity, entered academia, and eventually became a professor of applied Christianity at Grinnell College, published a number of works on immigration for the Fleming Revell company. Steiner's works for Fleming Revell include, *On the Trail of the Immigrant* (1906), *The Mediator: A Tale of the Old World and the New* (1907), *Immigrant Tide: Its Ebb and Flow* (1909), *Against the Current: Chapters From a Complex Life* (1910), *From Alien to Citizen: The Story of My Life in America* (1914), *Confessions of a Hyphenated American* (1916).

For works on the nascent professionalization of the social sciences see: Thomas L. Haskell, *The Emergence of Professional Social Science: The American Social Science Association and the Nineteenth-Century Crisis of Authority*, (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1977), 89. For more on the professionalization of the social sciences see, Andrew Abbott, *Department and Discipline: Chicago Sociology at One Hundred*, (Chicago and London: University Of Chicago Press, 1999); Mary O. Furner, *Advocacy and Objectivity: A Crisis in the Professionalization of American Social Science, 1865-1905*, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1975); John Higham, *History: Professional Scholarship in America*, (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); Louis Menand, *Metaphysical Club* (New York, Harper Collins, 2005); Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession*, (Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 1988); Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1967).

For works on public intellectuals in Progressive era America see: Russell Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe*, (New York: Basic Books, 2000); Casey Nelson Blake, *Beloved Community: The Cultural Criticism of Randolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo*



Frank, & Lewis Mumford, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Alan Trachtenberg, Introduction to *Critics of Culture: Literature and Society in the Early Twentieth Century*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1976); Christopher Lasch, *The New Radicalism in America, 1889-1963: The Intellectual as a Social Type*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1965), Morton White, *Social Thought in America: The Revolt Against Formalism*, (Boston: Beacon Hill Press, 1963).

<sup>25</sup> *Current Literature*, 20 January, 1895. Republication, or advance publications of Zangwill's stories in periodical form include, "Incurable," *McClure's Magazine*, November 1893 (from *Ghetto Tragedies*); "The Sabbath Breaker," *Los Angeles Times*, 3 September 1893, *McClure's Magazine*, 1894 Vol. 2, no.2, (from *Ghetto Tragedies*); "The Tragi-Comedy of Creeds *Outlook*, 8 September 1894, [Also published as "The Rabbi's Prayer" in *Current Literature* and *Zion's Herald*] (from *King of the Schnorrers*); "Joseph the Dreamer." *Cosmopolitan*, November 1895, "Uriel Acosta," *Cosmopolitan*, July 1896 (from *Dreamers of the Ghetto*). Rochelson also notes that *King of the Schnorrers* was serialized in the British magazine *The Idler* in 1893. For more on Zangwill's columns, see: Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena*, xviii.

<sup>26</sup> Ad for *the Cosmopolitan, The Independent*, 20 December 1894.

<sup>27</sup> Ad for *The Cosmopolitan, Medical and Surgical Reporter*, 14 December 1895. Similar ads also frequently ran in *Puck*.

<sup>28</sup> Ad for *The Critic, Literary World*, 15 December 1894; *The Chap*, 1 February 1895; *The New York Times*, 17 December 1895.

<sup>29</sup> *The Critic's* correspondents who contributed the Chicago, Boston, and London "Letters" respectively were, art critic Lucy Monroe, author William H. Rideing, and British author and critic Arthur Waugh.

<sup>30</sup> Israel Zangwill, "The Position of Judaism," *The North American Review*, Vol. 160, no. 461, (Apr. 1895).

<sup>31</sup> For more on Kallen's essays see: Horace Kallen, "Judaism, Hebraism, and Zionism," 1910 in *Judaism at Bay: Essays Toward the Adjustment of Judaism to Modernity*, (New York: Bloch Publishing, 1932), 28-41, "Hebraism and Current Tendencies in Philosophy," 1909 in *Judaism at Bay*, 7-15, "Universal Judaism," 1910 in *Judaism at Bay*, 16-27.

<sup>32</sup> "The North American Review," *The Critic*, 6 April 1895.

<sup>33</sup> This particular statement could be found in most of Macmillan's advertisements for the 1895 edition of *Children of the Ghetto*. See *Outlook*, 18 May 1895.

<sup>34</sup> Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena*, 63-64.

<sup>35</sup> See 1895 advertisements entitled "Macmillan & Co.'s New Publications," available in *Outlook, The Critic, and Literary World*

<sup>36</sup> Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena*, 32; *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, December, 1895, "Zangwill's Personality," *The Jewish South*, 8 February 1895. Similar reprints are found in "Zangwill's Brilliant Success," *The American Hebrew*, September 1894, *Harper's Bazaar*, 1 September 1894, and *Current Literature*, October 1894.

<sup>37</sup> Emmanuel Elzas, "Israel Zangwill," *The Reform Advocate*, 7 September 1895, *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, December, 1895.

<sup>38</sup> Cyrus Sulzberger to Israel Zangwill, 6 November 1895, CZA, A 120/49.

<sup>39</sup> *The American Jewess*, 18 January 1896.

<sup>40</sup> "Promotional Pamphlet for Israel Zangwill, "The Drama as Fine Art," No Date, Israel Zangwill Nearprint Biographies, American Jewish Archives (AJA), Cincinnati, Ohio. To be sure, Zangwill's promoters did not ignore his fame in Jewish circles. Indeed, the promotional text on this pamphlet was placed directly next to a Star of David. It is difficult to determine the exact reasoning behind this textual approach. Nahshon has suggested that Zangwill's promoters sought to avoid ethnically labeling him, thus resulting, for example, in the choice of an inaugural lecture which had nothing to do with Jewish issues (see note 59). If this were so, though, why would the promotional materials for that very same lecture prominently feature a Star of David? Perhaps a more likely reason is that Zangwill's promoters hoped to appeal both to Jews as well as a broader American audience. If this were in fact the case, it reinforces one of the central arguments of this section, namely that Zangwill possessed a significant standing in two distinct fields, as an expert on Jewish peoples and issues, and as a literary and cultural critic.

<sup>41</sup> See, "Critics and People" and "Indecency on the English Stage" in Israel Zangwill, *Without Prejudice*.

<sup>42</sup> "Some Books and Their Authors," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 June 1896; "Literary Notes," *The Watchman*, 31 December 1896; "Zangwill's Visit," *The New York Times*, 27 August 1898.

<sup>43</sup> In essence, Zangwill argued that the drama had originally served a religious purpose. This was just as true in early Greek drama as it was in medieval, Christian mystery plays. After the French Revolution, though, the drama, and all other forms of artistic expression, loosed its moorings from religion and instead focused on, and ideally exalted, earthly human experience. This view of drama, Zangwill claimed, still held sway in continental Europe, where champions of theatrical realism such as Henrik Ibsen continued to advance drama as an artistic tool for the exploration of the human condition. In America and England, though, writers and producers for the stage, and even theatrical critics, had abandoned the earlier commitment to the drama as a fine art. Such players focused instead on box office receipts, pandering to the mob with irrelevant musicals and comedies which depended upon cheap sentimentality and fantastic stage-effects. Thus, though other forms of art possessed true qualitative standards which patrons demanded and artists generally adhered to, standards for the English speaking stage were "deplorably low." See: "I. Zangwill's Lecture Tour," *The New York Times*, 10 October 1898; "Israel Zangwill's Lecture," *The New York Times*, 12 October 1898; "The Drama as Art," *The Dial*, 16 November 1898; "Zangwill on the Drama," *The New York Times*, 17 November 1898; Nahshon, *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot*, 35-41.

<sup>44</sup> *Harper's Bazaar*, 29 October, 1898; "Zangwill and the Dramatists," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 November 1898. This is a particularly useful column since it reprints extensive excerpts about the controversy from a number of papers and magazines from all over the United States.

<sup>45</sup> Israel Zangwill, "The New Jew," in Maurice Simon, ed., *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, (London: Soncino, 1937), 61-62.

<sup>46</sup> Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch, "Zangwill or Einhorn," *The Reform Advocate*, 5 November 1898; Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, *The American Israelite*, 27 October 1898.

<sup>47</sup> Samuel Greenfield, "The Judaeans, Zangwill, and Reform Rabbis," *The Jewish Criterion*, 28 October 1898.

<sup>48</sup> "Two Jewish Plays," *The American Hebrew*, 22 September 1899; *The American Hebrew*, 20 October 1899. "Dramatic and Musical," *New York Times*, 17 October 1899. It is important to note that during the New York run of "The Children of the Ghetto," Lieber and Company changed the name of play to "The Zangwill Play: The Children of the Ghetto." This was done to distinguish the play from

the New York production of Dutch playwright, Herman Heyerman's, "The Ghetto." For more on Heyermann's play see: Edna Nahshon, *From the Ghetto to The Melting Pot*, 81, 89,101.

<sup>49</sup> Clement Scott quoted in, "The Children of the Ghetto: Zangwill's Play and What the New York Critics Think of It," *The American Israelite*, 26 October 1899. It is worth noting that the *Israelite* review is particularly useful since it cites reviews from a wide array of American papers.

The most significant excerpts of Clement Scott's critique of "The Children of the Ghetto" can be found in *The American Israelite*, 26 October 1899; *The Jewish Chronicle*, 27 October 1899. Scott's review was also cited in *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, as well as in other papers throughout the United States,

<sup>50</sup> Edna Nahshon, *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot*, 77-100, 49. Also see *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1931), 244.

<sup>51</sup> Rebecca Altman, "The Zangwill Play," *The Jewish Criterion*, 1 December, 1899; "The Woman Who Talks and Thinks," *The Jewish Criterion*, 20 October 1899.

<sup>52</sup> Rabbi Henry Berkowitz quoted in, "The Children of the Ghetto: Zangwill's Play and What the New York Critics Think of It," *The American Israelite*, 26 October 1899.

<sup>53</sup> Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise quoted in, "The Children of the Ghetto: Zangwill's Play and What the New York Critics Think of It," *The American Israelite*, 26 October 1899.

<sup>54</sup> Zangwill's "Children of the Ghetto"—An Incomplete Picture of Jews and Judaism," Box 39 Folder 2, Samuel Schulman Papers, Manuscript Collection No. (MS) 90, AJA.

<sup>55</sup> Israel Zangwill to Richard Gottheil, 30 May 1900, Box 2, Folder 5, MS 127, Richard Gottheil Papers, AJA.

<sup>56</sup> William Shakespeare, "Othello," Act II, scene iii, line 225.

<sup>57</sup> Edna Nahshon, *From The Ghetto to The Melting Pot*, 28-35; Max Nordau to Israel Zangwill, 17 November 1895, CZA, A120/509; Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 109-122

<sup>58</sup> "The Zionist Movement and Jewish Colonization Association," *The Jewish Criterion*, 21 February 1902; "Mr. Zangwill Explains His Zionist Speech," *The Jewish Exponent*, 21 February 1902; "Zangwill's Basle Speech," *The Jewish Criterion*, 25 September 1903 and 2 October 1903; *The Jewish Criterion*, 18 April, 1902; "Zionist Brilliants," *The Jewish Exponent*, 31 January 1902.

<sup>59</sup> "Sixth Annual Convention of the American Federation of Zionists," *The Jewish Criterion*, 12 June 1903; "Back to Israel is Their Stirring Cry," *Los Angeles Times*, 9 June 1903.

<sup>60</sup> "Zionists Meet in Pittsburg," *The Jewish Exponent*, 12 June 1903.

<sup>61</sup> For works on the Kishinev Pogroms see Edward H. Judge, *Easter in Kishinev: The Anatomy of a Pogrom*, (New York: The New York University Press, 1992).

<sup>62</sup> Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism: From the French Revolution to the Establishment of the State of Israel*, (New York: Schocken Books, 2003), 109-123. ; Joseph H. Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto: The Life and Works of Israel Zangwill*, (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1990), 172-173; Israel Zangwill, "Speech to the Sixth Zionist Congress," in Maurice Simon, ed., *Speeches, Articles and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, (London: The Soncino Press, 1937), 182.

<sup>63</sup> Zangwill, "The East Africa Offer," in Simon, ed., *Speeches, Articles and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 208.

<sup>64</sup> Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 174-178.

<sup>65</sup> Zangwill, "What Is The ITO?" in Simon, ed., *Speeches, Articles and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 232; Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 174-180. The *Kehilla* was the traditional Jewish communal structure in the Eastern European Ghetto and in the Pale of settlement. *Kehilla* enforced Jewish law within the community and represented the Jews as a corporate body to the host government. For more on *Kehilla* see: Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis; Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961). For a comparison of the *Kehilla* structure in the Ghetto with modern, emancipated Jewry see: Salo Baron, "Ghetto and Emancipation," *Menorah Journal* 14 (1928): 515-526. Recent biographies of Zangwill generally concur that the Jewish Territorial Organization's acronym, "ITO" arose from the organization's Yiddish name, "Yiddish Territorial Organizatzya." In this construction the letter "I" substitutes for the Hebrew character "yud (י)" a letter which alternately functions as "Y" and "I" in Yiddish.

<sup>66</sup> Voorsanger quoted in, "Says Zangwill's Plan Untenable," *The Los Angeles Herald*, 15 January 1905.

<sup>67</sup> "Alternative to Zionism," *The New York Times*, 12 February 1905; "Dr. Magnes A Rabbi of Emmanu-El at 29," *The New York Times*, 9 May 1906.

<sup>68</sup> Florence Brooks, "Zangwill Talks About East African Zion," *The New York Times*, 23 October 1904.

<sup>69</sup> Joseph Jacobs to Israel Zangwill, 28 May 1906, CZA, A120/407. Early press reportage of Zangwill's leadership role can be found in *The New York Times*, *The Jewish Criterion*, *The American Hebrew*, and even *The Christian Observer*.

<sup>70</sup> *The American Hebrew*, 4 December 1903.

<sup>71</sup> *The American Hebrew*, 28 November 1903.

<sup>72</sup> *The Jewish Criterion*, 1 October 1908; for Udelson's comments on Zangwill's marriage see: Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 148-152.

<sup>73</sup> Noel Y. Harte, "Zangwill on Zionism and Art," reprinted in, *The Jewish Criterion* 11 November 1904.

<sup>74</sup> For works on the gendering of political and social activism in the Progressive era see: Ellen Fitzpatrick, *Endless Crusade: Women Social Scientists and Progressive Reform*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Helene Silverberg, ed., *Gender and American Social Science, The Formative Years*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

<sup>75</sup> The letterhead for the American branch of ITO listed its leadership as Hon. Oscar S. Straus, Judge Sulsberger [Mayer], Cyrus Sulzberger, Solomon Solis Cohen, and Bernard Richards. See: CZA Israel Zangwill Files A120/49; "Will People the West with Russian Jews," *The New York Times*, 5 January 1907. For details on Zangwill's role in the Galveston Plan see: CZA, A120/ 37, (Jacob Schiff Correspondence), 442 (Louis Marshall Correspondence), 462 (Mayer Sulzberger Correspondence); Henry Cohen Papers, MS 263, AJA; Louis Marshall Papers, MS 359 (Louis Marshall Correspondence), AJA. For information on Guggenheim and the Nevada plan see: CZA, A120/42 (Daniel Guggenheim Correspondence), 462 (Mayer Sulzberger Correspondence). Another prominent American ITOist was Reform Rabbi Gotthard Deutsch, who was a regular contributor to *The American Israelite*, see: Gotthard Deutsch Papers, MS 123.

<sup>76</sup> *The Reform Advocate*, 10 October 1908.

<sup>77</sup> "A Chat at the Club," *The Reform Advocate* 29 August 1908. This piece is a fictionalized discussion between two Jews, Zunick, an acculturated, well spoken Jew, and Moskowitz, presumably a recent immigrant who speaks broken English with a liberal sprinkling of Yiddishisms. They are comparing the merits of Herzl and Zangwill. Zunick is a proponent of Zangwill and Moskowitz of Herzl. Since *The Reform Advocate* was a German-Jewish Reform paper, it seems likely that Zunick represented the point of view of the paper and Moskowitz was seen as the immigrant bumpkin, so to speak. When we compare this piece with the article in note 73 we see that *The Reform Advocate* was ambivalent about Zangwill's status. They admired his rescue work, but likely objected to his interest in Jewish nationalism.

<sup>78</sup> Sollors quoted in Guy Szuberla, "Zangwill's Melting Pot Plays Chicago," *Melus*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Autumn, 1995), 3;

<sup>79</sup> "I. Zangwill Melts Up," *The Sun*, 25 September 1908; "Zangwill's Idea of a Play," *The New York Herald*, 25 September 1908; "Zangwill on His New Play," *New York Times*, 25 September 1908; "I. Zangwill Here" *The Washington Herald*, 4 October 1908; *The Jewish Exponent*, 2 October 1908.

It is also important to note that 1908 was a significant year in the Zionist movement. The rise of the Young Turks and the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in Turkey led some to hope that the new Turkish government might grant Jews the option to settle in Palestine. Zangwill's response to the possibility of a Jewish Palestine was twofold. The first was to reject the notion outright. On arriving in New York, for example, he discussed the differences between Territorialism and the Zionist movement with the press. "The Territorial Society, of which I am the head," said Zangwill "has concluded that although Palestine is the ideal place for the foundation of a Jewish State we cannot attain it [due to] the large Arab population." But less than a month later, Zangwill attempted to reconcile Territorialism and Zionism. In an October article for *The Independent* Zangwill claimed that the Territorialists were a wing of the Zionists, thus glossing over what was, at times, a fractious debate between the two factions. He then recognized the possibility of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. "Turkey," he writes, "has gained a constitution and changes are taking place which may clear away difficulties that are hampering us in Palestine." Still, Zangwill refused to abandon the Territorialist project, noting in the very next paragraph that "there are thinly populated parts of North America and South America, any of which might do for our proposed Land of Reunion." See: Zangwill on his New Play," *The New York Times*, 25 September 1908; Richard Gottheil, "The New Turkey and Zionism," *The Independent*, 15 October 1908; Israel Zangwill, "Zionism of Today," *The Independent*, 15 October 1908.

<sup>80</sup> Israel Zangwill, *The Melting Pot*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), 184-185.

<sup>81</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 20 October 1908.

<sup>82</sup> Constance Skinner, "Melting Pot at Grand, A Play to Remember," *Chicago Evening American*, 21 October 1908.

<sup>83</sup> Leo Kaul, "A Thought Suggested by The Melting Pot," *The Reform Advocate*, 20 January 1909.

<sup>84</sup> CZA, A120/218;; "Better Citizenship Association of Portland, Oregon to Israel Zangwill," 21 June 1910, CZA, A120/277.

<sup>85</sup> "Rabbi Sees Peril in Inter-marriage," *The New York Times*, 10 May 1909; "Jacob H. Schiff on Zangwill's Play," *The American Hebrew*, November 1908; Rabbi Jacob Landau, "Zangwill's Play," *The New York Times*, 10 September 1909; "Leo Mielziner Letter to *The New York Times*," in *The American Hebrew*, 17 September 1909.

<sup>86</sup> *The Washington Herald*, 11 October 1908; "Zangwill's 'The Melting Pot' a Dramatic Success," *The Washington Times*, 6 October 1908; Liebler and Co. ran this add in a number of papers

in preparation for the New York premiere of "The Melting Pot." See: *The New York Times* 22 August 1909.

<sup>87</sup> *The Bookman*, May 1914, found in CZA, A330/6. In 1922, the popular biographer C. Lewis Hind would write of Zangwill that *The Dreamers of the Ghetto* and "The Melting Pot"—that is, his major work on the struggle to maintain a Jewish identity in a world outside the ghetto, and his epic paean to the promise of American life—were the "essential Zangwill." See, C. Lewis Hind, *More Authors and I*, (New York: Dodd, Mead And Company, 1922), 302.

<sup>88</sup> Israel Zangwill, "For Small Mercies," *The Menorah Journal*, Vol. 1, no.2 (April 1915). For more information on the Intercollegiate Menorah Society or *The Menorah Journal* see: Jenna Weissman Joselit, "Without Ghettoism: A History Of The Intercollegiate Menorah Association, 1906-1930," *American Jewish Archives*, Vol. 30, no. 2 (Nov. 1978); Lewis Fried, *Creating Hebraism, Confronting Hellenism: The Menorah Journal and its Struggle for the Jewish Imagination.* *American Jewish Archives.*, Vol. 52, (2001); Seth Korelitz, "The Menorah Idea: From Religion to Culture From Race To Ethnicity," *American Jewish History*, Vol. 85, no. 1, (Mar. 1997)

<sup>89</sup> For information on Arthur Davis and the Arthur Davis Memorial Lecture see: Arthur Davis File, CZA A120/332; Israel Zangwill, "Chosen Peoples," *The Menorah Journal*, Vol.4, no.5 (October 1918).

<sup>90</sup> For a detailed look at the exchange between Zangwill and *The Menorah Journal* see: MS-2, Henry Hurwitz Papers, AJA.

<sup>91</sup> "Henry Hurwitz to Mayer Sulzberger," 26 August 1917, MS-2, Henry Hurwitz Papers, AJA.

<sup>92</sup> "Cable from Henry Hurwitz to Israel Zangwill," 19 September 1917, MS-2, Henry Hurwitz Papers, , AJA; "Letter from Henry Hurwitz to Israel Zangwill," 20 September 1917, MS-2, Henry Hurwitz Papers, AJA. The list of signatories to the Zangwill invitation reads like a who's who of American Jewry, including the renowned legal scholar and future Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, Columbia University Semitics Professor Richard Gottheil, mining magnate Daniel Guggenheim, prominent bankers Jacob Schiff and Felix Warburg, as well as the prominent New York attorney and philanthropist Sol. Strock, to name just a few of the luminaries assigned to the Menorah Convention invitation.

<sup>93</sup> "The Menorah Invitation to Mr. Zangwill," *The Menorah Journal*, Vol. 3, no.5 (December 1917).

<sup>94</sup> "The Menorah Invitation to Mr. Zangwill," *The Menorah Journal*, Vol. 3, no.5 (December 1917).

<sup>95</sup> Meri-Jane Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena*, 205-210.

<sup>96</sup> Israel Zangwill, "The Goyim," *The Voice of Jerusalem*, (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1920), 324-326.

<sup>97</sup> For the exchange between Zangwill and Marshall on the poem see Box 68, Folder Z; Box 1590, Folder November, 1920; and Box 1592, Folder August 1920, MS-359, Louis Marshall Papers, AJA.

<sup>98</sup> Israel Zangwill, "Our Own: An Original Poem Written Expressly for the Central Committee for the Relief of Jews Suffering Through the War," October 1919, Israel Zangwill Nearprint Biography, AJA.

<sup>99</sup> Israel Zangwill to Henry Hurwitz, 19 March 1919, Box 9, Folder 2, MS-14, Adolph Oko Papers, AJA.

<sup>100</sup> Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown*, 516.

<sup>101</sup> Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown*, 516.

## Chapter Two

<sup>1</sup> For Wilde quote see, Oscar Wilde, Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, (New York: Ward, Lock, and Co., 1891), vi.

<sup>2</sup> "Mr. Zangwill's Views 'Without Prejudice,'" *The American Hebrew*, 9 December 1898.

<sup>3</sup> *The New York World*, 11 October, 1908.

<sup>4</sup> Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets*, 3-4.

<sup>5</sup> Leo Pinsker, *Auto-Emancipation (Autoemanzzipation)*, in Arthur Hertzberg, ed., *The Zionist Idea*, 179-198; Theodore Herzl, *The Jewish State (Der Judenstaat)*, in Arthur Hertzberg, ed., *The Zionist Idea*, 204-226. "Interview With Mr. Zangwill," *The Jewish Exponent*, 2 October 1908.

Walter Laquer has observed the many similarities between the work of Pinsker and Herzl, noting for, example, that Herzl's diaries make clear he had not read *Autoemanzzipation* (which was first published more the twenty years before the publication of *Der Judenstaat*) until 1896, a year after the publication of *Der Judenstaat*. Herzl suggests that this was in fact a good thing, since, had he read Pinsker before he wrote his own work, he likely would have abandoned his own work. See, Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 87.

For more on the work of American Jewish thinkers and their response to the United States' social acceptance of Jews and its threat to Jewish identity see, Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Noam F. Pianko, "Diaspora Jewish Nationalism and Identity in America, 1914-1967," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, May 2004); Lewis Fried, "Creating Hebraism, Confronting Hellenism: The Menorah Journal and its Struggle for the Jewish Imagination." *American Jewish Archives.*, Vol. 52, (2001); Seth Korelitz, "The Menorah Idea: From Religion to Culture From Race To Ethnicity," *American Jewish History*, Vol. 85, no. 1, (Mar. 1997); Mel Scult, *Judaism Faces The Twentieth Century: A Biography of Mordecai Kaplan*; Susanne Klingenstein, *Jews in the American Academy, 1900-1940: The Dynamics of Intellectual Assimilation*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); Balia Round Shargel, *Practical Dreamer: Israel Friedlaender and the Shaping of American Judaism*, (New York: the Jewish Theological Seminary, 1985); Jenna Weissman Joselit, "Without Ghettoism: A History Of The Intercollegiate Menorah Association, 1906-1930," *American Jewish Archives*, Vol. 30, no. 2 (Nov. 1978);

Key primary sources by Kaplan and Friedlander can be found in: Mordecai Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*; Israel Friedlaender, *Past and Present: A Collection of Jewish Essays*, (Cincinnati: Ark Publishing Company, 1919).

Zangwill's belief in the possibility of social emancipation in England and America likely stemmed from his own experience as a British Jew, but also from the unique histories of the two countries. Under the rule of Oliver Cromwell, the Jews were tacitly allowed to return to England and observe Judaism in 1656. While in America, the absence of any constitutionally established church seemed to provide the Jews with a unique opportunity to live as both Americans and Jews without legal contradiction. For more on the history of British Jews see, Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> Israel Zangwill, "Zion, Whence Cometh My Help," in Maurice Simon, ed., *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 78; "English Judaism. A Criticism and A Classification," *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 1, no.4, (July 1889), 376-407.

<sup>7</sup> This idea is well documented and can be found in any of the previously cited works on Zangwill. The Zangwillian notion of American exceptionalism can also be found in works which discuss the history of the Melting Pot idea. Some of the central works in this field include, Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*, (Cambridge, Mass. : M.I.T. Press, 1963.); Michael Novak, *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics: Politics and Culture in the Seventies*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972); Werner Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Phillip Gleason, "The Melting Pot: Symbol of Fusion or Confusion?" in *Speaking of Diversity: Language and Ethnicity in Twentieth-Century America*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 3-31; David Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* Tenth Anniversary Edition, (New York: Basic Books, 2000); Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness*.

<sup>8</sup> Israel Zangwill cited in "Death Stills the Heart of Israel Zangwill," *The American Hebrew*, 6 August 1926; Israel Zangwill, *The Cockpit*, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1921), 32.

<sup>9</sup> Israel Zangwill, "The New Jew" in Simon ed. *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 6; Israel Zangwill, "Send off to Dr. Schechter," Simon ed. *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 67.

<sup>10</sup> Jacob Rader Marcus, *Early American Jewry*, vols. 1-2, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1951-1953); William Pencak, *Jews and Gentiles in Early America, 1654-1800*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005); Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States of America, 1654-2000*, (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2004); Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism*; Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, (New York: Columbia University, 1937).

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul: Human Nature in the Twentieth Century*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 3.

<sup>12</sup> *London Times*, 27 October 1908.

<sup>13</sup> "Unattributed Clipping," 10/24/1908, Melting Pot Scrapbook, CZA, A120/165.

<sup>14</sup> Israel Zangwill, *The Principle of Nationalities*, (London: Watts & Co., 1917), 44-60. In his speech, Zangwill articulated a number of national types. The first type he called a "Simple Nationality" a supposed pure race of people which lived in a unified geographical area. Here Zangwill cited the people of Iceland. The second type, which Zangwill compared to England and Hungary, was the "Complex Nationality," an ethnically and culturally diverse group which "mingle towards a political unity." The third group, "Compound Nationality" was a federation of national groups, like Switzerland. While the fourth and final group was a "Hybrid Nationality," in which all peoples are distinct, but subjected to a hegemonic nationality. Zangwill cited the Ottoman Empire as the paradigmatic Hybrid Nationality. Ultimately, though, all nationalities would, through either "tyranny or tolerance" would melt into a "Simple Nationality." See section VI, 39-44.

<sup>15</sup> Israel Zangwill, "Afterword," *The Melting Pot*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), 212.

<sup>16</sup> For more on the prophets' disdain for wealth and position see Heschel, *The Prophets*, 9-11.

<sup>17</sup> Israel Zangwill, "The New Jew," in Simon ed. *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 56-57.

<sup>18</sup> Israel Zangwill, "Zionism and England's Offer," delivered 8 December 1904 at The Cooper Union in New York City, in *The American Hebrew*, 9 December 1904.



<sup>19</sup> Israel Zangwill to Joseph Jacobs, 5 February 1907, CZA, A120/407.

<sup>20</sup> Israel Zangwill in *The Jewish Chronicle*, 30 October 1908.

<sup>21</sup> Israel Zangwill to Louis Marshall, 12 July 1921, Box 62, Folder Z, MS 359, Louis Marshall Papers AJA. Correspondence between Zangwill and Cyrus Sulzberger similarly makes clear that Zangwill believed that the meaning of his play was largely misunderstood. In a 1908 letter to Sulzberger, Zangwill lamented the fact that in response to the play, an epidemic of Sermons etc. has broken out on the subject of intermarriage, the bulk of it in misunderstanding my meaning." Israel Zangwill to Mayer Sulzberger, 18 December 1908, CZA, A120/462.

<sup>22</sup> Israel Zangwill, "A Few Reflections: Is America Forsaking the Ideals of Her Founders?" in Simon ed. in *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 107.

<sup>23</sup> Zangwill's suggestion that the Jews of the Jewish state be called Judeans can be found in his greetings to the fifteenth annual Intercollegiate Menorah Society convention. See: Israel Zangwill, "The Dilemmas of the Diaspora," *The Menorah Journal*, Vol. 4, no.1 (February 1918).

Born Asher Zvi Ginsberg, Ahad Ha'Am was one of the most renowned cultural Zionists of his age. Ha'Am argued that the conditions of exile (the *Galut*) made the formation of a truly creative and sustainable Jewish culture untenable. In the West, the pull of assimilation would prove too great for emancipated Jews to resist, and Jewish culture, even its religious expression, would fail to survive. In the East, the isolation of Ghetto Jews denied them the opportunity to learn beyond the narrow restrictions of religious education. Only in a Jewish state could a successful Jewish cultural life exist. That culture would serve as a focal point for self conscious Diasporic Jews interested in maintaining some connection to their distinct lives as Jews. See, Hertzberg, Ed. "The Agnostic Rabbi—Ahad Ha-Am," *The Zionist Idea*, 249-288.

<sup>24</sup> Simon Dubnow, "The Ninth Letter: A Historic Moment (The Question of Emigration) in *Nationalism and History: Essays on Old and New Judaism*, (New York: Atheneum, 1970), 192-199. For more on Friedlaender's understanding concerning the concomitant existence of Israel and Diaspora see, Samuel Margoshes, *Three Zionist Rishonim in America*, (New York: The British Rishonim of the United States, 1961), 26-30; Israel Friedlaender, *Past and Present: A Collection of Jewish Essays*.

<sup>25</sup> Israel Zangwill, *Watchman, What of the Night?*, 18-19.

<sup>26</sup> For more on the American Reform Movement and its efforts at reinventing Jewish practice see: Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Walter Jacob, ed., *Changing the World of Reform Judaism: The Pittsburgh Platform in Retrospect*, (Pittsburgh: Rodeph Shalom Congregation, 1985).

<sup>27</sup> Israel Zangwill, "The Jewish Race," in Simon ed. *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 82.

<sup>28</sup> Israel Zangwill, "The New Jew," in Simon ed. *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 62.

<sup>29</sup> Israel Zangwill, "The New Jew," in Simon ed. *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 63.

<sup>30</sup> Allusion to Kohler's comments, and Zangwill's response, can be found in, "Mr. Zangwill's Views Without Prejudice," *The American Hebrew*, 9 December 1898; Israel Zangwill, "The New Jew," in Simon ed. *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 60;

To be clear, Zangwill did not see a Talmudic approach to Jewish life as a panacea. Indeed, the central dilemma of *The Children of the Ghetto* fully recognized the way in which a rigid interpretation

of Talmud could prove extremely detrimental to a vibrant and evolutionary Jewish life. For more on the dilemma of Talmudism see Israel Zangwill to Rabbi Max Heller, 27 April 1900, Box 6, Folder 12, MS 33, Max Heller Papers, AJA.

<sup>31</sup> Israel Zangwill, "The Dilemmas of the Diaspora," *The Menorah Journal*, Vol. 4, no.1 (February 1918).

<sup>32</sup> Jeffrey S. Gurock, "Resisters and Accommodators: Varieties of Orthodox Rabbis in America, 1886-1983," in Jacob Rader Marcus, ed., *The American Rabbinate: A Century of Continuity and Change, 1883-1983*, (Hoboken: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1985), 18-19.

<sup>33</sup> Israel Zangwill, "Send off to Dr. Schechter," in Simon ed. *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 68-69.

<sup>34</sup> Mr. Zangwill's Views Without Prejudice," *The American Hebrew*, 9 December 1898; Israel Zangwill quoted in, Mabel Lyons, "Israel Zangwill in Retrospect," *The Saint Louis Jewish Tribune*, 20 September 1946.

<sup>35</sup> "Israel Zangwill, "The Jewish Race," in Simon ed. *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 93.

<sup>36</sup> Israel Zangwill, *Chosen Peoples*, 33; *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 9, 35.

<sup>37</sup> Israel Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 7-9.

<sup>38</sup> "Israel Zangwill and Daniel Guggenheim," *The New York Herald*, 8 November 1908; Israel Zangwill, *Chosen Peoples*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919); Israel Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 38.

<sup>39</sup> Israel Zangwill, "The Dilemmas of the Diaspora," *The Menorah Journal*, Vol. 4, no.1 (February 1918); Israel Zangwill, "Zion, Whence Cometh My Help," in Maurice Simon, ed., *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*; Israel Zangwill, "The Territorial Solution to the Jewish Problem," in *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 263-285; "The New Jew," in Simon ed. *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*; "Israel Zangwill and Daniel Guggenheim," *The New York Herald*, 8 November 1908

<sup>40</sup> "Rabbi Sees Peril in Inter-marriage," *New York Times*, 10 May 1909, 4; "Melting Pot's Product Poor," *Los Angeles Times*, 20 July 1914, section II, p. 2; Louis D. Brandeis, "A Call to the Educated Jew," *The Menorah Journal*, vol. 1, no. 1, (Jan., 1915), 12.

<sup>41</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism*, (London: Smith and Elder, 1882).

<sup>42</sup> John Henry Raleigh, *Matthew Arnold And American Culture*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), 1.

<sup>43</sup> Maurice Wohlgeleer, *Israel Zangwill: A Study*, 92—see same page for Heine quote; *Judaism at Bay*: Horace Kallen, "Hebraism and Current Tendencies in Philosophy," 1909 in *Judaism at Bay: Essays Toward the Adjustment of Judaism to Modernity*, (New York: Bloch Publishing, 1932), 7-15; "Universal Judaism," 1910 in *Judaism at Bay*, 16-27. For more on Wendell's influence on Kallen and his interest in Hebraism see, Milton Konvitz, ed., *The Legacy of Horace M. Kallen* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1987); Milton Konvitz, *Nine American Jewish Thinkers*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000); Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), Chapter Fourteen, "Pluralisms."

<sup>44</sup> Israel Zangwill, "Hebrew, Jew, and Israelite," in Simon ed. *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 34-41.

<sup>45</sup> Dr. J.H. Hertz, ed., *The Pentateuch & Haftorahs*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (London: Soncino Press, 1976). Israel Zangwill is cited five times on subjects ranging from the centrality of the Sabbath in Jewish life, to specific Hebrew translations to commentaries on the meanings of various passages. That is equal to or greater than the number of citations for renowned scholar Solomon Schechter, and Jewish historians Leopold Zunz and Heinrich Graetz.

<sup>46</sup> Andrew Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul*, 12; Lila Corwin Berman, *Speaking of Jews: Rabbis, Intellectuals, and the Creation of an American Public Identity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 2-3.

<sup>47</sup> Mordecai Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, 447.

<sup>48</sup> Israel Zangwill, *The Children of the Ghetto*, 234.

<sup>49</sup> Israel Zangwill, "The Territorial Solution to the Jewish Problem," in *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 267-268.

<sup>50</sup> Israel Zangwill, "The Dilemmas of the Diaspora," *The Menorah Journal*, Vol. 4, no.1 (February 1918), *passim*; "The Territorial Solution to the Jewish Problem," in *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 268.

<sup>51</sup> Israel Zangwill, "The Dilemmas of the Diaspora," *The Menorah Journal*, Vol. 4, no.1 (February 1918),, 13; Israel Zangwill, "The New Jew," in Simon ed. *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 63. It is worth observing that Zangwill's reference to an "orthodoxy mitigated by oysters," may refer to a specific instance in American Jewish history. In 1883, the recently established Hebrew Union College—the intellectual center of American Reform Judaism—held a dinner to celebrate the ordination of its first class of rabbinic students. The dinner menu reflected a fairly traditional, upper middle class banquet of the day, and included littleneck clams, crab, and other shellfish. A number of the invited guests observed Jewish dietary laws and were outraged by the menu. Some left in disgust before the first course was served, while others abstained from eating and remained at the banquet until its conclusion. By far the most in depth (and most recent) study of the so-called *Treifah* Banquet is Lance J. Sussman's "The Myth of the Trefa Banquet: American Culinary Culture and the Radicalization of Food Policy in American Reform Judaism," *The American Jewish Archives Journal*, Vol 57, nos. 1&2, (2005), 29-52. Other works which discuss the banquet include Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism*, Hasia Diner, *The History of the Jews of the United States*, Jacob Rader Marcus, *The Jew in American History*, and John J. Appel, "The Trefah Banquet," *Commentary*, Vol. 41, no.2 (February 1966), 75-78.

<sup>52</sup> Israel Zangwill, "Send-Off to Dr. Schechter," in Simon ed. *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 68.

<sup>53</sup> Solomon Schechter, "Introduction," *Studies in Judaism*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1911), xviii-xix.

<sup>54</sup> "Israel Zangwill and Daniel Guggenheim," *The New York Herald*, 8 November 1908.

<sup>55</sup> For a more detailed description of Hannah's predicament see Chapter 1 of this dissertation. "Israel Zangwill to Max Heller," 27 April, 1900, 33, Box 6 Folder 12, MS 33, Maximilian H. Heller Papers, AJA; Israel Zangwill, "Send-Off to Dr. Schechter," in Simon ed. *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 67; Israel Zangwill, "The New Jew," in Simon ed. *Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, 60.

<sup>56</sup> Maurice Wohlgernter, *Israel Zangwill: A Study*, ix.

<sup>57</sup> Meri-Jane Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena*, 4.

<sup>58</sup> Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets*, 13.

### Chapter Three

<sup>1</sup> Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets*, 23.

<sup>2</sup> F. De Sola Mendes, "The Children of the Ghetto," *The American Hebrew*, 6 January 1893.

<sup>3</sup> *Supra* Chapter 1, p. 16; Cyrus Sulzberger, in *The American Hebrew*, 2 December 1892.

<sup>4</sup> "The Children of the Ghetto," *The American Hebrew*, 30 December 1892; "The Children of the Ghetto;" "The Children of the Ghetto," *The American Hebrew*, 20 January, 1893.

<sup>5</sup> Rabbi Maurice Harris, "Zangwill's The Children of the Ghetto," *The American Hebrew*, 24 November 1899; F.F., in *The American Hebrew*, 30 December 1898; Lewis N. Dembitz, "A Divorced Woman to a Private Priest," *The American Hebrew*, 10 November 1899; Gertrude Veld, "One Point of View," *The American Hebrew* 10 November 1899.

<sup>6</sup> "The Zangwill Play: A Non-Jewish Point of View," *The American Hebrew*, 27 October 1899.

<sup>7</sup> JC Levi, "The Children of the Ghetto," *The American Hebrew*, 30 December 1892.

<sup>8</sup> The most widely reported episode of anti-Semitic exclusion at an American resort hotel occurred at the in Saratoga Springs, NY, when prominent and well-connected Jewish businessman, Joseph Seligman and his family were refused lodging at the Grand Union Hotel. Ironically, historians have observed that anti-Jewish restrictions were tactical effort by hotel owners to elevate their own flagging status. For more on the "Seligman affair see: Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States of America*, 170; Jon Sterngass, *First Resorts: Pursuing Pleasure at Saratoga Springs, Newport, and Coney Island*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 106-108.

For more on the Chinese Exclusion Act and immigration restriction in general see: John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of Nativism, 1860-1925*, (New York: Atheneum, 1985); Ronald Takaki, *Strangers From a Different Shore: A History of Asian-Americans*, (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1989); Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004);

For details on the Geary Act see Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy And Immigrants Since 1882*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004), 21.

<sup>9</sup> Sulzberger's comments appear in "The Children of the Ghetto Again," *The American Hebrew*, 30 December 1892.

<sup>10</sup> Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States of America*, 169-173.

<sup>11</sup> F de Sola Mendes, "The Children of the Ghetto," *The American Hebrew*, 6 January 1893.

<sup>12</sup> "The Fear of Holding Us Up to Nature," *The American Hebrew*, 30 December 1898.

<sup>13</sup> "Children of the Ghetto," *The Reform Advocate*, 3 December 1893.

<sup>14</sup>Maurice Harris, "Extracts From a Lecture on *The Children of The Ghetto*," *The American Hebrew*, 17 March 1893; Charles Brand, *The American Hebrew*, 6 January 1893; Max Cohen, "The Jewish Publication Society," *The American Hebrew*, 9 December 1892.

<sup>15</sup> For more on Zangwill's idea of Marranoism see *supra* Chapter 2, notes 11-13.

<sup>16</sup> Bernard Drachman, in *The American Hebrew*, 10 February 1893; Kaufman Kohler, "Zangwill at the Judeans," *The American Hebrew*, 28 October 1898; Henry Pereira Mendes, "Queries for Kohler," *The American Hebrew*, 4 November 1898. Samuel Schulman, "Zangwill's 'Children of the Ghetto'—An Incomplete Picture of Jews and Judaism," Delivered 31 August 1899, Box 39, Folder 2, MS 90, Samuel Schulman Papers AJA. For more on Mendes' role in the development of Orthodox Judaism see Jeffrey S. Gurock, "Resistors and Accommodators: Varieties of Orthodox Rabbis in America," *The American Rabbinate*, 10-97.

<sup>17</sup> Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism*, 144-151; Jacob Rader Marcus and Abraham J. Peck eds., *The American Rabbinate*. For more on the challenge to Reform from the newly emerging Conservative Movement see: Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 267.

<sup>18</sup> Samuel Schulman, "Zangwill's 'Children of the Ghetto'—An Incomplete Picture of Jews and Judaism," Delivered 31 August 1899, Box 39, Folder 2, MS 90, Samuel Schulman Papers, AJA; Maurice Harris, "Extracts From a Lecture on *The Children of The Ghetto*," *The American Hebrew*, 17 March 1893; Kaufman Kohler, "Zangwill at the Judeans," *The American Hebrew*, 28 October 1898.

<sup>19</sup> Naomi Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism*, 50-51.

<sup>20</sup> Maurice Harris, "Extracts From a Lecture on 'The Children of the Ghetto,'" *The American Hebrew*, 17 March 1893.

<sup>21</sup> Maurice Harris, "Zangwill and Reform,," *The American Hebrew*, 28 October 1898.

<sup>22</sup> Samuel Greenfield, "The Judeans, Zangwill, and Reform Rabbis," *The Jewish Criterion*, 28 October 1898.

<sup>23</sup> Samuel Greenfield, "The Judeans, Zangwill, and Reform Rabbis," *The Jewish Criterion*, 28 October 1898.

<sup>24</sup> Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism*, 71.

<sup>25</sup> Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism*, 150-151; Leonard Mervis, "The Social Justice Movement and the American Reform Rabbi," *American Jewish Archives Journal*, Vol. 7, no. 2, (1955). Mervis makes clear that Hirsch was a powerful advocate for such social causes as the six day work week and women's rights. He also objected to the Spanish American War because of America's imperialist aspirations.

<sup>26</sup> Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism*, 98-99; Bernard Martin, "The Religious Philosophy of Emil G. Hirsch," *American Jewish Archives Journal*, Vol. 4, no. 2, (1952); Aryeh Rubinstein, "Isaac Mayer Wise: A New Appraisal," *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 39, no. 1/2 American Bicentennial: II (Winter-Spring, 1977). Like his son-in-law, Einhorn spoke out against the most troubling social issue of his day—specifically the amorality of slavery. See: Sarna, 112-113; Bertram Wallace Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1951). For a thoughtful discussion of American Reform's debates and decisions about adherence to Biblical law, with a specific focus on dietary issues, see: Lance J. Sussman, "The Myth of the Trefa Banquet: American Culinary Culture and the Radicalization of Food Policy in American Reform Judaism," *American Jewish Archives Journal*.

<sup>27</sup> Emil G. Hirsch, "Zangwill or Einhorn?" *The Reform Advocate*, 5 November 1898

<sup>28</sup> Emil G. Hirsch, "Zangwill or Einhorn?" *The Reform Advocate*, 5 November 1898

<sup>29</sup> Emil G. Hirsch, "Zangwill or Einhorn?" *The Reform Advocate*, 5 November 1898

<sup>30</sup> *The New York World*, 11 October, 1908.

<sup>31</sup> Israel Zangwill, *The Melting Pot*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), 184-185.

<sup>32</sup> One scholar who has actually examined the multiplicity of melting pot paradigms in the play is Neil Larry Shumsky. See: Neil Larry Shumsky, "Zangwill's *The Melting Pot*: Ethnic Tensions on Stage," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 27, no. 1, (Mar., 1975), 29-41

<sup>33</sup> Israel Zangwill, *The Melting Pot*, 72.

<sup>34</sup> Israel Zangwill, "Afterword" in, *The Melting Pot*, FIND PAGE NUMBER

<sup>35</sup> Israel Zangwill, *The Melting Pot*, 180-181.

<sup>36</sup> Bernard Richards, quoted in, *Current Literature*, Vol. Xiv, no.6, (Dec., 1908). Roosevelt's reaction to "The Melting Pot" is well documented in a host of secondary and primary literature. See, Edna Nahshon, *From the Ghetto to The Melting Pot*, 241. Constance Skinner, "Melting Pot At Grand, Play To Remember," *The Chicago Evening American*, 21 December 1908; *Unity*, 29 October 1908.

For other sources hailing the Americanism of the play see, For articles which applauded the exceptionalist character of "The Melting Pot," see: "Mr. Zangwill's Play," *The Washington Herald*, 11 October 1908; *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 20 October 1908; As well, a frequently published advertisement for the play printed in papers throughout the country cited a number of prominent Americans, including President Roosevelt, Labor Secretary Oscar Straus, the Mayor of Toledo Ohio Brandon Whitlock, and even renowned Progressive activist Jane Addams, each of whom applauded "The Melting Pot" for—among other things—its "vision," its "heroism," its "patriotism," and even its "virility." The advertisement in question, and others very similar to it, can be found in numerous newspapers of the era. One example can be found in *The New York Times*, 29 August, 1909. It was published in advance of the play's New York Premiere and intended to generate interest among New York's theatre-goers. For more on this marketing campaign see, Nahshon, *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot*, 211-263.

<sup>37</sup> Tobias Schanfarber, "Mr. Zangwill's Play," *The American Israelite*, 29 October 1908.

<sup>38</sup> Charles Collins, *The Inter-Ocean*, 21 October, 1908; also see, *The Toledo News Bee*, in CZA, A120/165; *Unity*, 29

<sup>39</sup> Leon Zolotkoff, (author and translator from Yiddish to English), "Zangwill's Great Success," *The Daily Jewish Courier (Der Sontag Courier)*, 13 November 1908; Isaac Landman, *The Jewish Exponent*, 20 November 1908, in CZA, A120/165; Emil G. Hirsch, "Intermarriage," *The Reform Advocate*, 21 November 1908; Stephen S. Wise, "Zangwill and His Critics," *The American Israelite*, 28 October 1909.

<sup>40</sup> "An Excerpt From *The Washington Post*," quoted in, *The Jewish World*, 23 October 1908.

<sup>41</sup> Israel Zangwill to Mayer Sulzberger, 18 December 1908, in CZA, A120/165.

<sup>42</sup> Sarna, *American Judaism*, 8-9, 45; also see: William Pencack, *Jews and Gentiles in Early America, 1654-1800*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005) *passim*. Perhaps most important, contemporary demographic study of intermarriage in the Progressive era is Julius Drachler's 1921 study, *Intermarriage in New York City*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1921).

<sup>43</sup> Sarna, *American Judaism*, 132. For more on Helen Wise's marriage see: "Jew and Gentile," *The Cincinnati Gazette*, quoted in *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 2 June 1878; "Editorial Notes," *The Independent*, 6 June 1878. "Sex and the Sects," *The National Police Gazette*, 15 June 1878.

<sup>44</sup> On the Pastor-Stokes wedding see: "East Side Poetess is Now Mrs. Stokes," *The New York Times*, 19 July, 1905; "Stokes Marries Miss Pastor," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 19 July 1905; "The Climax Apostasy," *The Hebrew Standard* quoted in *The New York Times*, 20 July 1905. On the Stern wedding see: "Social Gossip," *The Washington Post*, 4 December 1907; "Miss Irma Stern to Wed Tonight," *The New York Times*, 10 December 1907; "Miss Stern a Baroness," *The Washington Post*, 11 December 1907; "Miss Stern Weds Baron Graffenreid," *The New York Times*, 11 December 1907; "Social Gossip," *The Washington Post*, 12 December 1907; "Rabbi Condemns Inter-marriage," Louis Marshall Papers, MS 359, AJA; "Quits the Temple Board," *The Washington Post*, 30 January 1908. *Zion's Herald*, 11 March 1908.

<sup>45</sup> See: *CCAR Yearbook*, Vol., 18 (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1908); *CCAR Yearbook*, Vol., 19 (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1909), 169-184, 309, 312. For press coverage of the event see, "The Question of Inter-marriage," *The American Hebrew*, 12 November 1909; "Rabbis on Jewish Problems," *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 12 November 1909; "Rabbis Cut Short Marriage Debate," *The New York Times*, 12 November 1909; "Not a Menace to Race: Rabbis Objection to Mixed Marriages Religious One," *The Washington Post*, 13 November 1909; "Rabbis Conference Split on Marriage," *The New York Times*, 18 November 1909; "Jewish Inter-marriage," *The Independent*, 18 November 1909; "The Central Conference of American Rabbis," *The American Hebrew*, 19 November 1909; "Universal Tolerance," *The Los Angeles Times*, 21 November 1909; "Interreligious Courtesy," *The Independent*, 25 November 1909.

<sup>46</sup> "Mixed Marriages," *The American Hebrew*, 27 November 1908; Inter-marriage Denounced," *The Los Angeles Times*, 17 November 1908.

<sup>47</sup> *CCAR Yearbook*, Vol., 19, 312; "Not a Menace to Race: Rabbis Objection to Mixed Marriages Religious One," *The Washington Post*, 13 November 1909

<sup>48</sup> Inter-marriage Denounced," *The Los Angeles Times*, 17 November 1908.

<sup>49</sup> Eric Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, And American Identity*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 101-102.

<sup>50</sup> "The Melting Pot," *The Jewish Exponent*, 23 October 1908; Schanfarber quoted in Eric Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness*, 100.

<sup>51</sup> "Rabbi Sees Peril in Inter-marriage," *The New York Times*, 10 May 1909; Judah Magnes, "The Melting Pot: A Sermon Delivered at Temple Emmanu-El," *The American Hebrew*, 9 October 1909.

<sup>52</sup> "Gotthard Deutsch, "The Question of Inter-marriage in Zangwill's Play," 25 March 1909; Also see, "Mr. Zangwill's New Dramatic Gospel," *Current Literature*, Vol. XIV, no. vi, (Dec, 1908); "Chronicle and Comment," *The Bookman*, 30 December 1909; "Mixed Marriages Scored by Rabbi," *The San Francisco Call*, 9 October 1910.

<sup>53</sup> Horace Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting Pot," *The Nation*, Vol. 100, no. 2590, 18 February, 1915; Israel Friedlaender, *Past and Present: A Collection of Jewish Essays*; Louis D. Brandeis, "A Call to the Educated Jew," *The Menorah Journal*, vol. 1, no. 1, (Jan., 1915);

For biographical information on Kallen, Brandeis, and Friedlaender see: Milton R. Konvitz ed. *The Legacy of Horace M. Kallen*; Lewis J. Paper, *Brandeis: An Intimate Biography of one of America's Truly Great Supreme Court Justices*, (Secaucus: Citadel Press, 1983); Balia Round Shargel, *Practical Dreamer: Israel Friedlaender and the Shaping of American Judaism*.

For more on American Jewish racist thinking see: Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). Also see

Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), specifically for Menand's study of Kallen.

<sup>54</sup> For more on Coffee's education see: *Catalogue of Officers and Graduates of Columbia University*, Edition XVI, (New York: Columbia University, 1916), 183; "Rabbi Rudolph Coffee," *The New York Times*, 12 May 1955. Extracts from Coffee's lecture to Wilshire Boulevard Temple can be found at, "The Melting Pot's Product Poor," *The Los Angeles Times*, 20 July 1914.

<sup>55</sup> On Coffee's work for the African-American community see, *The Crisis*, Vol.11 no. 1 (Nov. 1915). For Coffee's position with the Human Betterment Foundation see: "The Human Betterment Foundation, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Eugenics Archive, <http://www.dnalc.org/view/11673--Human-Sterilization-Human-Betterment-foundation-5-.html> (accessed on 25 March 2011). "Marshall Assails Zangwill's Theory," *The New York Times*, 8 April 1918.

## Chapter Four

<sup>1</sup> Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets*, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Program for, "An Evening With Israel Zangwill," Israel Zangwill Nearprint Biography, AJA; *Supra*, Chapter 1, pp. 39-45; Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 216-217, note 24, p.293.

<sup>3</sup> Rabbi David Phillipson, "The Zangwillian Upheaval," a sermon delivered on 20 November 1923, Box 6, Folder 12, MS 33, Maximilian H. Heller Papers, AJA.

<sup>4</sup> For Wise's quote on Zangwill see note 14. For more on the reformation of the American Jewish Congress see: James Loeffler "Nationalism Without a Nation? On the Invisibility of American Jewish Politics," presented at UCLA Center For Jewish Studies, *Rethinking the History of Jewish Nationalism*, 31 January 2011, copy in possession of author; Morris Frommer, *The American Jewish Congress: A History, 1914-1950* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Ohio State University, 1978).

<sup>5</sup> "Jews to Mobilize Today to Plan Delegate Vote," *The Chicago Tribune*, 9 September 1923; "We Are Sorry," *The Jewish Criterion*, 28 September 1923; "At Random," *The Reform Advocate*, 6 October 1923; Herman Jacobsohn, "Israel Zangwill--Novelist and Dramatist" *Los Angeles Times*, 9 Sept. 1923; "Letter from Israel Zangwill Reception Committee to Annie Nathan Meyer," 7 September 1923, Box 1 Folder 6, MS 7, Annie Nathan Meyer Papers, AJA.

<sup>6</sup> "American Jewish Congress," *The American Israelite*, 23 October 1923; "Zangwill Address at the Judeans," *The American Hebrew*, 2 November 1923.

<sup>7</sup> "Zangwill Reports Zionism to be Dead," *Current Opinion* 1 December 1923. Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 209-210.

<sup>8</sup> Israel Zangwill quoted in, "Death Stills the Heart of Israel Zangwill," *The American Hebrew*, 6 August 1926.

<sup>9</sup> "Calls on Zangwill to Defend Judaism," *The New York Times*, 13 October 1923

<sup>10</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925, Corrected With a New Preface*, (New York: Antheneum, 1985),

<sup>11</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 272-277.

<sup>12</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 282-283.



<sup>13</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 286-299; Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 171.

<sup>14</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 300-311, Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 182-189.

<sup>15</sup> "Zangwill Arrives With Comprehensive Plan for Jewry," *The Jewish Criterion*, 12 October 1923; "At Random," *The Reform Advocate*, 6 October 1923. Both articles are reprints of Jewish Telegraphic Agency posts and were reprinted in papers across the country. For more on the Jewish Telegraphic Agency see below, note 9.

<sup>16</sup> "At Random," *The Reform Advocate*, 6 October 1923. "Zangwill Arrives With Comprehensive Plan for Jewry," *The Jewish Criterion*, 12 October 1923. The JTA was founded in 1917 by journalist Jacob Landau. Landau recognized that the global dimensions of the Diapora, and increasing immigration and post WWI refugee displacement distanced Jews from their places of birth and from news of other Jews. He named the agency the Jewish Correspondence Bureau, but by 1923, Landau's organization had come to be known as the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Jewish Telegraphic Agency History, <http://www.jta.org/about/history>, accessed on 22 May 2011.

<sup>17</sup> Stephen S. Wise in "Watchman What of the Night?" (New York: The American Jewish Congress, 1923), 3.

<sup>18</sup> The passage in question comes from Isaiah, 20:12,

A call comes from Seir:  
"Watchman, what of the night?  
Watchman, what of the night?"  
The watchman replied,  
"Morning came and so did night.  
If you would inquire, inquire.  
Come back again."

As we shall see, Zangwill found the uncertainty of this passage an important component of his speech, noting that the contingent nature of history insured that whatever assessment he could offer of the Jewish community it would be temporary and that all gains in history must be continually renewed. For the citation to Isaiah see, Adele Berlin, Marc Zvi Brettler, and Michael Fishbane eds., *The Jewish Study Bible, Featuring the Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 824.

<sup>19</sup> Israel Zangwill, *Watchman, What of the Night?*, (New York: The American Jewish Congress, 1923), 4.

<sup>20</sup> Israel Zangwill, *Watchman, What of the Night?*, 37-39.

<sup>21</sup> Israel Zangwill, *Watchman, What of the Night?*, 6. Zangwill's comments were specifically directed at claims of global Jewish conspiracy found in the virulently anti-Semitic tract, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The *Protocols* had recently been published and distributed across the United States by automobile magnate Henry Ford.

<sup>22</sup> For more on the Leo Frank Case see: Leonard Dinnerstein, *The Leo Frank Case*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966); Jeffrey Paul Melnick, *Black and Jewish Relations on Trial: Leo Frank and Jim Conley in the New South*, (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000); Matthew Bernstein, *Screening a Lynching: The Leo Frank Case on Film and Television*, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2009).

<sup>23</sup> Israel Zangwill, *Watchman, What of the Night?*, 13-14. America's most severe immigration restrictions would be enacted some seven months later with the passage of the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act. The act, which included the National Origins Act and the Asian Exclusion Act, limited

European immigration based on the national origins of the immigrant. The act restricted the immigration of a specific nationality to 2% of that nationality's extant population in the United States. Such restrictions favored immigrants from Northern and Western Europe, who had been immigrating to the United States for many years and had established significant populations in the country. For more on American nativism and immigration restriction see, Higham, *Strangers in the Land*; Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door*.

<sup>24</sup> Zangwill, *Watchman What of the Night*, 10-11, 16-17.

<sup>25</sup> Israel Zangwill, *Watchman, What of the Night?*, 18-19.

<sup>26</sup> Israel Zangwill, *Watchman, What of the Night?*, 25.

<sup>27</sup> Israel Zangwill, *Watchman, What of the Night?*, 41-43. In his speech Zangwill makes reference to the "Thind" case, *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind*, in which the United States' Supreme Court ruled that Thind, a Punjabi Sikh, could not become a naturalized US citizen. Though the race science of the time had claimed that the so-called Aryan race had its roots in Northern India, the Court found that external "whiteness," and not "Aryan blood" determined Thind's status. The Court also cited a 1917 Congressional act barring the admission of Asian peoples to the United States. For more on the Thind case and on the exclusion of Asian immigrants see, *US v. Bhagat Singh Thind*, (261 U.S. 204, 1923); Ronald Takaki, *Strangers From a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*, (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1998), 294-314; Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 38, 42, 45, 49.

<sup>28</sup> Mordecai Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, 109-110.

<sup>29</sup> Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism*, 307-308, Abraham Joshua Heschel, "The Reasons for My Involvement in the Peace Movement," *Journal of Social Philosophy*, Vol.4 (January, 1973). For more on the postwar connection between social activism and Judaism see: Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 265-270, 280-282.

<sup>30</sup> "Zangwill Will Stay to Fight For His Ideals," *The New York Times*, 29 October 1923.

<sup>31</sup> Eliezer Schweid, "Prophetic Mysticism," 142.

<sup>32</sup> As the reader may recall, the relationship between fame and reticence is an essential component of Leo Braudy's work, *The Frenzy of Renown*. See, *Supra*, Chap. 1, p.45. For more on the Commodore Hotel Address see, Israel Zangwill, "Mr. Zangwill's address on the occasion of the Luncheon given to the Delegates by Mr. Nathan Straus," in *Watchman, What of the Night?*, 44-52. For Zangwill's letter for the Jewish education fundraiser see, "\$200,000 Pledged For Jewish Fund," *The New York Times*, 18 October 1923.

<sup>33</sup> Israel Zangwill, "Mr. Zangwill's address," *Watchman, What of the Night?*, 51-52. For more on Nathan Straus see, Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 459-460.

<sup>34</sup> Israel Zangwill, "Mr. Zangwill's address," *Watchman, What of the Night?*, 46-47

<sup>35</sup> "Zangwill Stands by His Utterances: Answers His Critics," *The Jewish Criterion*, 2 November 1923. This was a JTA reprint of Zangwill's speech to the Judeans and was reprinted in several Jewish newspapers across the country.

<sup>36</sup> Israel Zangwill, "Mr. Zangwill's address," *Watchman, What of the Night?*, 52.

<sup>37</sup> Israel Zangwill in E-Haldeman-Julius, ed., *Is the Ku Klux Klan Constructive or Destructive?*, (Girard, KS: Haldeman-Julius Company, 1924), 24. "Noted Author Rakes America," *The Los Angeles Times*, 8 November 1923; "American Worm Turns for Zangwill," *The New York Times*, 8 November

1923. Zangwill's characterization of the Klan as exaggerated Boy Scouts led to an exchange with James West, the Chief of the Boy Scouts of the United States. See: James West Letter to Israel Zangwill 13 November 1923, and Israel Zangwill Letter to James West, 14 November 1923 in CZA, A120/277.

<sup>38</sup> Zangwill in, *Is the Ku Klux Klan Constructive or Destructive?*, 30.

<sup>39</sup> "Zangwill Praises the Public Here," *The New York Times*, 9 November 1923.

<sup>40</sup> Zangwill in, *Is the Ku Klux Klan Constructive or Destructive?*, 27-37.

<sup>41</sup> "Zangwill Assails Jews of New York," *The New York Times*, 19 November 1923.

<sup>42</sup> "Life Threatened Zangwill Reveals in an Address Here," *The Washington Post*, 26 December 1923.

<sup>43</sup> Israel Zangwill, *Watchman, What of the Night?*, 42.

<sup>44</sup> Mel Scult ed., Mordecai Kaplan, *Communings of the Spirit: The Journals of Mordecai M. Kaplan, Volume I, 1913-1934*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001), 99. Gerson D. Cohen, "Jewish Identity and Jewish Collective Will in America," *Jewish History And Jewish Destiny*, 66-67.

<sup>45</sup> Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Cult of Synthesis in American Jewish Culture," *Jewish Social Studies*, New Series, Vol. 5, No. 1/2, American Jewish History and Culture in the Twentieth Century (Autumn, 1998 - Winter, 1999), 52-79. Naomi Cohen has also observed the way in which Reform Jews linked their mission with Americanism with almost "mathematical precision. She quite literally spells out a logical syllogism which reasons that since both Reform Judaism and American ideals are products of Enlightenment thought, they must be equal. This particular syllogism, Cohen argues, was used to depict Zionism, which was at odds with Reform theology, as decidedly un-American. See Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism*, 44.

<sup>46</sup> For more on Kallen and ethnic pluralism see: Horace Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting Pot," *The Nation*, Vol. 100, no. 2590, 18 February, 1915; David Hollinger, "Pluralism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Diversification of Diversity," *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*, (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 79-104; Louis Menand, "Pluralisms," *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), 377-408.

<sup>47</sup> "Israel Zangwill Runs Amok," *The American Israelite*, 1 November 1923.

<sup>48</sup> *The Jewish Criterion*, 19 October 1923; Walter Hurt, "Why Zangwill Appeals," *The Jewish Criterion*, 16 November 1923. In 1922 Hurt published an apologetic on behalf of the Jews entitled, *The Truth About Jews, As Told by a Gentile*, (Chicago: Horton and Company, 1922). Rabbi David Phillipson, "Israel Zangwill's Funeral Oration Over Zionism," *The American Israelite*, 25 October 1923; Joseph Leftwich, "The Voice," *The American Israelite*, 25 October 1923; Rabbi Samuel Schulman, "Israel Zangwill's Message and American Judaism," Samuel Schulman Papers, MS Collection No. 90, Box 4, Folder 36; George Alexander Kohut, "Zangwill the Clarion," *The American Hebrew* 16 November 1923.

<sup>49</sup> American Jewish Congress, *The American Israelite*, 25 October 1923; "Mischief Making," *Outlook*, 4 Oct 1923.

<sup>50</sup> "Editorial," *The Reform Advocate*, 3 November 1923.

<sup>51</sup> "Zangwill Berates Jewish Congress," *The New York Times*, 4 November 1923.

<sup>52</sup> "Untermeyer's Attack and Zangwill's Reply," *The American Hebrew*, 2 November 1923; "Local Jews Upbraid Zangwill for Stand on Zionist Hopes," *The Washington Post*, 29 October 1923.

<sup>53</sup> "American Jewish Congress," *The American Israelite*, 23 October 1923.

<sup>54</sup> "Judge Mack Gives Views on Zionism," *The New York Times*, 29 October 1923.

<sup>55</sup> For more on Zangwill's distinction between Itoists and mainstream Zionists see, "Manifesto by Israel Zangwill," *The Reform Advocate*, 9 September, 1905; Israel Zangwill, *Land of Refuge*, ITO Pamphlets no.2, (London, 1907); Israel Zangwill, "The Territorial Solution to the Jewish Problem, in *The Voice of Jerusalem*, 263-285. Israel Zangwill, *Land of Refuge*, ITO Pamphlets no.2, (London, 1907); Interview With Mr. Zangwill," *The Jewish Exponent*, 2 October 1908.

<sup>56</sup> Naomi Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism*, 40, 75; Samuel Halperin, *The Political World of American Zionism*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1961), 327. For examples of Stephen S. Wise and others labeling Zangwill a "maximum Zionist see, "Untermeyer's Attack and Zangwill's Reply," *The American Hebrew*, 2 November 1923; Judge Mack Gives Views on Zionism," *The New York Times*, 29 October 1923.

<sup>57</sup> Louis Marshall to Bertha Rosenberg, 16 October 1923, Box 1594 Folder October 1923, MS 359, Louis Marshall Papers, AJA.

<sup>58</sup> Rabbi David Phillipson, "The Zangwillian Upheaval," a sermon delivered on 20 November 1923, Box 6, Folder 12, MS 33, Maximilian H. Heller Papers, AJA.

<sup>59</sup> Rabbi Samuel Schulman, "Israel Zangwill's Message and American Judaism," a sermon delivered on 4 November, 1923, Box 4, Folder 36, MS 90, Samuel Schulman Papers, AJA.

<sup>60</sup> Rabbi Samuel Schulman, "Israel Zangwill's Message and American Judaism." For press accounts of the address see, "Two Rabbis Defend Zangwill's Speech," *The New York Times*, 5 November 1923; "A Problem Larger than Palestine," *The American Hebrew*, 9 November 1923.

<sup>61</sup> Rabbi Samuel Schulman, "Israel Zangwill's Message and American Judaism."

<sup>62</sup> Rabbi Samuel Schulman, "Israel Zangwill's Message and American Judaism."

<sup>63</sup> "Crush Disloyalty," *The New York Times*, 15 June 1923.

<sup>64</sup> For more on denunciation of hyphenate identity see, "No Room for the Hyphen," *The New York Times*, 14 June 1916; "The Hyphen Vote, the Silent Vote, And the American Vote," *The New York Times*, 2 October 1916; "In Mr. Roosevelt's Mind," *The New York Times*, 8 October 1916; Berl Lang, "Hyphenated Jews and the Anxiety of Identity," *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol.12, no.1 (Fall, 2005), 2. For more on the politics surrounding the election of 1916 and its results see, William E. Leuchtenburg, *The Perils Prosperity, 1914-32*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993); "Both Candidates Got the Hyphen Vote," *The New York Times*, 9 November 1916; "Why President Wilson Was Elected," *The Outlook*, 22 November 1916. For an explanation of the absence of a "Jewish vote" in early twentieth-century American politics see: Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 157-159.

<sup>65</sup> "Jewish Time Urges Race to Vote for Governor Hughes," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 October 1916; Rabbi Deplores Brandeis Issue, *The New York Times*, 17 October 1920.

<sup>66</sup> "An Insult to Jews," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 24 October 1916; "Jewish Time Urges Race to Vote for Governor Hughes," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 October 1916; Rabbi Deplores Brandeis Issue, *The New York Times*, 17 October 1920.

<sup>67</sup> Rabbi Samuel Schulman, "Israel Zangwill's Message and American Judaism."

<sup>68</sup> Rabbi Samuel Schulman to Israel Zangwill, 5 November 1923, Box 4, Folder 36, MS 90, Samuel Schulman Papers, AJA.

<sup>69</sup> "John Spargo Attacks Zangwill's Views," *The Jewish Criterion*, 26 October 1923; *Supra*, note 40; Roscoe Simmons, "The Week," *The Chicago Defender*, 17 November 1923.

<sup>70</sup> Marshall's comments to the JTA were distributed to a number of Jewish and non-Jewish newspapers. For the original response to the JTA's request for comments on Zangwill's address see: "Louis Marshall to Jacob Landau," 23 October 1923, Box 1594, Folder October 1923, MS 359, Louis Marshall Papers, AJA; Rabbi Samuel Schulman, "Israel Zangwill's Message and American Judaism;" "A Devious Way out of Darkness," *The American Hebrew*, 19 October 1923; Rabbi David Phillipson, "The Zangwillian Upheaval."

<sup>71</sup> "Israel Zangwill to Rabbi Samuel Schulman," 15 November 1923, Box 4, Folder 36, MS 90, Samuel Schulman Papers, AJA.

<sup>72</sup> Rabbi Samuel Schulman, "Israel Zangwill's Message and American Judaism, *The American Hebrew*, 19 October 1923.

<sup>73</sup> "Louis Marshall to Jacob Landau," 23 October 1923, Box 1594, Folder October 1923, MS 359, Louis Marshall Papers, AJA.

<sup>74</sup> Rabbi David Phillipson, "The Zangwillian Upheaval;" Rabbi Gerson B. Levi, "Editorial," *The Reform Advocate*, 3 November 1923.

<sup>75</sup> "Topic of the Times," *The New York Times*, 9 November 1923.

<sup>76</sup> For more on Secretary Colby's support of Zangwill see, "Colby Backs Zangwill," *The New York Times*, 22 November 1923. As the reader may recall, in 1923 the *Jewish Tribune* published a list of the most prominent Jews in the world, a list which was republished in the pages of *Time Magazine*. Zangwill was listed as the third most important Jew on that list, behind Max Nordau and Albert Einstein. See *Supra*, Chapter 1, note 7. For more on Zangwill as a prophet of American exceptionalism see, *The Chicago Daily Tribune* 20 October 1908.

<sup>77</sup> "American Worm Turns on Zangwill," *The New York Times*, 8 November 1923.

<sup>78</sup> "Zangwill Attacks Menken Retorts," *The New York Times*, 14 November 1923.

<sup>79</sup> Richard Gottheil, "Mr. Zangwill's Views," *The New York Times*, 17 November 1923.

<sup>80</sup> "Zangwill Makes His 'Final Reply,'" *The New York Times*, 25 November 1923.

<sup>81</sup> "Zangwill Makes His 'Final Reply,'" *The New York Times*, 25 November 1923.

<sup>82</sup> "How it Looks From Mars," *The Los Angeles Times*, 28 November 1923; "Life Threatened Zangwill Reveals in Address Here," *The Washington Post*, 26 December 1923

<sup>83</sup> "Zangwill's Lecture," *The Jewish Criterion*, 25 January 1924.

<sup>84</sup> Meri-Jane Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena*, 211; "We are Sorry," *The Jewish Criterion*, 28 September 1923.

<sup>85</sup> "Zangwill Fires Parting Broadside," *The New York Times*, 6 February 1924.

<sup>86</sup> "Face the Facts,' Zangwill's Parting Message to America's Jews," *The Jewish Criterion*, 8 February 1924

## Chapter Five

<sup>1</sup> "Israel Zangwill, Author, Dies at 62," *The New York Times*, 2 August 1926; "I. Zangwill, Noted Jewish Author, Dies," *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, "Post-Scripts," *The Washington Post*, 2 August 1926; Coverage in the major American Jewish dailies was extensive, including multiple stories in the initial editions which reported Zangwill's death. See: *The American Hebrew*, 6 August 1926; *The American Israelite*, 12 August 1926; *The Reform Advocate*, 7 August 1926.

<sup>2</sup> Maurice Wohlgernter, *Israel Zangwill: A Study*, x.

<sup>3</sup> Wise's Sermon can be found in a number of newspapers across the United States, including: "Hundreds Mourn at Zangwill's Bier," *The New York Times*, 6 August 1926; "An Appreciation of Zangwill," *The American Hebrew*, 6 August 1926; "Israel Zangwill," *The Reform Advocate*, 4 September 1926; "Israel Zangwill—Novelist of the Ghetto," *The American Israelite*, 12 August 1926; "Israel Zangwill," *The Jewish Criterion*, 10 September 1926.

<sup>4</sup> "Tributes to Zangwill—Lamented Social Prophet," *The American Hebrew*, 6 August 1926.

<sup>5</sup> William J. Perlman, quoted in Clarence Freed, "Zangwill As a Tragic Figure," *The American Hebrew*, 23 August 1926. There is no historical record of Perlman having ever produced his play about Zangwill. See, [http://broadwayworld.com/people/?page=William\\_J.\\_Perlman](http://broadwayworld.com/people/?page=William_J._Perlman) , accessed 14 November 2011.

<sup>6</sup> For more on Marshall's response to Zangwill's 1923 speech, see, *Supra*, Chapter 4, note 67. Letter from Sol Stroock to Louis Marshall," 24 September 1926, The Louis Marshall Papers, Manuscript Collection No. 359; Louis Marshall, "Zangwill—An Exalted Son of Israel," printed in *The Jewish Tribune*, 1 October 1926. It is worth noting that the historical legacy of Simon Bar Kochba is problematic. The failure of the Bar Kochba Revolt resulted in severe retribution on the Jews of Roman occupied Judea, including the horrific torture and execution of ten Rabbinic sages, including Rabbi Akiba, the man who first characterized Bar Kochba as the Messiah. The failure of the revolt, as well as the ways in which its failure resulted in such suffering for Jews, led to a rather negative assessment of Bar Kochba in the Jerusalem Talmud. In that document he is called, Bar Koziba (Son of a Lie) as opposed to Bar Kochba (Son of a Star). So while we may reasonably assume that Marshall, a Reform Jew with likely no familiarity of Talmud, meant his comparison between Zangwill and Bar Kochba as a compliment, we cannot be entirely sure. For more on the image of Bar Kochba in Jewish historical literature see, Richard G. Marks, *The Image of Bar Kochba in Traditional Jewish Literature: False Messiah and National Hero*, (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).

<sup>7</sup> "All Join to Honor Zangwill Here," *The New York Times*, 27 September 1926. Straus is listed as Chairman on the Israel Zangwill Memorial Committee Letterhead. See, Letter from Sol Stroock to Louis Marshall," 24 September 1926, The Louis Marshall Papers, Manuscript Collection No. 359.

<sup>8</sup> Louis Marshall, "Zangwill—An Exalted Son of Israel," printed in *The Jewish Tribune*, 1 October 1926

<sup>9</sup> Isaac Landman, "Zangwill, Mirror of the Jewish Soul," *The American Hebrew*, 6 August 1926; Clarence I Freed, "Will Zangwill's Plays Live?" *The American Hebrew*, 26 August 1926; Fredcick Donaghey, "This Thing and That Thing of Theater," *The Chicago Tribune*, 10 October 1926.

<sup>10</sup> "All Join to Honor Zangwill Here," *The New York Times*, 27 September 1926.

<sup>11</sup> Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman, "Israel Zangwill: A Sermon Delivered on Friday Evening, November 5, 1926," Box 11, folder 5, MS 6, Ferdinand M. Isserman Papers, AJA.

<sup>12</sup> Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman, "Israel Zangwill," AJA.

<sup>13</sup> Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman, "Israel Zangwill," AJA.

<sup>14</sup> "Tributes to Zangwill—Lamented Social Prophet," *The American Hebrew*, 6 August 1926; Gerson Levi, "Editorial," *The Reform Advocate*, 7 August 1926.

<sup>15</sup> "Hundreds Mourn at Zangwill's Bier," *The New York Times*, 6 August 1926; "An Appreciation of Zangwill," *The American Hebrew*, 6 August 1926; "Israel Zangwill," *The Reform Advocate*, 4 September 1926; "Israel Zangwill—Novelist of the Ghetto," *The American Israelite*, 12 August 1926; "Israel Zangwill," *The Jewish Criterion*, 10 September 1926.

<sup>16</sup> Mabel Lyons, "Israel Zangwill in Retrospect," *The St. Louis Jewish Tribune*, 20 September 1926. *The Jewish Spectator* was the creation of Trude Weiss Rosmarin, a significant figure in twentieth-century, American Jewish intellectual life. In 1933, Rosmarin and her husband, Aaron, established the School of Jewish Women on Manhattan's Upper West side. *The Jewish Spectator* originated as a newsletter for the school and soon grew to a monthly magazine. As Jennifer Breger has observed, "While the *Spectator* never had a mass circulation, it was always very influential. The magazine ceased publication in 1974. For more on Trude Weiss Rosmarin and *The Jewish Spectator*, see: Jennifer Breger, "Trude Weiss Rosmarin, 1908-1989," The Jewish Women's Archive, <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/weiss-rosmarin-trude> , accessed on 17 November 2011.

<sup>17</sup> Mordecai Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, 63, 191, 350. Kaplan began to form his ideas on American Judaism in the 1910s with a series of articles in *The Menorah Journal*. Zangwill was a significant contributor to the journal during these years, as well. Indeed, as the reader may recall, a number of readers of, and contributors to, the journal solicited Zangwill's appearance at the 1917 meeting of the Menorah Society. Kaplan was among the signatories to that request. For more on Kaplan's *Menorah* articles in the 1910s See: Mordecai Kaplan, "What Judaism is Not," *The Menorah Journal*, Vol.1, no.4 (October 1915); Kaplan, "What Is Judaism," *The Menorah Journal*, Vol. 1 no. 5, (December 1915); Kaplan, "Where Does Jewry Really Stand Today?" *Menorah Journal*, Vol. 4 (Feb, 1918); Kaplan, "A Program for the Reconstruction of Judaism," *The Menorah Journal*, Vol. 6 no.4 (August 1920).

<sup>18</sup> "Letter from Israel Zangwill Reception Committee to Annie Nathan Meyer," 7 September 1923, Box 1 Folder 6, MS 7, Annie Nathan Meyer Papers, AJA; Letter from Sol Strock to Louis Marshall," 24 September 1926, MS 359, Louis Marshall Papers, AJA.

<sup>19</sup> Edith Ayrton Zangwill, "Foreword," in Simon, ed., *Speeches Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, ix-xii; During a 1933 American speaking tour, Edith issued a press release seeking any available correspondence from her late husband. See: "Zangwill's Letters," *The New York Times*, 14 February 1933; "Request for Zangwill Letters," *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 17 February 1933.

<sup>20</sup> Edith Ayrton Zangwill, in Simon, ed. *Speeches Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, x-xi

<sup>21</sup> Edith Ayrton Zangwill, in Simon, ed. *Speeches Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill*, x-xi.

<sup>22</sup> Rabbi Ira Eisenstein, "Israel Zangwill," *Jewish Book Annual*, Vol. 10, (New York: Jewish Book Council of the National Jewish Welfare Board, 1952), 37-42.

<sup>23</sup> See, Charles E. Shulman Papers, MS 124, AJA; Charles E. Shulman, *What It Means To Be A Jew*, (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1960).

<sup>24</sup> Details on Rabbi Charles E. Shulman's biography and the development of North Shore Congregation Israel can be found at, <http://americanjewisharchives.org/aja/FindingAids/Shulman.htm>, accessed on 12 December 2011; [http://www.nsci.org/about\\_us/about\\_us.php?page=90](http://www.nsci.org/about_us/about_us.php?page=90), accessed on 12 December 2011.

<sup>25</sup> Rabbi Charles E. Shulman, "Israel Zangwill—In Memoriam," a sermon delivered at North Shore Congregation Israel, 15 November, 1936, Box 10, Folder 11, MS 124, Charles E. Shulman Papers, AJA.

<sup>26</sup> Rabbi Charles E. Shulman, "Israel Zangwill—In Memoriam," 15 November, 1936, Box 10, Folder 11, MS 124, Charles E. Shulman Papers, AJA; Israel Zangwill, "Moses and Jesus" in *Dreamers of the Ghetto*, in *Israel Zangwill, Works*, Vol. 4, (London, Globe Publishing Co., 1925).

<sup>27</sup> Rabbi Charles E. Shulman, "The Position of Judaism," n.d., Box 10, Folder 11, MS 124, Charles E. Shulman Papers, AJA.

<sup>28</sup> Rabbi Charles E. Shulman, *The Problems of the Atomic Age: Five Sermons*, (Glencoe: Published by Author, 1946).

<sup>29</sup> Rabbi Charles E. Shulman, *The Problems of the Atomic Age: Five Sermons*, 9, 21.

<sup>30</sup> Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1996), 87. In Shulman's Sermon, "Revival Without Religion," the Rabbi cites a number of American Jewish thinkers who express deep concerns over the absence of true spirituality in the so called religious revival of the 1950s, including Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, and Israel Brodie, the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, as well as sociologists Will Herberg, Nathan Glazer, and Herbert Gans. See, Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology.*, (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1955); Herbert Gans, "American Jewry—Past Present and Future, parts 1 and 2, *Commentary* no. 21 (1956). For more on the contemporary critique of postwar religion see, Marshall Sklare, Marc Vosk, and Mark Vboroski, "Forms and Expressions of Jewish Identification," *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 17, no. 3 (July, 1955); "The Church of Suburbia," Chapter 27 in William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956).

<sup>31</sup> Rabbi Charles E. Shulman, "Revival Without Religion," 15 September 1956, Box 8, Folder 6, MS 124, Charles E. Shulman Papers, AJA. Observations on the history and development of Riverdale Temple come from an oral history interview with Lew Holzman. Holzman was a member of the Temple as a child, one of the first students to be Bar Mitzvahed in the Temple's new structure. Oral History Interview with Lew Holzman, 9 December 2011, recording in possession of author.

<sup>32</sup> Rabbi Charles E. Shulman, *What It Means To Be A Jew*, 78-79.

<sup>33</sup> Rabbi Charles E. Shulman, "Israel Zangwill," (1964), Box 10, Folder 11, MS 124, Charles E. Shulman Papers, AJA. For more on the careers of mid century American Jewish authors and their participation in American Jewish discourse see, Ezra Cappell, *American Talmud: The Cultural Work of Jewish American Fiction*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), Kindle Edition, loc 193; Ken Koltun-Fromm, "The Material Narrative," *Material Culture and Jewish Thought in America*, chap. 5.

<sup>34</sup> Rabbi Charles E. Shulman, "Israel Zangwill," (1964), Box 10, Folder 11, MS 124, Charles E. Shulman Papers, AJA.

<sup>35</sup> Andrew Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul*, 196.

<sup>36</sup> Andrew Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul*, 196-209; Ken Koltun-Fromm, *Material Culture and Jewish Thought in America*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 53-57.



<sup>37</sup> Andrew Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul*, 208-209.

<sup>38</sup> For reference to the "On Grandfather's Bookshelf" episodes of "An Invitation to Learning," see: George Crothers, ed., *An Invitation to Learning Reader*, Vol. 1, no. 3. Transcripts of the episode on *Dreamers of the Ghetto* can be found in, George Crothers, ed., *An Invitation to Learning Reader*, Vol.1, no. 4, 396-401.

<sup>39</sup> George Crothers, ed., "Israel Zangwill, *Dreamers of the Ghetto*," *An Invitation to Learning Reader*, Vol.1, no.4, 399.

<sup>40</sup> Susanne Klingenstein, *Jews in the American Academy: The Dynamics of Intellectual Assimilation*, 88-120.

<sup>41</sup> George Crothers, ed., "Israel Zangwill, *Dreamers of the Ghetto*," *An Invitation to Learning Reader*, 399. Samuel saw the ideological division between Jew and Gentile as profound and fundamental. Put simply, Gentiles believed life to be a sport, subject to specific "rules of the game." To violate those rules was to cheat the game and violate a sense of honor. By contrast, Jews lived their lives governed by eternal laws (not mere rules) handed down by God. To violate such laws was to defy God's will. Like Zangwill, Samuel dismissed the notion that Gentile society was Christian, and believed that true Christianity was a development of Jewish thought. See: Maurice Samuel, *The Gentleman and the Jew*, (New York: Knopf, 1950). Also see Maurice Samuel, *You Gentiles*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1924).

<sup>42</sup> George Crothers, ed., "Israel Zangwill, *Dreamers of the Ghetto*," *An Invitation to Learning Reader*, 399.

<sup>43</sup> George Crothers, ed., "Israel Zangwill, *Dreamers of the Ghetto*," *An Invitation to Learning Reader*, 401.

<sup>44</sup> George Crothers, ed., "Israel Zangwill, *Dreamers of the Ghetto*," *An Invitation to Learning Reader*, 401.

<sup>45</sup> Philip Rubin, "Israel Zangwill," *The Jewish Spectator*, July-August 1951, 14-15.

<sup>46</sup> Philip Rubin, "Israel Zangwill," *The Jewish Spectator*, 15.

<sup>47</sup> Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1970), 288-293.

<sup>48</sup> Maurice Wohlgernter, *Israel Zangwill: A Study*, ix-xi. For more on the development of Yeshiva University and its efforts to synthesize Jewish and modern American culture and ideals see: Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism*, 232-233, 280. It is worth noting that Wohlgernter's study was not the first biography of Zangwill's to be published. The first such book was Joseph Leftwich's 1957 work, *Israel Zangwill*. Leftwich was a friend of the Zangwills, and, as reviewers have noted, his book reflects that relationship. It is largely an anecdotal work filled with historical inaccuracies. As Wohlgernter observes in his introduction, the "*Times Literary Supplement*...refused to consider it [Leftwich's book] an adequate biography."

<sup>49</sup> Maurice Wohlgernter, *Israel Zangwill: A Study*, x-xi, 125.

<sup>50</sup> George Crothers, ed., "Israel Zangwill, *Dreamers of the Ghetto*," *An Invitation to Learning Reader*, 401; Maurice Wohlgernter, *Israel Zangwill: A Study*, 22, 261-291.

<sup>51</sup> Maurice Wohlgernter, *Israel Zangwill: A Study*, 21-30, viii-ix. Like Wohlgernter, literary critic Harold Fisch identified Zangwill's ambivalent relationship with a father figure, at least in his literary works, as indicative of an essential dilemma the modern Jewish identity. See, "Israel Zangwill: Prophet of the Ghetto," *Judaism*, Vol. 13, (1964), 407-421.

<sup>52</sup> Joseph H. Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, x-xi.

<sup>53</sup> Joseph H. Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, chapter seven, "The Crisis," 131-162.

<sup>54</sup> Joseph H. Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 162; Meri-Jane Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena*, 220-221.

<sup>55</sup> Joseph H. Udelson, *Dreamer of the Ghetto*, 6.

<sup>56</sup> For Rabbi Kaplan's quote see, Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan, *Not So Random Thoughts*, (New York: The Reconstructionist Press, 1966), 263. For Jody Myers' quote see, Jody E. Myers, "Kabbalah in the Modern Era," in Hart and Michels, eds., *Cambridge History of Judaism, Volume III: The Modern Period; c. 1815-c,2000* (forthcoming). For more works on the invention of tradition see, Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Joseph Ward Swain trans, (New York: Free Press, 1965); Clifford Geertz, *Myth Symbol and Culture*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1974); Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger eds. *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>57</sup> Edna Nahshon, *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot*, 3, 49-57.

<sup>58</sup> Edna Nahshon, *From the Ghetto to the Melting Pot*, 2-3.

<sup>59</sup> Meri-Jane Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena*, 3-6.

<sup>60</sup> Meri-Jane Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena*, 3.

<sup>61</sup> Meri-Jane Rochelson, "'They That Walk in Darkness:' *Ghetto Tragedies: The Uses of Christianity in Israel Zangwill's Fiction*," *Victorian Literature and Culture*, (1999), 221; Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena*, 103-128.

<sup>62</sup> Meri-Jane Rochelson, *A Jew in the Public Arena*, 224-229.

<sup>63</sup> Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism*, passim.

<sup>64</sup> Israel Zangwill quoted in, Joseph Leftwich, *Israel Zangwill*, 294.

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