

Foreword

E. DIGBY BALTZELL

I was honored when my old friend, Murray Friedman, asked me to write a few lines by way of a preface to this volume on the changes in the Philadelphia Jewish community during the almost half-century since 1940, the year John F. Kennedy graduated from Harvard and the year following my own graduation from the University of Pennsylvania. The essays in this book cover a period in Philadelphia Jewish history that exactly spans my own adult life.

I was raised in Chestnut Hill among a class of people who took anti-Semitism for granted. Several years of service in the armed forces, where privileges were based on functional rank rather than class or ethnic ancestry, were bound to challenge the traditional values of my generation. Both gentile and Jewish officers and gentlemen of the United States Navy, for the first time in their lives, shared leisurely intimacies in the wardroom as well as common dangers at their respective battle stations. Although country-club anti-Semitism was the overwhelming rule before the war, it would have seemed entirely out of place in the first-class officers clubs at the Naval Air Stations at Norfolk, Quonset, or Corpus Christi, to say nothing of those more primitive bastions of privilege in the South Pacific, at Espietu Santo, Guadalcanal, and Guam. And many if not most of my fellow officers and friends returned to civilian life far less willing to tolerate the traditional, often dehumanizing, ethnic snobberies of our pre-war years. One of my South Pacific shipmates and a close friend, for instance, played an important role in eliminating the categorical exclusion of Jewish alumni from membership in the Harvard Club of New York City. I myself gave up a pre-war business career to become a sociologist, receiving a Ph.D. from Columbia and then spending my entire academic career at the University of Pennsylvania. I did not join the Lenape Club, a private faculty club whose older members tended to be anti-Semitic. Instead I became an enthusiastic member of our present Faculty Club, whose membership by now is as heterogeneous in background as the United Nations. There was surely little or no anti-Semitism among my generation of faculty members at Penn, and the same was true of the Philadelphia College of Art, where my wife, Jane Piper, taught for three decades.

Outside of academic life, my wife and I confined our social life largely to the art and academic worlds, especially among a kind of countercultural elite of reform Democrats centering in the Americans for Democratic Action, who took the lead in bringing Joseph S. Clark and Richardson Dilworth into the mayor's office in the 1950s. Of importance here is the fact that the leading members of this reform counterculture were tacitly but emphatically agreed on the evils and destructiveness of anti-Semitism.

In the meantime, my writing and research interests paralleled my academic and social life. My first book, *Philadelphia Gentleman* (1958), examined the historical background and contemporary structure of Philadelphia's leadership class in 1940, a date purposely chosen because it preceded the post-war social changes, such as those discussed in the essays in this volume. My second book, *The Protestant Establishment: Aristocracy and Caste in America* (1964), was an analysis of the history of anti-Semitism within the American WASP establishment in the years between the assassination of Czar Alexander of Russia in 1881, and the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963.

The first and most important thing to be said about elite anti-Semitism in the years since the end of World War II, especially since 1963, is that while Philadelphia was a familistic and class society in 1940, it is a relatively individualistic and bureaucratic society today. In 1940, a class of WASP gentlemen still dominated the business and cultural life of the city as their ancestors had since colonial days. For instance, Edward Hopkinson, Jr., the senior partner of Drexel and Company, was probably the most powerful man in the city. He had graduated from both the college and the law school at Penn; was a partner in one of the city's major law firms (100 percent WASP until the 1960s) for many years before going to the Drexel firm; was a descendant of a member of the first class to graduate from the College of Philadelphia; was a great-great-great grandson of a founder of the American Philosophical Society; and was a great-great grandson of a signer of the Declaration of Independence. In that same year, Benjamin Rush, whose namesake was

a signer of the Declaration and the city's most famous physician, was chairman of the board of the Insurance Company of North America (he had been president from 1916 to 1939). The Pennsylvania Railroad and the famous Baldwin Locomotive Works had a president and a majority of board members who were listed in the *Social Register*. The University of Pennsylvania was entirely run by such proper Philadelphia gentlemen as Lippincotts, Cadwaladers, Merricks, Whartons, and Peppers. Senator George Wharton Pepper, a life trustee, was Penn's most eminent alumnus and unofficial dean of the Philadelphia Bar. Penn's president, Thomas S. Gates, the senior Drexel partner before Hopkinson and a birthright Quaker-turned-Episcopal Philadelphian, served without pay. And finally, the presidents of all the major banks in the city and a vast majority of their directors were listed in the *Social Register*.

At the same time, and most important, the class cohesion of the WASP leadership in 1940 was consolidated in an elaborate complex of city men's clubs and various exclusive cricket and golf clubs out in the suburbs, in all of which the anti-Semitic line was firmly drawn. In Center City, the members of the Philadelphia Club dominated the upper-class leadership in both business and culture. Like President Gates at Penn, most of the cultural institutions—the Art Museum, the Historical Society, the Academy of Fine Arts, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and so forth—were headed by amateur volunteers (gentlemen of independent means) who served at minimal or no salaries.

All that has changed since the Second World War and especially since President Kennedy's assassination in 1963 and his brother's in 1968. One must always bear in mind that the sixties, which peaked between 1968 and 1970, was the most egalitarian and atomizing era in American history. It was largely a revolt from the top: the 1969 "Bust" at Harvard was led first by the sons of successful and even affluent Jewish intellectuals, and then by the WASP and preppy children of privilege who made up the majority of the three hundred or so undergraduates who occupied University Hall on April 9, 1969.

The sixties accelerated a secular trend in America from a pre-war social structure dominated by a relatively open class system (despite ethnic barriers) to a more or less classless bureaucracy, based largely on educational achievement. John F. Kennedy's entering class at Princeton in 1935, for instance, ranked below the national average in IQ and included a handful of Jews (2 to 3 percent); the entering class today is at the very top levels of the nation academically and is composed of a third or more Jewish students. The school for gentlemen has been replaced by a school for preprofessional men and women. In those pre-war days, moreover, it was the colleges (especially Harvard, Yale, and Princeton) that educated a class of leaders, whereas it is the graduate and professional schools that are now training bureaucrats; hence the preprofessional "A" has now replaced the upper-class "gentleman's C" of the old undergraduate days.

It is no accident that the revolutionary trend of the sixties was centered on the prestige campuses of the nation, such as Berkeley, Columbia, and Harvard. For, as Max Weber observed in bureaucratic Germany before the First World War, the certificate of education finally replaced the test for ancestors after the Second World War, even in Philadelphia. Thus, the largest private employer in the city today is the huge bureaucracy that is the University of Pennsylvania. Martin Meyerson, quite unlike Thomas Gates, not only was the first Jewish president of a major American university, but also had spent a lifetime as an agile academic bureaucrat of the first rank. The trustees were no longer primarily high-born Philadelphia Gentlemen, but persons of merit from all over the nation—Jew and gentile, black and white, female and male.

The Drexel firm, always allied with the Pennsylvania Railroad and the heavy industries, such as the Baldwin Locomotive Works, which marked the pre-war city, is no longer a major Proper Philadelphia institution; the prestigious and traditional name has been retained by the largely Jewish and very successful New York firm of Drexel Burnham Lambert Incorporated (and Mr. I. W. Burnham II became a Penn trustee under the Meyerson regime). Today, there is no man or woman of informal and traditional dominance in the city's life to compare with Edward Hopkinson, Jr. Nor is there an unofficial dean of the bar to compare with Senator Pepper. The official position as head of the Philadelphia Bar Association, moreover, is no longer a mark of personal prestige, but is more likely to be rotated from firm to firm as a duty to be discharged rather than strictly an honor. While the most prestigious law firms in the city in 1940 were small and homogeneous partnerships (all save the German Jewish firm of Wolf, Block, Schorr & Solis-Cohen), entirely old stock and Protestant in membership, they are today becoming larger and larger bureaucracies with partners—men and women—of varying ethnic backgrounds, including Jewish. Some would also

say that the law is increasingly becoming a business rather than a profession (just as Penn is now in the "education business," as members of the administration are so fond of saying).

While the traditional class authority of men like Hopkinson and Gates in 1940 emanated from the halls of the Philadelphia Club (the oldest of its kind in the nation), the elite Union League club, far more likely to include the big industrial and financial leaders of newly achieved status, has now become the focus of most of the important bureaucratic power struggles in the city. While the members of the League were almost entirely WASP and supporters of the Republican party in 1940, today one meets men of mannerly power and often new money, of all races and ethnic backgrounds (and convictions, even including confessed supporters of the Democratic party). As I write, the League has just voted to accept women members, after years of threats from City Hall and prodding from the media. Similarly, the Philadelphia, Racquet, and Rittenhouse clubs, more upper class than the League, have recently let down anti-Semitic barriers to membership and presumably will soon accept women (the Racquet already has).

What I have been saying here is that, in the three post-war decades, elite anti-Semitism and ethnic prejudice have declined to a considerable degree. But what are the prospects for the future in an atomistic and elitist bureaucratic society as against the traditional class society that marked pre-war America and Philadelphia? In the first place, the present Philadelphia (and American) leadership structure has never been so justly chosen and meritocratically based; at the same time, it is my contention that it has never been so prone to atomization and disorder. There is, for example, no organic and historically rooted center of authority or responsibility in Philadelphia or in America today. A WASP establishment such as we had in Philadelphia in 1940 is no longer possible or desirable today. Some sort of authoritative establishment, however, may be a prerequisite for the ordered freedom that we and the British have enjoyed to a greater extent than any other nation in modern times.

This is especially so in contrast to post-Bismark and pre-Hitler Germany, which was extremely bureaucratic compared with the Anglo-American class systems of that period. There were no upper-class educational institutions in Germany that melded the sons of the old nobilities, such as the agricultural and militaristic Junkers, and the sons of the rising upper-bourgeois into one coherent class ethic. There has never been anything to compare with the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge in England, or with the undergraduate colleges at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton in this country, where the sons of the aristocracy, gentry, and high middle classes in England, or of the old professional gentry and the new industrialists here, were molded in a single gentlemanly ethic. On the contrary, the great universities, such as of Heidelberg, Bonn, or Berlin, have always been engaged in educating scholars and scientists and in training professional bureaucrats. We imported the Ph.D. from Germany and the Bachelor of Arts from Oxbridge. Similarly with secondary education, in Germany, the *Gymnasium*, a total community school run by the state, was much like our public high school or the British grammar school. There have never been national class schools such as Eton, Harrow, or Rugby in England, or Groton, St. Paul's, Exeter, and Andover in America. Organized games and the gentlemanly sportsmanship ethic for which they once stood have never been a part of either *Gymnasium* or university education in Germany. There are no class rituals to compare with the Eton-Harrow cricket matches at Lords each spring or the Harvard-Yale football games at the end of each fall. I have often thought, how different modern history might have been had Karl Marx captained his (nonexistent) college football team at Bonn or Berlin, or had the Nazi leadership been schooled in some German equivalent of the playing fields of Eton. All this is not to say that the positive values of the Anglo-American sportsmanship ethic were not correlated with a gentlemanly anti-Semitism. But on the other hand, there have been no Dreyfus cases or concentration camps, and ultimately no permanent barriers, as the current Jewish experience makes clear.

At any rate, just as the shallow forms of socially humiliating anti-Semitism did not exist in liberal and permissive Weimar Germany to anywhere near the extent they did in America during that era, so today our permissive society has never seen so little manifest anti-Semitism. And yet . . . perhaps it has never been so structurally weak at the top levels of leadership and consequently, so I contend, never so vulnerable should some new anti-Semitic movement take hold in America. Nothing in this life comes without a price, and our atomized age of total (even intolerant) tolerance must pay the price of weakened authority and social cohesion. The decline of anti-Semitism discussed in the course of these essays is, of course, all to the good. Let us hope that my reflections here on the unanticipated consequences of undoubted progress will never be tested.

THE EIGHTIES TO A NEW CENTURY

Murray Friedman · Andrew Harrison

When the research and writing for the first edition of this volume began about twenty-five years ago, the Introduction posed a question: Had Jews become insiders in the life of the community? The matter was still in doubt. True, the signs were promising. Still, one had some hesitation in announcing that Jews had been fully accepted when the book was first conceived and written. Almost a quarter of a century later, the matter is no longer in doubt: Jews are insiders.

The evidence is clear by any reasonable measurement of success. It is illustrated by the career of David Cohen, Esquire. Cohen served as Mayor Ed Rendell's much-admired chief of staff. When Cohen resigned in 1997, he returned to an elite law firm as its managing partner. In the early 1960s, virtually none of the older-stock Philadelphia law firms would have hired him, let alone move him into a high-level position.

True enough, anti-Semitic incidents such as the torching of Beit Harambaum, a Sephardic Orthodox congregation in Northeast Philadelphia several years ago, occur occasionally. These incidents, however, are rare; they do not reflect any long-term patterns and are widely condemned. Jews have "made it" as full citizens in community life, but at what cost? Here we are reminded of a joke that makes the rounds of the Jewish community: Two Jewish women are talking, and one admires a gem on the finger of the other. The woman wearing the ring tells her proudly that it has a name. It is called the Plotnick gem, but it comes with a curse. Impressed, her friend asks, "What is the curse?" "Mr. Plotnick," the other replies.

The gains that Jews have made here in the last quarter of a century do not come with a curse, but they are a mixed blessing. But we are getting ahead of the story. In the decades immediately following World War II, a series of Working Papers published by the American Jewish Committee charted the decline in anti-Semitism.¹ This has been accompanied by growing affluence. Virtually no area of community life is barred to Jews today.² The results are evident in the ease of movement of Jews from older sections of the city and the suburbs in line with demographic patterns of the population generally.³

Jewish communal agencies, however, continue to grapple with pockets of poverty. Attacking poverty was a central theme in the Federation's 2001 fundraising campaign. The change can be seen most dramatically in South Philadelphia. In 1920, South Philadelphia contained approximately 100,000 Jews, making it the largest concentration of Eastern European Jews in the city. By the close of the twentieth century, the Jewish population of the area had dwindled to about four hundred. Most are over the age of 70 and often in need of communal assistance.⁴

When this book was first published, a majority of Jews lived in Philadelphia proper.⁵ No longer. The Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia's Jewish Population Study of 1996–1997 revealed that of the 99,300 Jewish households in the five-county Philadelphia region, a majority no longer reside in the city. The number of people in Jewish households in Bucks County went from 24,000 in 1984 to 43,600, a 10 percent increase. Chester County experienced the largest growth, starting with 3,700 people in Jewish households in 1984 and rising to 13,400, an incredible 250 percent increase.⁶ Anecdotal reports suggest that these trends are increasing.

The Northeast, which gained the greatest number of Jews in the post-war years, suffered the greatest losses. Only Center City, with a high proportion of older professionals and empty nesters eager to enjoy the rich cultural resources of the area, saw an increase.⁷ "We no longer can think of

our Federation as a Philadelphia Federation, but as a Federation for all the Jews living in the five-county area," former Federation president Michael R. Belman has observed.⁸

As a whole, the region lost Jewish households (from 103,100 in the 1983–1984 Federation survey to 99,300 Jewish households in the 1996–1997 survey.) In terms of actual numbers, the figures show a decline from 256,000 in 1984 to 241,000 in 1996–1997, a drop of more than 14 percent. If one counts such areas of Southern New Jersey as Cherry Hill (not included in this book), however, Philadelphia Jewry may be holding its own more or less.⁹

While the dispersion of Jews is a sign of the growing middle- and upper-middle-class character of the Jewish community and its success, it *reduces*, nevertheless, communal coherence. Dr. Gary Tobin, the president of the Institute for Jewish and Community Research in San Francisco and a consultant to the 1996–1997 Jewish population study, characterized the Philadelphia Jewish community in the late 1980s as "lacking institutional glue."¹⁰ The byline of a *Philadelphia Inquirer* story on February 24, 2001, reported, "In the Lower Northeast, synagogues are struggling."

In the fall of 2000, a number of representatives of the remaining congregations in the Northeast came together with the assistance of the Federation to chart their future. It was agreed that despite territorial issues, within ten years the five synagogue buildings must be consolidated into one centrally located site, with each congregation still having the option of remaining a separate entity.¹¹ In turn, the newly emerging Jewish areas struggle to create new organizational and religious networks.¹²

When one of the authors of this Introduction first came to Philadelphia in the early 1960s, the executive suites of the major industrial and financial institutions were closed to Jews. Jews are now employed by, serve on the boards of, and operate many of the city's largest and important corporations.¹³ Joseph Neubauer heads Aramark Corporation; Ralph and Brian Roberts, Comcast; and Jack Farber, CSS Industries. Jews increasingly also enjoy leadership roles in the city's major cultural institutions. Neubauer, for example, served as chairman of the Philadelphia Orchestra board, and the late Philip Berman, an Allentown businessman, headed the Philadelphia Museum of Art. It is no longer unusual to see Jewish names like the Steinberg/Dietrich Hall at the Wharton School and the Annenberg School of Communication, as well as the Van Pelt Library at the University of Pennsylvania.

The prominence of Jews in civic philanthropy, of course, is a reflection of growing affluence and civic acceptance or, as one wag put it, "the democracy of the dollar." Leading the list of generous donors over the years have been Leonore and Walter H. Annenberg. The latter made a gift in 2000 of \$10 million to endow permanently a chair for the music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra (added to a gift in the same amount in 1994 toward the renovation of the Academy of Music) and \$20 million to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the largest cash gift in its 125-year history. Raymond G. Perelman also donated \$15 million to help the museum expand.¹⁴ The largest single gift that has come to our attention is the \$100 million given by Madeline and Leonard Abramson to the cancer center of the University of Pennsylvania.

In the winter of 2001, the Sydney Kimmel Regional Performing Arts Center, which houses the city's famed orchestra, was opened; it is named after the founder and head of Jones Apparel, the largest private donor, with a gift total of 30 million. Raymond G. and Ruth Perelman also helped to expedite the building of the center by contributing \$5 million.

Such largesse, however, is a measure, too, of the enthusiasm with which Jews have thrown themselves into the educational and cultural life of the community. It is no exaggeration to suggest that they have altered the cultural landscape of the city. Moe Septee (who died in 1997 at age 71), Philadelphia's version of New York's famed impresario Sol Hurok, emerged as the driving force behind the creation of the city's Avenue of the Arts performing arts district along Broad Street. Philadelphia lawyer Stephanie W. Naidoff took Septee's vision and turned it into a reality. When she accepted the post as president of the Kimmel Center Regional Performing Arts Center, many doubted a performing arts center would ever be built. Naidoff navigated and built consensus through some intense conflicts between Mayor Ed Rendell and developer William Rouse III. Her vision and tenacity helped to make the Kimmel Regional Performing Arts Center a showplace on Philadelphia's Avenue of the Arts.¹⁵

At his death in 2001, Meyer P. Potamkin, a banker, and his wife Vivian had assembled one of the finest private collections of American art in the United States, with special emphasis on masters like Georgia O'Keeffe, Red Grooms, Winslow Homer, Mary Cassatt, and John Sloan.¹⁵ They donated to the Art Museum seven oil paintings and one watercolor by members of the artist group known as The Eight, which museum director Anne d'Harnoncourt has described as "clearly stars" among its holdings.¹⁶

Nor have the interests of Jewish philanthropists and businessmen been limited to fine arts. Ray Posel, a lawyer-businessman with a passion for films, offers patrons high-quality movies in the Ritz movie theaters he opened. "Almost single-handedly, Posel has turned the Philadelphia market from a foreign and art film backwater into one of the country's premier markets," a movie columnist for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* wrote.

Through an aggressive campaign against graffiti, Jane Golden, director of the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, has helped beautify the city, particularly poorer areas. Under her guidance, more than 100,000 inner-city children have helped to transform their neighborhoods and the city itself. "The most successful thing we did for these kids," Golden says, "was to take them out of the cycle of crime." Her efforts have enabled Philadelphia to feature the largest number of murals of any city in the United States.¹⁷

The heightened role of Jews in philanthropy, however, has had a downside. "Well-to-do Jews are giving ever larger gifts to institutions outside the Jewish community," Jack Wertheimer, provost and chief academic officer of the Jewish Theological Seminary, reports. "Their gifts to Jewish institutions, if they exist at all, are a fraction of what they are bestowing upon nonsectarian institutions or institutions outside of the Jewish community. When there are families that do give some of their wealth to Jewish institutions, the size of those gifts are dwarfed by those to the university, the museum, or the hospital."¹⁸ Jewish philanthropists still support Jewish institutions, but there is little doubt that the big gifts are going elsewhere.

Part of the reason for this, Tobin suggests, is that "Jews are fully integrated into the larger society; where they go to school, where they work, who they do business with. They generally follow the giving patterns of society as a whole."¹⁹ The 1996–1997 study indicated that less than half of the respondents making gifts of more than \$100,000 made a contribution to the Federation, the central vehicle for communal planning and welfare purposes.²⁰ Moreover, as one communal official points out, some of the younger "dot comers" are new to the process of philanthropy. They were raised often in families not accustomed to charitable giving. This, together with the fact that Philadelphia is a community with little economic and industrial growth, defines one of the more serious challenges to the Jewish philanthropic process.

Another indication of the broader acceptance of Jews is their continuing and increasing role in politics despite their small numbers in the population. Senator Arlen Specter, a moderate Republican who makes his home in Philadelphia, and was first elected in 1981, continues to win reelection with strong support from parts of the state known for their lack of affection for the city. In 1995, sensing a vacuum and anxious to keep the GOP from falling into the hands of the Far Right, he launched a bid to gain the Republican presidential nomination. The campaign failed, but his candidacy suggests how high Jewish aspirations could now reach.²¹ Several years earlier (in 1991), Ed Rendell was elected as the first Jewish mayor of Philadelphia. Further north and west in Montgomery County, Jon Fox, a Republican, and Marjorie Margolies Mezvinsky, a Democrat, have represented that area in Congress. Another Jewish politician who appears to have a bright career ahead of her is State Senator Alyson Schwartz, a Democrat whose district encompasses Philadelphia and Montgomery Counties, including Cheltenham Township West and East Mount Airy, West Oak Land, Fox Chase, and Chestnut Hill.

In their study, *The Jew Within: Self, Family and Community in America*, authors Steven N. Cohen, associate professor at the Melton School for Jewish Education at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and Arnold M. Eisen, professor of religious studies at Stanford University, describe the system of belief and behavior among the baby boomer generation of Jews: "Their connection to Israel . . . is weak, as is the connection they feel to the organized Jewish community in America. They take for granted the compatibility of being both Jewish and American: this is simply not an issue anymore. . . . They want to be Jewish because of what it means to them personally—not

because of obligation to the Jewish group . . . or the historical destiny of the Jewish group." Asked about their emotional attachment to Israel, just 9 percent of respondents answered "extremely attached" (as opposed to 13 percent in a similar survey in 1988). Only 20 percent in the survey thought it was essential for a good Jew to support Israel, and even fewer (18 percent) had similar views with regard to visiting Israel in the course of one's life.²³

On matters involving religious observance, Cohen and Eisen found "an unprecedented exercise of autonomy." Three quarters of the Jews who participated in their national study agreed, "I have a right to reject those Jewish observances that I don't find meaningful." The principal authority for contemporary American Jews, the authors write, is "the sovereign self."²⁴ In Philadelphia, the 1996–1997 study reported that area Jews gravitated toward family- and child-centered behavior that is not labor intensive and did not differentiate them too much from their non-Jewish cohorts. Thus, 74 percent took part in a Passover seder, and 71 percent lit Hanukkah candles.²⁵

Not surprisingly, interfaith marriage—the ultimate test of broader acceptance—is a fact of life among Jews. Between 1984 and 1997, the intermarriage rate among respondents in the five county areas nearly doubled. In the Cohen–Eisen national study of broader Jewish population currents, 80 percent agreed that "intermarriage is inevitable in an open society."²⁶ Some 50 percent said it was "racist" to oppose marriages between Jews and non-Jews.²⁷ While the 1996–1997 Jewish Population Study reports that intermarried couples did express some interest in Jewish rituals, culture, and education, most reported a lower level of Jewish engagement than partners born or raised Jewish.²⁸

The problem of lessening Jewish identification is found especially among younger Jews. They have had no experience with World War II, the Holocaust, Israel's creation and struggle for survival, and, in most instances, prejudice and discrimination. Driving issues of the past, such as the Soviet Jewry movement and the threat of anti-Semitism, no longer exist or have been sharply reduced. The Federation 1996–1997 study indicates that only 21 percent of Jews ages 35 and younger contribute to the Federation. In turn, two-thirds of that group donate to non-Jewish causes.²⁹

Jews, in short, are becoming like other Americans. An example may be in their political responses. There are indications that Jews may be moving to the right, in line with more conservative tendencies Americans have manifested recently. Since the days of Franklin D. Roosevelt, of course, Jews have been prototypical liberals. Jews still vote heavily Democratic in national elections. However, at local and state levels where the here-and-now problems of crime and social disruption are felt most acutely, Democrats can no longer take their votes for granted.³⁰

The first indication of this in Philadelphia occurred in the aftermath of the turbulent 1960s. The latter brought with them racial disorders and widespread destruction of property along Columbia and Ridge Avenues (see Chapter 5). Jewish businesses were particularly hard hit. Former police commissioner Frank L. Rizzo, a "tough cop" and a conservative, received a considerable number of Jewish votes in his two races for mayor, but this vote was divided along class lines. More affluent Jews tended to cast their ballots more heavily for his opponents. In marked contrast, in middle- to lower-middle-class divisions in the Northeast and elsewhere, Jews gave a majority of their votes to Rizzo.³¹ In 1983 and again in 1987, W. Wilson Goode, an African American and a Democrat, received only 30 percent and 25 percent of the Jewish vote, respectively. However, Jews cast more votes for him than did any other white group in the city.³²

The election of former district attorney, Ed Rendell, a Democrat who is Jewish and who served two terms, brought Jews back to their normal Democratic moorings. However, in the 1999 mayoral race, Jews cast ballots overwhelmingly for Sam Katz (82 percent), a Republican running against John Street, who narrowly squeaked by to victory.³³ Katz is Jewish and a moderate. However, in the presidential race the following year, a curious dichotomy became apparent, as reported in an exit poll of local Jewish voters conducted for the *Jewish Exponent* by the Zogby International polling firm. While Jews as a whole supported the Gore-Lieberman ticket overwhelmingly (almost 78 percent), a sharp split developed among older and younger Jews. Broken down by age, the results showed a steady decline among the generations in the rate of Jewish support for the Democratic presidential ticket, from 95 percent among voters age 65 years and older, down to 82 percent among voters age 30 to 49. Thereafter, support for Gore plummeted among voters ages 18 to 29. Gore received only 41 percent of that vote. The remaining 59 percent polled supported Bush.³⁴ Significantly, Rick Santorum, the Republican senatorial incumbent,

widely seen as a hard-line conservative, received some 41 percent of the Jewish vote, according to the *Zogby-Exponent* poll.

The argument that Jews are moving to the right, however, can be pressed too far. As David Hyman, president of the local chapter of the American Jewish Committee, who is active in local Philadelphia politics, declared in an election postscript, "The gross numbers show the news remains the same. Seventy-five to 80 percent of the Jewish community continued to support the Democratic nominee for president. It's a pretty steady baseline for as long as I can remember."

It is noteworthy, too, that in every instance in which African American candidates have run for high office here, Jews have voted in higher proportions for them than have other whites. Jews have played a significant role in the Street administration. In this respect, tensions between blacks and Jews, which were at a height when the first edition of this book went to press—Jesse Jackson had made his famous "Hymietown" remark, characterizing New York, in his presidential race in 1984—have calmed considerably. Strong lines of communication continue to exist between leaders in the two communities. Following Jackson's "Hymietown" remark, blacks and Jews closed ranks through the creation of Operation Understanding, founded by former Congressman Bill Gray and George Ross, a former chair of the local American Jewish Committee chapter. Now in its sixteenth year, OU, which is also sponsored by the Urban League, sends incoming African American and Jewish high school seniors to Africa and Israel and other areas of the country each summer to explore each other's histories and traditions. The Jewish Community Relations Council also has worked closely with African American leaders through the Black-Jewish Coalition. A momentary flair-up occurred in 1997, following a confrontation between whites and blacks in the Grays Ferry area of the city. Some Jewish leaders were infuriated when Mayor Rendell joined with the head of the Nation of Islam, Louis Farrakhan, widely viewed by Jews as anti-Semitic, in an effort to calm things. The episode, however, quickly blew over.

Having reported a weakening of the ties that have bound Jews together over the years, it is also important to note the existence of countervailing forces or tendencies. The demographic losses Philadelphia Jewry has sustained have been lessened somewhat by an infusion of Jews from the former Soviet Union. Beginning in the 1970s and accelerating heavily in the late 1980s following the collapse of the Soviet Union, some 35,000 Russians, virtually all Jewish, have arrived in Philadelphia.

Most have settled in the Northeast in Bustleton, Fox Chase, Somerton, and other sections west of Roosevelt Boulevard. Their attraction to Philadelphia grew in part because of the contact many had had with a number of Philadelphia Soviet Jewry advocacy networks prior to their departure.⁵ Most, of course, have had little or no exposure to Judaism in the Soviet Union, but vigorous efforts have been undertaken by the Jewish Family and Children's Service, the Klein Branch of the Jewish Community Centers of Greater Philadelphia, and other communal bodies to enhance their sense of Jewish identification.⁶ The presence of so many Russian Jews has pumped new energy into Northeast Philadelphia's Jewish community, even as many, following the trajectory of their co-religionists here, are moving into Lower Bucks or Eastern Montgomery counties.⁷

Recent years also have witnessed the growth of new pockets of Jewish energy. Chief among these is the spurt in religious Orthodoxy and Orthodox activity here. An older generation that often did not live a religious life has died off and been replaced by younger Orthodox Jews who are showing greater commitment to following *halacha*, Jewish law.

A case in point has been the experience of Lower Merion Synagogue. In 1981, the Orthodox community in the area had grown to about one hundred families, and a separate wing had to be constructed to offer more space for services and programs. Twenty years later, however, growth in size and participation at the synagogue has inspired a \$3.5 million building campaign to replace the worn-down, three-story house on Old Lancaster Road in Bala Cynwyd with a new, modern facility. "Younger people are coming to study [on the Main Line], to do medical school rotations," David Lebor, co-president of the synagogue says. "They like the community well enough to stay on."⁸

In addition to being better educated Jewishly, the 30-something Orthodox are more secure in Orthodoxy, and more confident in their practice, than previous generations. Lower Merion Synagogue is only one of a handful of growing congregations ranging from modern Orthodox to *haredi* (more intensely) Orthodox. The locale—if one includes Overbrook Park as well—includes

two *eruvim* (an artificially constructed boundary usually denoted by a wall or wires, in which Jews who are strictly observant can perform work, such as pushing a stroller, without violating the Sabbath), *mikvahot* (or ritual baths) for men and women, and the Torah Academy of Greater Philadelphia. In addition, Akiba Hebrew Academy, a community school, thrives in the area. There is also a sizable Orthodox community across the Delaware River in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, and growing activity in Bucks County. In 2001, the *Jewish Exponent* reported plans being made to construct an *eruv* in Center City. Another *eruv* was being constructed in West Philadelphia to serve the Orthodox community at the University of Pennsylvania.³⁹ The *eruv* that presently exists in Elkins Park was established with the help of Conservative and Reform rabbis.

Although we have reported the Jewish population in the Northeast is declining, one exception is the Orthodox community in Rhawnhurst. The neighborhood has an *eruv*; two schools, the Politz Hebrew Academy of Philadelphia and the Stern Hebrew High School; *mikvahot*; a handful of kosher restaurants and markets; and a number of synagogues.

Two outreach groups, Aish Hatorah Philadelphia and Lubavitch of the Main Line, have set up two storefronts on Montgomery Avenue to provide entry-level activities into the community for non-observant Jews. The growth of the Orthodox community is reflected not only in the number of institutions, but also in the greater availability of kosher food. Genuardi's Family Markets has three kosher food counters in the Philadelphia area—in their Wynnewood, St. David's, and Rockledge locations. Business is booming, the director of food services there reports. Acme Markets, Inc., has also opened a kosher food counter in its Bala Cynwyd site; Shop Rite has done the same in the Northeast.⁴⁰ "The fact that these companies [Genuardi's, Acme Markets, and others] have seen the benefit to their bottom line in providing kosher products to their customers suggests that Jewish observance is no longer relegated to the margins of American society," the *Jewish Exponent* editorially exults.⁴¹

Kosher Jewish fast-food restaurants also are flourishing, creating a new mix of modern American marketing and ancient tradition. It is true that one cannot order a Philly cheese steak at Safta's, the new kosher takeout in Bucks County, but this has not slowed the more than one-third of the 12,000 community members who follow strict dietary laws of the Torah and patronize the facility. "I love getting a break from cooking," Harriet Shamis, 48, a Bensalem resident who keeps kosher in her home, says. "Being kosher in Bucks County is impossible because you can't run to McDonald's with the kids when you're tired. You always have to cook. . . . When Safta's opened, I was thrilled that I could get a break."⁴²

In addition, the Reform and Conservative religious movements are experiencing an intensification of Jewish educational and other programs. Large suburban congregations are reaching out more to intermarried couples. The Reform congregation in Bucks County has a *mikvah*, as does Beth Hillel-Beth El, a Conservative synagogue in Wynnewood.⁴³ Alternate Jewish services to accommodate special Jewish interests both within and outside of synagogues are growing. The Reform movement, as has been widely noted, has introduced more traditional forms of ritual, including Hebrew, in its services. The Reconstructionist movement and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, which is located in Wyncote just outside Philadelphia, have been particularly active.

As Dr. Ernest Kahn indicates in his new essay in this book, we are witnessing what might be called the "Judaization" of the Federation, at both the board and the staff levels. (This is a trend seen among national Jewish organizations as well.) Worried about the impact of assimilation, intermarriage, and diminishing population, late in July 2001 the Federation's Task Force on Jewish Day Schools decided to boost funding for area day schools, bringing funding for these institutions up to about \$1,000 per pupil, a step toward equalizing funding to local day schools. Philadelphia is among the highest per capita providers for Jewish education in the United States.⁴⁴ Significantly, day-school education has expanded in area institutions such as Abrams Hebrew Academy, the Raymond and Ruth Perelman Jewish Day Schools, and Stern Hebrew High School. It is also expected that passage of Governor Tom Ridge's 2001 education reform package, providing significant tax write-offs to corporations for contributions made for religious and secular private schools, will further strengthen these institutions.⁴⁵

A concerted effort has been made by Jewish leadership to develop a strong attachment to Israel among area youth. The Federation has created a "Passport to Israel" program that provides

subsidies for youth trips to Israel. In 1998, the Federation spent an estimated \$500,000 toward programs that develop Israeli experiences for youth.

In the past twenty-five years, there has been a burst of Jewish intellectual and cultural vigor locally that has not been seen since the early years of the twentieth century, when, as one of the authors wrote, Philadelphia was "the capital of Jewish America."⁴³ In 2001 the National Museum of American Jewish History, located in the Independence Hall area in historic Congregation Mikva Israel, celebrated its first quarter of a century. The museum, which is visited each year by thousands from all over the United States, has more than ten thousand artifacts in its collection depicting Jewish life in America. The facility offers education, exhibits, and programs that deal with American Jewish history and culture. At its quarter of a century celebration, it featured Senator Joseph Lieberman and his wife Hadassah as honorary chairs.

A revived Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center, sponsored initially by the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Jewish Committee and now the Federation, houses the records of the community's philanthropic, organizational, religious, and business endeavors. Jewish scholarship in the area has expanded. Jewish Studies programs exist at Drexel, Temple University, and the University of Pennsylvania. Through a gift from the Annenbergs, former Dropsie University, including its world-famous Judaica collection, has been merged with Jewish academic programming at the University of Pennsylvania in the Center for Judaic Studies, headed by the distinguished historian, David Ruderman.⁴⁴ The Center invites the leading Jewish scholars from around the world to come to the Center for a year and focus on a specific topic. It also has sought to bring some of this scholarship into the broader community.

In 1990 Temple University and the local chapter of the American Jewish Committee launched the Myer and Rosaline Feinstein Center for American Jewish History. The Center's major thrust has been to identify important vacuums in the study of Philadelphia and American Jewish history and arrange consortiums of Jewish scholars to fill them. Since its inception, the Center has sponsored the publication of a number of books and articles, including *When Philadelphia Was the Capital of Jewish America*, edited by Murray Friedman; *A Second Exodus: The American Movement to Free Soviet Jews*, edited by Friedman and Albert Chernin; a special issue of the professional journal, *American Jewish History*, "American Jewish Political Conservatism"; *Women and American Judaism: Historical Perspectives*, edited by Pamela S. Nadell and Jonathan D. Sarna; and *Passover Revisited: Philadelphia's Efforts to Aid Soviet Jews, 1963-1998*, by Andrew Harrison. The Center provides summer fellowships, a doctoral prize, and other grants to encourage younger scholars to enter the comparatively new field of the professional study of American Jewish history.

Norwegian historian Marcus Hansen has declared with great insight that what the fathers want to forget, the children seek to remember. Even as religiosity, save for the Orthodox, interest in Israel, organizations, and various causes that used to anchor identity and shape behavior have declined, there are countercurrents that appear to be growing. Jews, like other Americans, are looking for meaning in their lives. The American Jewish Committee's youth group, Bridges, is one example. The latter's programming indicates an emphasis on the religious and cultural tradition along with social activity. The wearing of the *kipah*, the traditional Jewish skullcap, is everywhere evident on campuses and elsewhere. Hillels are experiencing a revival, as evidenced by heavily attended holiday observances at the University of Pennsylvania and the popularity of its kosher kitchen. About a half dozen years ago, Orthodox students at Penn's Hillel started "Roots," a program that matches college students curious about Jewish texts with tutors. According to Rabbi Howard Alpert, executive director of Hillel of Greater Philadelphia, participation varies from twenty to sixty partners per year.⁴⁵

It may be an indication of positive change underway that in the fall of 2001, philanthropist Sidney Kimmel, who had given substantial sums earlier for the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts and other major secular charities, announced record-breaking gifts to the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia and the Raymond and Ruth Perelman Jewish Day School. Each will receive \$1 million a year, with the institutions getting \$20 million each upon his death. (A day before the opening of the Kimmel Center, Kimmel, age 73, emotionally celebrated his bar mitzva at the Perelman Jewish Day School's synagogue in Wynnewood.⁴⁶) Simultaneously, other Jewish donors who have been giving large sums to nonsectarian civic institutions in recent years were discussing

with Jewish agencies the possibility of increased gifts. What we may be seeing is that the rush for broader civic approval by Jewish philanthropists in the post-war years and beyond is being overtaken by growing concerns about the Jewish future.

In their 2000 study, Steven M. Cohen and Arnold M. Eisen highlight the ambivalence that seems to characterize the Jewish community at the turn of the century. The "sovereign self," an ethos that weakens traditional religion, religious practice, and organizational life, continues to remain prominent. The labor of fashioning a Jewish self, however, remains significant to moderately affiliated American Jews, the authors add. "We can state with confidence that the quest for Jewish meaning is extremely important to our subjects, just as the search for meaning is important to contemporary Americans more generally. . . . Far from leaving faith behind in favor of secular national or communal loyalties, as many of the parents and grandparents did, the Jews we interviewed are dissatisfied with secular affiliations and are in search of personal spiritual meaning."⁵⁰

Even the high rate of intermarriage, which alarmed the organized Jewish community when it was first reported in the National Jewish Population study in 1990, seems more complicated with the passage of time. Steve Bayme, director of the Jewish Communal Affairs Department of the American Jewish Committee, continues to view intermarriage as a disaster for the Jewish community. Others, like Brooklyn College sociologist Egon Mayer and Brown University sociologist Calvin Goldscheider, however, argue that intermarriage can be positive, particularly if the Jewish community reaches out and family and friends seek the conversion of the Christian partner. There are indications, nevertheless, that the children of mixed marriages are lost to the Jewish community unless conversion takes place.⁵¹

Here in the Philadelphia area, we are witnessing other signs of vitality, including the growth of collaborative efforts in Center City, Buxmont, and City Line Avenue, among synagogues and the organized Jewish community to battle against the erosion of Jewish identity. Casting aside institutional affinities, the seven congregations along Old York Road have set up and operate joint adult educational programs. These congregations also have been cooperating with Young Israel, an Orthodox body in the area, in creating an eruv. The Federation has been working with cluster groups to enhance their fund-raising capabilities. And, as has been indicated, the Federation has allocated increasing funds for Jewish education.

How can we make sense of these contradictory currents? What do they portend for Jewish life in the coming years? Pessimists argue that, freed from the crippling disabilities of the past and governed increasingly by the "sovereign self," the older traditions and forms are being cast aside and the future appears grim—that it is only in Israel and among the Orthodox that the maintenance of Jewish life can be assured. A number of students of Jewish life, however, are more positive, or at least more hopeful. Sociologists Calvin Goldscheider and Alan S. Zuckerman at Brown argue in *The Transformation of the Jews* that, in fact, the Jewish population in the United States is growing and that the intermarriage rate is not as high as has been usually reported. Moreover, the Jewish past in this country has not always been the "golden age" it has often been portrayed to be. From this vantage point, the Jewish community may be seen as less in decline than as transforming itself. The fact is that Jewish life has always been voluntary and must continue necessarily to remain so today.

Cohen and Eisen carry the argument a step further. Thoroughly aware of the threats and dangers, they report nevertheless that the moderately affiliated Jews they studied are "far from indifferent to Judaism and things Jewish." They "feel no need to express or enact their identity in regular activity. Judaism is rather an 'inner thing,' a point of origin, a feature of experience, an object of reflection." American Jews have opted for "a group identity that is characteristic of late modern religion, culture, and communal forms—and have also developed new patterns that seem to us best described as postmodern." "They express affection for and loyalty to the Jewish people. . . . They even exhibit a significant degree of belief in God, though the God they believe in differs from the one portrayed in the blessings they recite at home and the prayers they say in the synagogue." The tendency is toward privatization (as in celebration of Passover) and personalization. This form of "pick and choose Judaism," in short, is still loyal to the past and is struggling to find new ways of expression.⁵² In any case, it is something, we would add, that can be built upon.

Philadelphia Jewry has played a proud role in helping to recast the Jewish community of

America in newer terms. At the turn of the century and at a time of large-scale immigration, such figures as Judge Mayer Sulzberger, Cyrus Adler, and Rabbi Sabato Morais, working with leadership in New York and elsewhere, created many of the institutional forms on which American Jewish life came to rest. If some of the emerging newer scholarship is correct and the Jewish community is in transition rather than in meltdown, the challenge beckons once again to join with others in the country to create the new Jewish community of the twenty-first century and beyond.