

Look to the rock from which you were hewn
הביטו אל-צור הצבתם



chicago jewish historical society

618 South Michigan • Chicago, Illinois 60605 • Telephone: (312) 663-5634

society news

VOL. IV-NO. 3

OCT., 1980

THE POLITICS OF JEWISH CHICAGO: ISSUES AND PERSONALITIES OCTOBER 12 PROGRAM

As the 1980 Presidential election draws near, the Society will open its fall program season with another innovative presentation: a look at the Jewish role in Chicago politics, both past and present.

The Society's own specialist on Jews in Chicago politics, DR. EDWARD H. MAZUR, Associate Professor of Urban Studies & Social Studies at the City Colleges of Chicago, will moderate a panel discussion among three of Chicago's outstanding Jewish politicians:

SIDNEY R. YATES

U.S. Congressman, 9th Congressional District
* * *

ARTHUR L. BERMAN

Illinois State Senator, 11th District
* * *

HOWARD W. CARROLL

Illinois State Senator, 15th District
* * *

EDWARD H. MAZUR, MODERATOR

This is our annual meeting for 1980. Nominees for the Board of Directors as listed in our Society News, June, 1980, will be elected at this meeting.

Plan to attend this exciting pre-election day event.

* * * * *
-program information-

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1980

1:30 p.m. SOCIAL HOUR

2:00 p.m. PROGRAM

Bederman Hall, Spertus College of Judaica, 618 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago

ADMISSION FREE

ALL ARE WELCOME

BRING YOUR FRIENDS

For further information call our office: 663-5634



THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Summer is generally considered the "sleepy time" for organizations: meetings cease, committees slow down, and a general lull sets in until the resumption of activities that the New Year and the fall season bring. But this past summer has been a very busy one for the CJHS.

It began for me with a research trip to London and a visit to the Jewish Historical Society of England. Like us, they hold public meetings on topics of "local" interest (local being the United Kingdom and western Europe), and I was fortunate to be able to attend their June meeting, a most interesting discussion of James Finn, the British consul in Palestine in the 1850s, when the land was under Turkish rule. With the English society added to our mailing list, the Chicago Jewish Historical Society has now made ties with a kindred group across the sea.

Here in Chicago, the Society's summer bus tours were in full swing. In addition, the Board of Directors embarked on a new program. At the July board meeting, we decided to begin a publications program to edit and print some of the outstanding talks presented at our bi-monthly meetings, as well as other worthy studies in Chicago Jewish history. The Board also decided to push forward with the campaign to collect and conserve the valuable papers of Chicago Jewish organizations and synagogues, and are mounting a vigorous drive this fall to bring these records into the Chicago Jewish Archives at Spertus College.

As we move into the New Year with new projects and ongoing activities--oral history, public meetings, collection of individual and family papers--we send greeting to our members and other friends: **שנה טובה** --L'Shana Tova. We hope you will join us as observers and participants, and help make this year a rewarding and exciting one for the Chicago Jewish Historical Society.

Adele Hast

OUR NEXT PROGRAM:

SID SORKIN

on

LANDSMANSCHAFTEN

"The Verein: From Bialystok to Chicago"

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1980

Temple Sholom, 3480 Lake Shore Drive

1:30-Social Hour 2:30-Program

Membership Information

Membership in the CJHS is open to all. The dues categories are the following:

\$ 5.00	Students & Senior Citizens
10.00	Contributing Membership
25.00	Sustaining Membership
50.00	Patron Membership
100.00 & up	-- Sponsoring Membership
25.00	Minimum contribution for synagogue and organization membership

To become a member, or to increase your membership contribution, send your check to the Treasurer, Chicago Jewish Historical Society, 618 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605.



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BOOK NOOK

by Mark Mandle

I started researching my family genealogy fifteen years ago. I have found family genealogy to be a fascinating and never-ending hobby. It has helped my sense of Jewish identity grow.

Jews can use general genealogy and some new Jewish sources to find out information about their ancestors. I will provide a short list of sources. I hope readers will write in with additional sources they think would be helpful.

You can start doing family genealogy by visiting your local public library, and seeing if they own some of the books. If they don't, see if they can get the books for you on interlibrary loan from other libraries.

Basic Books:

Doane, Gilbert. Searching For Your Ancestors, 4th ed., 1973.

Excellent basic introduction to genealogical study. One of the most popular and best-known works on the subject.

Greenwood, Val D. The Researchers Guide to American Genealogy, 1978. A detailed step-by-step guide to genealogy. A thorough guide to the field.

Helmbold, F. Wilbur. Tracing Your Ancestry A Step-by-Step Guide to Researching Your Family History, 1976. Covers same material as Greenwood. Less detailed and an easier book to tackle.

Kurzweil, Arthur. From Generation to Generation: How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy and Personal History, 1980. A popular guidebook that covers every stage of Jewish genealogy. It lists basic sources of information, and includes historic tidbits and wonderful quotations.

Rottenberg, Dan. Finding Our Fathers, A Guidebook to Jewish Genealogy, 1977. Pioneering work that showed American Jews they could trace their families back

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Upon presentation of membership card

several generations. I found the chapters on Jewish sources in America and throughout the world particularly helpful. Two-thirds of the book is a guide to eight thousand Jewish family names.

Specialized Sources:

Jewish Genealogical Society. The society was founded in 1978. When you join the society, you can provide family data cards on families you are trying to research. Other people may be working on the same families, and you may be able to exchange information. The society has a newsletter, and holds programs in New York. There has been some talk of starting a Chicago regional chapter. Dues are inexpensive. The Society's address is: 300 East 71st Street #5R, New York, New York 10021.

Kaganoff, Benzion. A Dictionary of Jewish Names and Their History, 1977. A concise dictionary that offers the source and original meaning of several hundred names. It also presents the customs and folk beliefs of the names. This is an informative and enjoyable book by a rabbi.

Toledot: The Journal of Jewish Genealogy. The word toledot means generations. Toledot is a fairly new quarterly magazine. It is fun to read, and an excellent how-to source. You may want to browse through it to see what other people have accomplished. Spertus Library is the only area library I know of that subscribes to it. For subscription information, write to: 808 West End Ave., Suite 1006, New York, New York 10025. Subscriptions are \$8 a year.

Good luck with your own searching!

NEW ORAL HISTORIES OBTAINED OVER SUMMER

by Moselle Schwartz

The Oral History Committee proceeded this summer to tape interviews of outstanding Chicago Jews who volunteered interesting information on Jewish life and work in Chicago. Interviews were conducted by Leah Axelrod, Adele Hast, Rachel Heimovics, Joe Landy and Moselle Schwartz.

One of the exciting and rewarding "side effects" of the oral history program is the number and quality of historical artifacts that are given so generously by our interviewees. These materials along with the tape recordings and manuscripts make a most valuable addition to the Chicago Jewish Archives.

Interviews which have been completed include those of Max Targ, founder of the Americans for Music Library in Israel (AMLI), and Cantor Abraham Lubin of Congregation Rodfei Zedek. Mr. Targ has donated the complete records of the AMLI to the Archives.

The need for typists is most urgent at this time to transcribe the tapes to manuscript form. Using our transcribing machines is a great help to our typists. To volunteer your services, please call Mrs. Schwartz at her residence during the week at dinner time, 944-4444.

ARCHIVES DRIVE STARTED

The CJHS has undertaken the responsibility of helping to preserve our heritage in Chicago. We have begun the task of gathering the history of the Jewish community in Chicago and we are now accelerating this process.

To this end, we have sent a letter to every Jewish organization in Chicago asking for their help in meeting our joint responsibility by giving us their founding documents, pictures, minutes, and any and all memorabilia that they have. The Society will then undertake to collate

SOCIETY SUPPORTS JEWISH MURAL PROJECT

A monumental mosaic mural depicting Chicago Jewish immigrant and labor history is being assembled in West Rogers Park.

The project is sponsored by the West Rogers Park Jewish Mural Committee, with representatives from the North Town Community Council, the Jewish Community Council of West Rogers Park, Rogers Park JCC, Jewish Labor Committee, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, with support from Alderman Stone's office, the Fine Arts Committee of the Horwich JCC, and the Chicago Jewish Historical Society.

Chicago Mural Group artists, Cynthia Weiss and Miriam Socoloff, have designed the mural. After consultation with the advisory committee. Under their direction, volunteers of all ages are laying tile mosaic at the Dolnick Community Center.

This mosaic mural will help to instill a sense of pride in all our many volunteers, beautify the neighborhood, and commemorate the Jewish immigrant contributions to Chicago.

Partial funding has been received from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Illinois Arts Council. The committee must raise matching funds for the purchase of materials. A local canvas drive has brought in \$300.00. Donations of any size whatsoever from any interested parties would be most appreciated. Tax-deductible checks can be written to the West Rogers Park Jewish Mural Committee, and sent to the Chicago Mural Group at 2261 North Lincoln Avenue, Chicago, IL 60614.

this material and store it in the climate-controlled Chicago Jewish Archives at Spertus College.

Let us not let our history crumble in the basements, attics and cartons of our community's organizations and individual homes. Help us preserve your past.

For further information, call our office or our Archives Committee Chairperson, ELSIE ORLINSKY, 643-9266.

TRANSCRIPT OF MAY 4, 1980 PROGRAM OF THE CJHS

"MEET THE SOCIETY'S AUTHORS"

Our May 4 program made such an impact on the large crowd who attended, that we feel it appropriate to reproduce here the texts of the speeches. The program consisted of a distinguished panel of CJHS Board members and authors discussing their various works on Chicago Jewish history:

DR. IRVING CUTLER, chairman of the Department of Geography at Chicago State University, author of Chicago: Metropolis of the Mid-Continent and "The Jews of Chicago: From Shtetl to Suburb" from The Ethnic Frontier, Vol. II.

DR. EDWARD MAZUR, professor of political science at Chicago City College, author of "Jewish Chicago: From Diversity to Community" from The Ethnic Frontier, Vol. I and Minyans for a Prairie City: The Politics of Chicago Jewry, 1850-1940.

RABBI JUDAH L. GRAUBART, historian and writer, co-author with Alice V. Graubart of Decade of Destiny, an oral history of the 1930's.

IRVING CUTLER

I am often asked in connection with my books how I happened to become a professional geographer and why Chicago became my area of research specialization. Certainly, my parents didn't raise me to become a geographer. In fact, I doubt if they knew there was such a profession. Actually, what happened is that after many efforts, the first grade of "A" that I received at the University of Chicago was in an introductory geography course. That definitely helped to arouse my interest in the field. Shortly thereafter, while in the Navy in World War II, I was exposed to a number of additional geography courses and especially to a variety of interesting geographic areas, both in Europe and in the Pacific. Until my stretch in the Navy, the furthest I'd been from Chicago was South Haven, Michigan.

After the war, I returned to college and did quite a bit of graduate work under a brilliant geography scholar and teacher, Professor Harold Mayer. . . . He had a great influence on my selection of geography as my professional field and later he served as one of the advisors for my dissertation.

The selection of a Ph.D. dissertation topic is very important because it usually determines one's future area of specialization and research. Many of my fellow students had selected exotic areas to do their year or two of dissertation field work, places such as Malaysia, Nepal, Sudan or Equador. I chose to write about the most exotic place of all--the Chicago area.

I had always been fascinated by the city's great variety of people, neighborhoods, industry and transportation. As a child, I remember having had a goal of riding on every trolley, bus, el and commuter train route in the city, and later as a cab driver while in college, I think I spent more time cruising through interesting neighborhoods than looking for fares. There was also a little practical consideration for my staying close to home. By the time I was ready for my dissertation, I was married with two young children and owned a home with what then seemed like a huge mortgage, \$15,000 at 5% interest.

The dissertation had the high-sounding academic title of "The Chicago-Milwaukee Corridor: A Geographic Study of Inter-Metropolitan Coalescence." More simply, I suppose it could be called, "What's Happening between Chicago and Milwaukee." It

contained some eighty maps and was published by Northwestern University. In the next few years I was author or co-author of a number of other books on Chicago, one on Illinois, and a high school text on urban communities.

My particular preference among the books is Chicago: Metropolis of the Mid-Continent, originally published in 1973 by the Geographic Society of Chicago. It is a combined history and geography of the Chicago area, relating how and why the area grew, and looking at some of its problems and progress. The text is complemented by 132 interesting photos and maps. The upcoming third edition will contain a major new section on the ethnic groups of Chicago.

This book had some unexpected repercussions. I was soundly denounced by a black group for writing that DuSable, Chicago's first permanent settler, was a mulatto and not 100% black as they claimed. And just last Thursday, I received a call from the U.S. Attorney's Office asking for my source of information as to the number of Mexicans in the city as stated in my book. My source, incidentally, was the U.S. Government's own census.

One of the fringe benefits of the books which I find enjoyable is the opportunity to give talks and tours about the city to various groups, including some from foreign lands. The most interesting foreign groups that I have toured have been from Communist China and Russia. To the Chinese, everything in Chicago looks good, even our worst slums. The Russians, on the other hand, evidently like to depict the more negative aspects of our capitalistic society by taking plenty of photos of deteriorating areas and of mobile homes.

My serious interest in Jewish Chicago is more recent. I had noticed when I gave slide talks about Chicago to Jewish groups that they were intrigued by the few slides of old Jewish neighborhoods that I had inserted into my presentation, so I began to delve more deeply into Chicago Jewish history--researching, visiting old Jewish neighborhoods, and talking to people, especially to senior citizens. One of my most interesting sources of information was a retired Jewish cab driver, about 85 years old, whom I drove around for two days as he showed me many places I was unaware of, including numerous bookies and card halls.

I found that I was very fortunate in that I had lived in virtually all of the major Jewish neighborhoods and had vivid memories and personal experiences that I could relate to. I had been born in the Maxwell Street area on Washburne Avenue where my mother ran a little chicken store, I grew up in the Lawndale-Douglas area, I lived for about 15 years on the south side, and in recent years have lived north.

Last year I was asked to write a chapter entitled, "The Jews of Chicago, from Shtetl to Suburb" for the second volume of the book, The Ethnic Frontier, a book that will be out later this year. . . . The chapter is geographically oriented, tracing the mobility of the Jews from the inner part of the city through the various neighborhoods and out into the suburbs. And as a geographer, of course I've included a number of original maps, as well as some photos, and in closing I would like to show you a few slides of them:

This first map is entitled "Jewish Population of Chicago of 1931 by Community Areas." The little boxes that you see are the various communities--

Hyde Park, Rogers Park, Austin and so forth--and the shadings indicate the percentage of Jews living in each of these communities. The darker the color, the more Jews in these communities. In 1931 it was estimated that there were 275,000 Jews in the Chicago area. Almost half of them lived in the Douglas-Lawndale area . . . stretching toward Garfield Park. There were another 60,000 or so on the Northwest Side--in Humboldt Park, Logan Square and into Albany Park. There were another 25,000 or so along the Lake in Lakeview, Uptown and Rogers Park, and another 30,000 or so on the South Side, especially in the communities of Kenwood, Hyde Park and South Shore.

Now this map, "Jewish Institutions Along Douglas and Independence Boulevards and Other Nearby Neighboring Facilities, 1943," is a map of the Douglas-Lawndale area which I think many of you may be familiar with, just before the area started its very rapid change. Those of you who remember the area recall that on the southeast end was Douglas Park. Stretching westward for about a mile from Douglas Park was Douglas Boulevard. The parkway turned northward and became Independence Blvd., which went north about a mile to Garfield Park, the park at the northwest end. Along the boulevards were many institutions--religious, educational, Zionist, social service--and others. On two sides of Douglas Park were a collection of very sizeable and very important social service institutions. On the eastern side of the park on California Avenue was, and still is, Mount Sinai Hospital and a rehabilitation home. On Albany Avenue, opposite the western side of the park was the Jewish Day & Night Nursery, the Jewish People's Convalescent Home, the Marks Nathan Jewish Orphan Home, and the Orthodox Jewish Home for the Aged. A block away, on the corner of Kedzie and Ogden, was the Douglas Park Auditorium, the Labor Lyceum--the home of the Workmen's Circle and the last Yiddish Theatre. On the fringe of the community were the high schools which the Jewish students attended. Perhaps some of you attended or have friends who attended Marshall High School on Kedzie Avenue or Manley High School on Sacramento Boulevard. The main commercial street was Roosevelt Road and Sid Sorkin wrote a very excellent article about it in the [CJHS] newsletter recently. Just north of Roosevelt Road was the huge complex of Sears, Roebuck & Co. where many of the young Jewish girls worked. They probably got to work there due to the intercession of Julius Rosenwald.

Some of you may recognize this photo. This was, in a sense, the heart of the community in Douglas Park. This is the corner of Douglas Blvd. and St. Louis Avenue where there were two major institutions, the Hebrew Theological College, which is now in Skokie, and the Jewish People's Institute. Both were built in the 1920's. The JPI was a great center of activity with thousands of people coming there every week. It had lectures, forums, Hebrew classes, social and athletic events. It had a Blintzes Inn. It had a great library. It had a day nursery, and it even had roof garden dances in summer on Sunday nights where young Jewish men and women from all over the city would come. I think many a shiddach was made up there on the roof on Sunday night. It's interesting to note that the JPI has recently been declared a national historic landmark due to the work of Stuart Brent, the bookseller, and Congressman Sidney Yates. This means that the building has to be preserved. The two buildings combined, are used now as the Julius Hess Elementary School, the last year I visited both buildings. The JPI is in pretty good shape. The Yeshiva, which I attended for a number of years, is all right on the first floor, but up on the second floor,

it's sad to see that the beautiful wood panelled library and some of the other rooms are in such shoddy condition.

The closest neighborhood that we have today to the Lawndale-Douglas Park area, of course, is West Rogers Park, and this map depicts the major Jewish institutions of West Rogers Park, 1979. You can see a good number of them are lined up along California, the Douglas Blvd. of 1979-80. I think I counted something like 20 institutions of various kinds--synagogues, educational facilities, and so forth, between Peterson on the south and Howard Street on the north.

I also made a number of maps showing synagogue distribution in Chicago. I made some going back to the 1800's, but I'll show you just two relatively recent ones so you can get an idea of Jewish mobility in Chicago as depicted by the location of the synagogues, and of course the people generally live in rather close proximity to their synagogues. This first map shows synagogue distribution in Chicago in 1948. By far, the largest concentration in the city, about sixty synagogues, is shown in the Douglas-Lawndale area. To the north you have a cluster of synagogues in the Humboldt Park area, a few in Logan Square, more in Albany Park, not too many in the West Rogers Park area, a few along the Lake and quite a few on the South Side, especially this cluster in Hyde Park and the one here in South Shore. This is the pattern of synagogue distribution in 1948.

Now if you keep this map in mind, the next map will show synagogue distribution in the Chicago area thirty years later, in 1978, and I think you'll notice the major change that took place. There are still about the same number of synagogues, a little over a hundred in the metropolitan area, but you notice that a great number, actually about half, are now in the suburbs, especially to the north. There are none, of course, in the Douglas Park-Lawndale area anymore. There are three in Hyde Park. There are a number in the downtown area, a few near the lakefront, and a large cluster, as we noted, in West Rogers Park, especially along California Avenue. There are many synagogues in Skokie, Lincolnwood, and some all the way up to Highland Park and beyond. Actually, the Jewish community has spread out, especially to the north and the northwest, and it is estimated that now about 80% of the Jewish population of the Chicago area lives north of Lawrence Avenue and more than half of the Jewish population of the Chicago area now lives in the suburbs. This is up from just 5% in 1950. There are Jewish communities now in suburbs that most of us never heard of twenty-five years ago, places like Hanover Park, Hoffman Estates, Schaumburg, Vernon Hills, Buffalo Grove. All these places have synagogues. In fact, Buffalo Grove now has three synagogues, one to take care of each major Jewish religious denomination: Reform, Conservative, and Traditional.

Now the last illustration from the chapter shows a different type of Jewish mobility--Jewish mobility during the summer time. Some of you may recall the hot summer nights before air-conditioning. Many people would go out and sleep in the park. They'd sleep in Douglas Park or Garfield Park or along the boulevards, and in those days it was perfectly safe. However, if you could afford it, you tried to spend some of the summer in a resort area along the eastern shores of Lake Michigan. You'd go to the Michigan City area, or to Union Pier, or especially, as shown here, to the South Haven area.

Thank you very much.

EDWARD MAZUR

Thank you, Mr. Bernstein, for such a lovely introduction. I couldn't have done better if I had written it myself.

My serious interest in Chicago Jewish history probably goes back to my involvement as a student at the University of Chicago and the search for a Ph.D. dissertation topic. I had two interests. One was the history of immigrants and immigration and their assimilation and acculturation experience. The second was an interest in urban politics. I thought I could satisfy both of those interests by looking at people who lived in the city I knew most about, the area I knew most about, the Chicago Jewish community, and by seeing how the Jewish community responded to politics over a long period of time.

When I first talked to knowledgeable individuals about this idea, I received several responses. Number one, Jews have always voted Democratic. Other people said that Jews were always Republicans until the 1930's; then someone by the name of Roosevelt came along and changed everything. There were some who told me that Jews are inherently liberal. They always vote for the big spenders and the free thinkers and so on. The day after they mentioned that theory to me, there was a group of members of the American Nazi party who wanted to march in West Rogers Park. There was a decided negative reaction to that, so my immediate thought was, 'Well, so much for the Jews are inherently liberal and free thinker theory, I don't think that will ever hold up.'

But I began to ask myself such questions as, just who are the Jews of Chicago and most importantly, is there a Chicago Jewish community? Has there been a definite Jewish response to politics? I defined community as a group that has common interests and common characteristics. When I looked at the history of the Jews in Chicago, I came up with not one Jewish community, but a number of Jewish communities. There's the Orthodox Jewish community, the Conservative Jewish community, the Reform Jewish community. There's a Jewish community that really isn't a religious community at all. There's the upper class Jewish community. There's the Jewish community that as early as 1901 established the Ravisloe Country Club. There was a Jewish community in Chicago, which, for want of a better term I'll simply call the German Jewish community. These were people who basically had come to Chicago in the 1830's, 1840's and 1850's, and who, by the 1880's were so affluent, that one in every four families had private help--maids, butlers, and so on.

By 1900, there was the legendary Maxwell Street community, composed of large numbers of East European Jews, perhaps 100-150,000 who poured into this congested neighborhood, nostalgically remembered by many as the Roosevelt and Halsted area. The area was characterized by high incidences of tuberculosis and infant mortality, store-front synagogues, and Kosher signs in abundance. It was a very different community than the upper class one that I came to call the South Side German Jewish community. And I began to ask myself: maybe the response of the Jews to politics in Chicago was a result of when people came to Chicago, what type of businesses they were in, their philosophical outlooks, their religious attitudes, and so on. And my research demonstrated that it's difficult to stereotype the Jewish response to politics; in fact the response is dependent

on the time of arrival, the social and economic status, religious attitudes, philosophical attitudes and so on.

What I found to be very interesting in my own researches (my grand scheme, even though I'd written several articles and a dissertation on Jews in Chicago, is to do a full scale history of Jewish Chicago, but I don't think I'll be ready to do that for a number of years) was the conflict of what I call Jew v. Jew. During the last two decades of the 19th century, the period from 1880 to 1900, the large number of Jews coming into Chicago arrived primarily from Eastern Europe, and the result was a series of confrontations and clashes with those people who were already here, people who were fairly well assimilated, people who had entered America at a very different time. And the reaction between these two groups is fascinating. For example, the Reform Advocate newspaper in 1892 talked about a sheltering home that had been erected by the Jews who were here before 1890. They talked about the fact that it was a substantial building that contained 36 rooms, including numerous bathrooms, the laundry, the drying and baggage store rooms. The Reform Advocate commented how the German-Jewish Standard Club had voted a thousand dollars to the executive committee in aid of the Russian refugees. Several issues later Sinai congregation voted to appropriate \$500 to aid Russian refugees, and so on down the line.

At the same time there was another group of German Jews here in Chicago that took the attitude:

"26,000 Polish Jews in a single year: that is certainly an overdose for our American national economy. These Polish Jews are indigestible for the American stomach, as are the Chinese. Now to come to a conclusion, much might be said on behalf of these Polish, Russian, and Roumanian Jews. There's also much that could be said in favor of the Chinese. Without doubt, they possess spiritual qualifications and characteristics which might in an economic sense be made profitable to our land and country. But that will not set aside the fact that so many of these East European Jews, as reared in their native land, are not desirable in our American communities however much of these may be mixed."

So I was presented with an interesting dichotomy: that there's sort of a love-hate relationship between those who had gotten here earlier, had their feet on the ground, were achieving success, and their brothers and sisters, co-religionists, who were coming to Chicago, to whom the early group felt a responsibility. My research indicated that this split between the German and what I call the East European Jews--these are very broad terms--had political derivatives, and that much of what happened in Chicago politics could be explained by this German-East European split.

Politics was very important to Chicago Jewry because politics enabled individuals to gain recognition, enabled the group to gain recognition, and serviced the community economically and socially. When we talk about Jewish political figures, we are talking about a very diverse group. You're talking about the people whom we might classify as the political bosses, the Jake Arveys and some of their predecessors. Then there were people who primarily emphasized reform. There were middle-grounders, people who used machine tactics to achieve beneficial and constructive social and political ends. Neither the German nor the East European Jewish communities had a monopoly on any one type.

There are a number of individuals who come to mind. Probably the first important Jewish political figure in Chicago was a man by the name of Adolph Kraus. Adolph Kraus was a Bohemian Jew. I have a theory about people like Adolph Kraus and Jacob Arvey and others: one of the reasons why they were so successful is because they were really central Europeans or children of central Europeans, as opposed to East Europeans or what I call German Jews, and that somehow because they were central Europeans they could bridge the gap between the more decided East European and German individuals.

Adolph Kraus started his political career in the 1870's and 1880's. His becoming a Democrat had nothing at all to do with ideology. A Republican had promised him a job if he would help him on election day. The Republican never showed up to help him. The local Democrat said, "If you help me, I'll give you a job," and that was political ideology and conversion. Adolph Kraus became a Democrat. Kraus is important because he formed a political club and he brought in a number of young people, including William Loeffler.

Bill Loeffler became the city clerk shortly before 1900. Loeffler's important because he looked at Maxwell Street Court and said, "This is where some of the Jews should gain recognition." To him, politics meant jobs, group advancement, and personal gain. He took another Bohemian Jewish fellow by the name of Adolph Yoachim Sabath and he appointed him magistrate of the Maxwell Street Court. In a few years, he appointed another Jew, Philip Bregstone, magistrate of the Maxwell Street Court.

Then the Democrats needed someone to run for Congress out of that southwest side area, and they selected Adolph Sabath. Adolph Sabath, who was a Bohemian Jew, was elected to the Congress of the United States in 1906. Now some people here today think that Congressman Sid Yates has spent a long time in Congress. Sid Yates has another twenty years to go before he'll even come close to the amount of time Adolph Sabath spent in the Congress of the United States. Sabath was elected in 1906. He served until 1952. In fact, he died on election night in November of 1952. He was re-elected to office the night he passed away. He happened to live in the Graymere Hotel at that time, by the way. Sabath is important because he served as a model for bringing people like Judge Harry Fisher, Mike and Moe Rosenberg, and Jacob Arvey into the Democratic party.

Now when we look at politics and Jews, you have to separate local elections from national elections. For most Jews, the local elections are really important. Sure, foreign affairs were significant, but only as they related to policies that might affect brethren and sisters overseas. The most important political figure was probably the local precinct captain. Again, it had nothing to do with ideology, but simply that he was someone who could help you out in a time of need, not give you justice, not really determine what was right or wrong, that was something the courts would decide, but someone who could really help you out in time of need. There were two people who I think came to symbolize this more than any other. One of course would have been Jake Arvey and the second would have been Henry Horner, two very different people, and I'd just like to say a little about both of them.

Jacob Arvey was born in November, 1895, probably not far from where our own Irv Cutler's mother had her chicken store, roughly around LaSalle and Roosevelt Road. His father died shortly after he was bar mitzvahed. Arvey got very involved at the JPI, went to law school, studied law, practiced before he was twenty-one, and then made a decision that he wanted to go into politics. This would be a great avenue of mobility for him and for countless numbers of his constituents. He moved into the Lawndale neighborhood.

Now Chicago until 1921 had thirty-five wards, not fifty wards the way it does today, with two aldermen from each ward. And Jake Arvey got involved with the-- we call it a political organization today--headed by John Toman and Joseph Kostner. It was a Bohemian-Czeck political organization. In 1921 the City Council re-districted the political wards of the City of Chicago and we came up with the fifty wards we have today, and they created the 24th ward. Arvey was faced with a real decision: should he leave the 34th ward of Kostner and Toman and move into the 24th ward where he might not have a political future, because the ruling figures in that 24th ward were Ruben Rosenberg, Michael Rosenberg, and Moe Rosenberg, and Arvey represented a different faction. Well, a peace pact was worked out, some sort of temporary shalom, between the Arvey factions and the Rosenberg factions. Mike Rosenberg became the ward committeeman. In Chicago the ward committeeman is the man with all the power. He's the one with the jobs. He's the one with the clout. Arvey became the alderman, elected in 1923, and he remained alderman only until 1934.

Some interesting things happened in the meanwhile. In 1928 Michael Rosenberg died rather unexpectedly. I have a whole theory about death as an avenue of mobility in politics. For those of you who know something about the late Mayor Richard J. Daley's career, you remember he advanced rather decidedly when certain people died, and the same thing happened to Jake Arvey. When Mike Rosenberg died, he was succeeded by his brother Moe. Now Moe couldn't hold public office because he had spent some time in a federal penitentiary for receiving stolen goods. (This is another side of Chicago Jewish history that has to be written about if we're ever to get an accurate picture. There are Jewish good guys and there are Jewish bad guys.) Because Moe couldn't hold public office, he became the ward committeeman, which is a private office. Arvey remained as alderman. He became the mouthpiece for the Democratic machine in the City Council for Mayor Kelly. He had a very close relationship with Cermak who preceded Kelly, and in 1933 Moe Rosenberg passed away also rather unexpectedly, and Jacob Arvey, simply by quirk of fate, became ward committeeman.

In 1936, of course, when FDR ran for his second term, out of 21,000 votes cast in the 24th ward, Franklin Delano Roosevelt received more than 20,000 votes, and Alf Landon got 700. Everyone referred to Jacob Arvey as the number one precinct captain in the entire United States. Arvey then went on to have a most illustrious career for another ten or fifteen years. He did very well until he made some mistakes about 1950 in slating certain people for public office, and then he really retired from the active scene. But Jacob Arvey, as successful as he was, was always looked down on by a certain segment in the Chicago Jewish community, particularly the more affluent, the older, established community, that could trace its roots back to the 1860's, 1870's and 1880's, because he was really sort of a "new man."

On the other hand, you have a man like Henry Horner. Henry Horner is very interesting: he came from a Chicago Jewish family that goes back to the founding decade of Jewry here in Chicago; he was a member of the Standard Club (Jacob Arvey and the East Europeans weren't accepted in the Standard Club); a lawyer, he became a judge and between 1914-1930 he was the judge of the probate court, winning each new election with progressively larger margins. One time in fact he had no primary opposition at all in the Democratic party. He belonged to both Sinai and K.A.M. Congregations, but he wasn't a devout Jew. Henry Horner observed the High Holidays, but didn't practice other Jewish rituals. He was the type of man, however, who had a good working relationship with the Jake Arveys and the Mike and Moe Rosenbergs, the Harry Fishers, the Adolph Sabaths, and he was also the type of person who could relate to the Emil G. Hirsches, the Julius Rosenwalds and so on, whereas the Jake Arveys had a little difficulty, perhaps a great deal of difficulty, in relating to the Julius Rosenwalds and the Emil G. Hirsches.

Henry Horner was the Democratic party's choice for governor in 1932. It was kind of unusual for a Jew to be selected as the gubernatorial candidate, but remember, 1932 was a depression year, and the candidate who really wanted to run for governor was Anton Cermak. However, the party leaders decided he would be unacceptable, and they picked Henry Horner. There was a lot of anti-semitism in the 1932 campaign. There was also a lot of pride in the Jewish community in the 1932 campaign. For example, the Daily Jewish Courier proclaimed that Chicago Jews had a dual duty: the primary duty was to vote for Judge Horner; the secondary duty was to vote for the rest of the Democratic party. Well, Henry Horner won overwhelmingly in 1932.

Something happened between 1932 and 1936. Briefly, Henry Horner wouldn't take orders from the Chicago Democratic machine, the Kelly-Nash machine decided to dump Henry Horner, he decided to buck the machine, ran against the machine, and defeated the machine. And Jacob Arvey tried to defeat Henry Horner in the primary election of 1936. You wouldn't expect anything else, because Arvey was a machine man. He was a loyal party man! and that's the basis of the machine--loyalty--that's the basis of any organization. They got together after it was all over. It's kind of an interesting story--I do not have the time to go into it in great detail--but a man like Henry Horner, and Jacob Arvey to a much lesser degree, can be looked at as a catalyst, uniting the traditional Republican German Jewish community with the more diverse East European masses. I would contend that an individual like Henry Horner formed a bridge that helped the two communities get together.

I think eventually we come to have a more unified Jewish community in Chicago because of the ending of mass immigration, the horrible experience of World War II, and the tremendous mobility of the American Jewish community and the Chicago Jewish community, so that really when we talk about a Jewish community in Chicago, we're talking about many Jewish communities. What I've tried to do in my own work is just to give people an idea of new ways of looking at the Chicago Jewish community.

Thank you.

JUDAH L. GRAUBART

When I was invited to speak before a meeting of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society about some of the work that my wife, Alice, and I had done on the book that we are writing now, I accepted out of a great sense of loyalty and commitment to the organization, but in doing so, I also had the very distinct feeling, "Given our area of work, of what possible interest could the United States during the 1930's be to the Chicago Jewish Historical Society; and for that matter, how are we even going to relate the evolution, or should we say de-evolution, of East European Jewish culture, of Yiddishkeit, in the United States after 1924, to the Chicago Jewish scene?"

In giving this some thought, we found that there were indeed some very interesting issues and questions which had arisen in the course of our work, both our first book, Decade of Destiny, and in the research that we have been doing now on the American Jewish community. Let me explain it this way. When we went around the country interviewing various people about their experiences during the 1930's, our intention was to do a book about what happened to American society during the years of the Depression, beyond the "hard times" that we all knew about from Studs Terkel's magnificent book. So we talked to people who were involved in movies, sports, radio, politics, government, music, protest movements, just about any area that one could conceive of, and we developed what we hoped was an across-the-broad picture of a tremendously dynamic and creative era in American society. Of course included among those interviewees were a number of American Jews and naturally some of them from Chicago. It was with these few, but as it turned out for us, historically significant interviews with American Jews that the questions and issues which we would encounter later on in much greater number first arose.

Likewise, when we began the work for our present book, From Generation to Generation, interviewing members of three generations of American Jewry from 1924 to 1980 about their experiences with East European Jewish culture, we again found that there were certain trends, certain issues, which this time were so prominent and so direct that they could not be overlooked in the process of assembling this material. And it is one particular set of these trends and issues which I am about to share with you.

The principal issue that presented itself in many of our interviews was both an issue and a very bitterly phrased question from the American Jewish community. Namely, what was American Jewry doing, the leadership, the gedolim, as well as the amcha, the people; what was American Jewry doing during the 1930's, why was there supposedly so little response to the threat of German anti-semitism and Nazism? Over and over this question presented itself, particularly with Chicago Jews from the 1930's period, and also with many Jews from other communities as well: Shimon Weber, the editor of the Jewish Daily Forward (now the Forward); Emanuel Celler, the former congressman from New York; Dorothy Rosenman, the widow of the late Judge Samuel Rosenman, a close advisor to President Roosevelt, and so on. But I was particularly interested in the response of Chicago Jewry, because Chicago Jews were then and still are so representative of the total American Jewish community. What we found in answer to this question every time

we alluded to it in an interview session was first of all a very strong emotional response, much more so than when we talked about any other matter, such as Palestine or the creation of the State of Israel. Not only did we get a very strong response, but one with two components, each at opposite ends of the spectrum. The first component was what we might call condemnation of or anger at the American Jewish community leadership of the 1930's from people whom we interviewed. Typically they said something like, "Yes we tried to warn them about the threats of Nazism, fascism, anti-semitism and what was happening in Germany, but no one would listen to us; we tried and we tried, but those fools wouldn't listen."

I heard this from Shimon Weber in New York and Paul Novick, the editor of the Jewish Daily Freiheit, and others, But I'd like to share with you one quotation in particular which I think helps to describe this picture very vividly. It's impossible to believe in this day and age that such incidents took place, but nonetheless they did. This is a story my father told me about some of his very early experiences as a young rabbi in Des Moines in the early 1930's:

In Des Moines I recall, to the shame of the people and the rabbinate of that city, they brought a Nazi, Hjalmar Schacht [who was the Finance Minister of the Third Reich] to speak and I said, "What are you doing, you are smuggling in a Nazi," but they couldn't see it. They said, "What do you mean, he's not a Nazi it's not going to be so bad." So at a meeting of the governing body of the community, of which I was a member, they took me to task. "This young rabbi," they said--I was only in my twenties--"has the chutzpah to speak out against the elders. What kind of nonsense is he talking about?" I quoted a Hebrew poet: "The Middle Ages are upon us. This is going to be a horrible thing." Not that I had facts. I just intuitively felt that something horrible was going to happen to our people, and they said, "No, you're naive, what are you talking about. It's your naivete." Well, it wasn't pleasant.¹

Again, in interviewing Dina Halpern for our present project, I spoke with her about her experiences in the Yiddish theatre when she came to the United States in 1938 and what her impressions were about how the Yiddish Theatre, since it was an expression of American Jewish culture, was reacting to this threat of nazism. She said:

I don't think that during this period the Yiddish theatre in the United States reflected much awareness of nazism the way we did in Europe. In America there was no such awareness. For instance, I remember when I came here in 1938 I was put in a play called "My Meidele's Chasana." It was led by a star named Itzik Felt. My part was that of a widow whose husband had been killed by the Nazis and brought to the United States with her little girl by some relatives. The play was written by a writer named Willy Segal who was not a real playwright, but a manufacturer of such productions for the entertainment theatre. It was so mediocre, it meant nothing.

¹Judah L. Graubart & Alice V. Graubart, Decade of Destiny, Contemporary Books, Inc., Chicago, 1978, p. 149.

Then she went on to mention that the New Yiddish Art Theatre in New York did do some plays about the tragedy in Europe, "The Miracle of the Warsaw Ghetto," "We Will Live, We Will not Die," by David Bergelson. But then she concludes the section by saying:

However, the other [Yiddish] theatres were theatres of entertainment where people could come and laugh. Plays about the First World War, about emigration from Czarist Russia, about the alter heim, yes, those were in abundance and people flocked to see them. No, I don't know why there were so few outright anti-Nazi plays. Perhaps there was not yet a perspective. Perhaps the tragedy was too close and the pain too poignant, too sharp. Although at the same time those cheap, undignified, illogical plays were being done on Second Avenue, there were anti-Nazi plays on Broadway, like "Tomorrow the World" or "Skipper Next to God," so I don't know, I just don't know."²

And finally, in this category, a man whom we just heard a fascinating talk about, Jacob Arvey, said to us in an interview about the Bund in Chicago during this time:

Yes, the Bund was spreading Nazi propaganda, but there were people who would fan out when the Bund was having a meeting and break them up. We had a member of the Police Department who was Jewish, a German immigrant who infiltrated their ranks, so we got to know where they were going to meet. There were people who cultivated pool halls and restaurants, Zucky's on the West Side and Tuchman's on the North Side. I knew that Zucky and Tuchman were recruiting university people who were leaders to go out there. Did I organize them? I did not. Aid them, yes, I admit that quite frankly.

And then he went on to say, in concluding:

In 1939 I attended a meeting at the home of Rabbi Solomon Goldman, where Chaim Weizmann, then the president of the World Zionist Organization was speaking. He was trying to get money to aid the Jewish victims of Nazi oppression and he said, "If the Allies win this war, pardon me, gentlemen, when the Allies win this war, you will have no Jewish problem; there will be no Jews." So he had an awareness of the implications of Hitler's program, but most people never dreamed of the ultimate conclusion.³

So there you have three prominent and rather representative leaders of the American Jewish community, saying, in effect, "Nu? Where was the rest of the Jewish community then when we had warning?" Solomon Goldman was warning about the threat of Nazism in 1939--this was two and a half years before the final solution actually went into effect, and of course nobody dreamed of what was going to happen.

²Interview with Dina Halpern conducted by Judah L. Graubart.

³Graubart & Graubart, op. cit., p. 96.

Well, that's all well and good, but at the same time we found in our interviews the totally opposite reaction, one, not of anger or self-castigations, but rather one of saying, in effect, "Don't blame us, we were doing everything we could; we had the war to contend with. America was at war. We had to defeat the Germans and manufacture arms, etc., etc., etc. So if you want to be Monday morning quarterbacks and stand back and look at what happened back then, fine, go ahead, but it's really not a very legitimate analysis. You can't blame us.

Let me give you one of the most poignant quotations in this area. It's from Philip Klutznick, who cited an incident when he was attending a conference on the Holocaust at the Hebrew University Institute of Contemporary Jewry in New York:

A professor from a northeastern college, himself a refugee as a youngster from Germany, stood up and said, "The trouble was that American Jews didn't react and America didn't react. If, at the time of the Kristallnacht they had sent one plane and bombed Hamburg, everything would have been over." Finally, amidst this kind of discussion I couldn't hold myself back any longer, and I got up and said, "I think we ought not base our consideration of the problems on the mistaken evaluation of reality at that time. I moved to Washington in October of '41 for what was to be 60 days and I ended up staying for six years. I was in the executive office of the President at the time of Pearl Harbor, handling a certain assignment. We didn't have anti-aircraft guns to protect Washington in December of '41, let alone planes; we didn't have a plane that could fly across the ocean in those days. I remember as late as '42 traveling across the country day and night, and we were opening plants to build planes that were just coming off the line. So you're talking about sending planes that we didn't have to a place that we couldn't go because we were not at war, and even when we were at war, we could not have mounted that kind of offensive. We had given everything that we had to the Allies, but, people forget what the realities of life were at that time. They forget these realities and condemn people who had no knowledge of what was happening, and not being able to do anything about it, weren't entitled to be condemned.⁴

And again, another very representative figure, not only of Chicago, but likewise of American Jewry as well, Irv Kupcinet, who back in the early 40's was writing "Kup's Column." He began by telling us the work he was doing with the A.D.L.:

During the war I was very well briefed through various sources, including the Anti-Defamation League and other organizations of that nature. I worked very closely with them on any number of stories pertaining to what was happening in Europe as well as in this country. If there was anything locally, we would go after it right away. There wasn't too much discussion of the Holocaust in those days. There was just a great deal of resentment and stupor

⁴From interview with Philip Klutznick conducted by Judah L. Graubart.

that such a thing could happen. While we referred to what was happening over there many times in our column, the war was the dominant theme. Beating the Nazis was the important thing, so it obliterated most of the coverage about Nazi persecution of the Jews. Wiping out the Nazis was the most important thing. The Jewish issue was underlying it at that time.⁵

So we have had a few representative samplings of quotations and very diverse opinions about what American Jewry thought was or was not being done within their community during the days of German anti-semitism, quotations and opinions which in turn raise another question, namely, what was happening then? Do we even know? And do American Jews have a responsibility to own up to whether or not they were doing everything that could be done? Unfortunately, the opinions of American Jews who lived through that era aside, we know very little about what American Jewry did during the Holocaust or the years before because very little research and less writing has been done. There have been, of course, the books, While Six Million Died and The Politics of Rescue, and a couple of Ph.D. theses, but the Holocaust is an area that until recently has been very much avoided by the American Jewish community. It's almost been locked away, as if people were trying to avoid it, rationalizing that, "We have so many other issues to consider today, there are so many other areas of history and study," but really saying in effect, "The Holocaust is too painful for us to study."

Ultimately, of course, the Holocaust is something that we not only must study and come to grips with as an American Jewish community and as individual Jews, but it is something from which we must learn certain lessons as well. For example, we can relate what did or did not happen in the 30's to the contemporary question of Soviet Jewry. Indeed, I remember so well when the demonstrations that began about 1970 for the first of the Soviet show trials, it was almost as if the debates about how American Jewry should respond were being repeated from the 1930's: "Should we or shouldn't we demonstrate, should we or shouldn't we be militant? We don't want to go out in the streets with this kind of issue, after all, we'll go through channels." And others were saying, "Yes, to save Soviet Jewry we have to demonstrate." So in terms of the lessons to be derived from our response and applied to our people's situation today, there is very much that we have to learn from this.

But on another, much deeper level, the Holocaust is something that each of us American Jews, that each of us as Jews from whatever era, must incorporate into our very being, that we must never forget, that we must never let pass from our consciousness. I'd like to close with a brief quotation from a man I believe sums this issue up very beautifully and meaningfully for all of us. This man's message of commitment to his people and through this commitment to the meaning of the Holocaust for the Jewish people is one for all of us to consider, for however we manifest our link to our tradition, the Holocaust is the most profound issue of modern Jewish times.

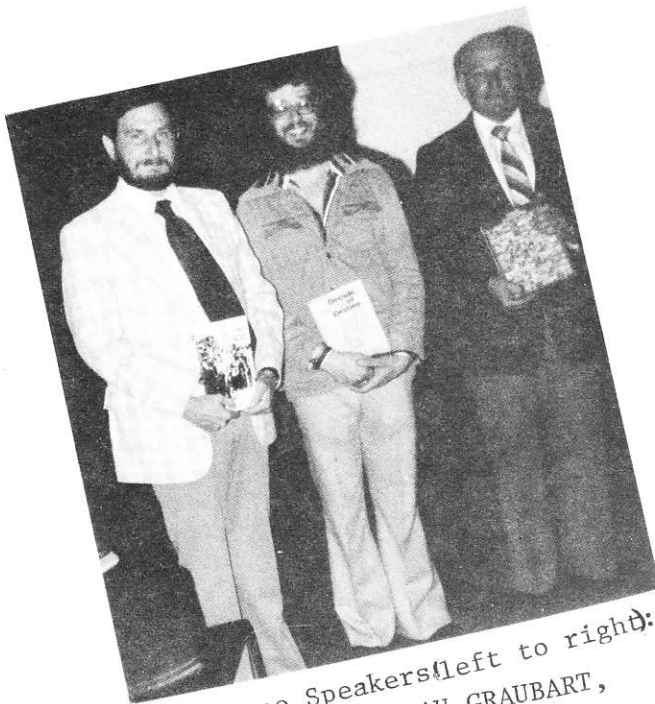
The speaker is Maynard Wishner, who has been very active within the Jewish organizational community and is currently the national president of the American

⁵Interview with Irv Kupcinec conducted by Judah L. Graubart.

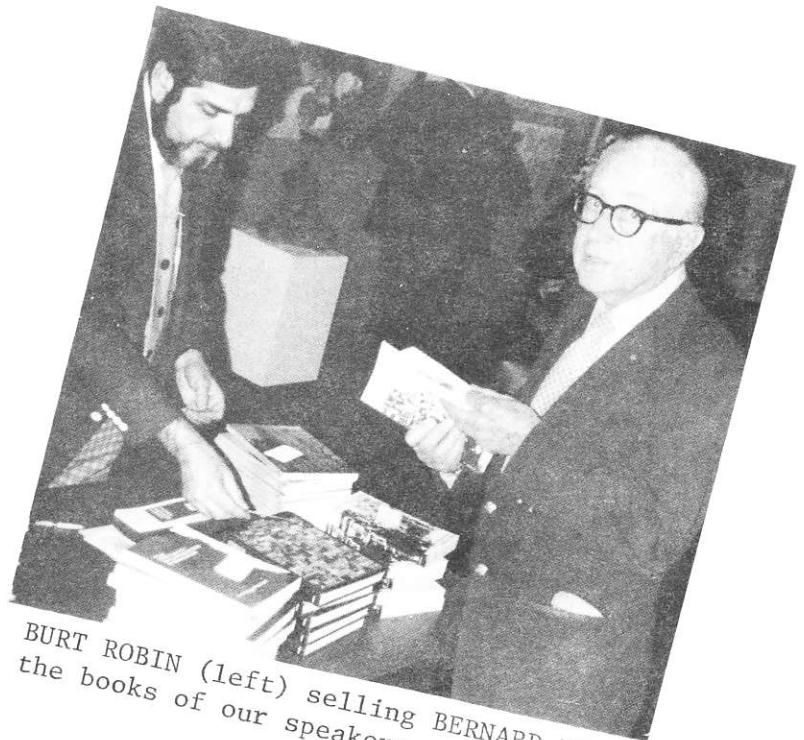
Jewish Committee. He tells an anecdote of how he was going to speak to Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Organization memorial observance, and although he speaks of his commitment to Yiddish, we can apply his lesson to any kind of Jewish commitment:

I asked myself, all baloney aside, 'what are you capable of saying to these people on that subject in Yiddish,' because the fundamental question was, what right did I have to talk to them on this question, and it was the language which determined the answer, the theme of the speech, because through the language I was able to bridge the unbridgeable. Through the language I could say that there was a part of me that was a part of them. I remember coming to the part where I wanted to say, 'I wonder what it was like to look out the window and to see a real German helmet, a real German helmet on a man going by. What did it feel like. I, who had never felt that, how could I know?' But I didn't know how to say helmet and I wasn't going to go to the dictionary and I wasn't going to ask anyone for help with this speech. So I ended up saying, "I, who have never heard the beat, beat, beat of soles of German boots on a pavement." That was the idea of the speech. I was able to come closer to them than I ever would again. I remember I broke down and cried twice. Then the next night, Monday, at the Jewish Federation board meeting, Sol Goldstein got up to make his report on the Memorial event. I was sitting in the back of the room and Sol was facing the front and he said, "The speaker was Maynard Wishner who came and spoke to us." Then he turned to me and said, "Maynard, you asked the question what right did you have to talk to us? I will tell you. We heard your words. You were with us at Auschwitz."⁶

⁶Interview with Maynard Wishner conducted by Judah L. Graubart.



Our Three Speakers (left to right):
ED MAZUR, JUDAH GRAUBART,
IRVING CUTLER



BURT ROBIN (left) selling BERNARD EPSTEIN
the books of our speakers.

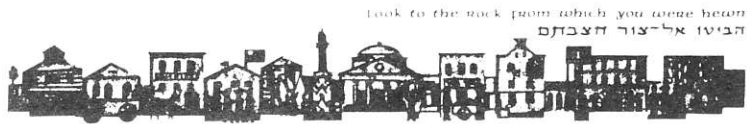
PICTURES FROM OUR MARCH 9 MEETING



Chuck Bernstein (left) getting ready to introduce the guest speaker Rabbi Morris Gutstein.



The audience enthralled by Rabbi Gutstein. Moselle and Norman Schwartz, front row, right.



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