

MICHIGAN

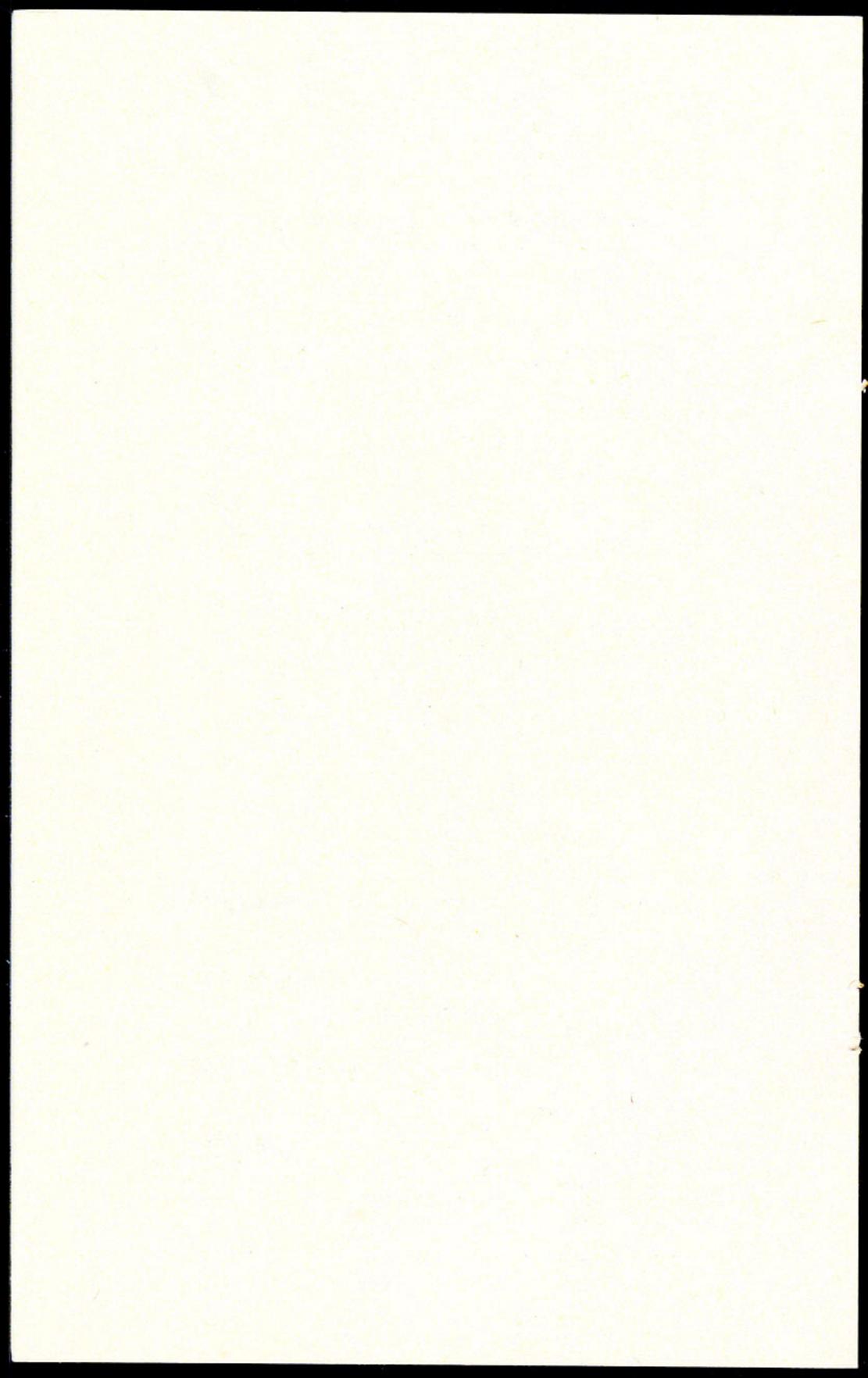
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MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

... אשר ישאלון בניכם מחר את אבותם... (יהושע ד:כא)

"When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come . . ."

—Joshua 4:21

Volume 18 June 1978 — Sivan 5738 No. 2

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The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, founded in 1959, promotes the study and research of Michigan Jewish history, publishes periodicals, collects documents and records, maintains a permanent depository for such documents and records at the Jewish archives of the Burton Collection of the Detroit Public Library, and commemorates sites of Jewish historical significance.

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DR. MAX BALLIN AND HARPER HOSPITAL OF DETROIT

Part III

By IRVING I. EDGAR, M.D.

In his time, as already mentioned,* Dr. Max Ballin was considered the foremost surgeon in Michigan and "among the greatest physicians of the State,"¹ having not only a national reputation, but one that was also international. He had come from Berlin, Prussia to Leadville, Colorado in 1896, where he had soon become surgeon to the American Smelting Co., operating at St. Vincent's Hospital in that city. It was not until five years later, 1901, that he came to Detroit, Michigan, at the invitation of a prominent surgeon of the state who had seen him operate in Leadville. Here in Detroit too, he soon developed a fine reputation as a surgeon, operating at the then Detroit Sanitarium. Many of the surgeons at Harper Hospital came to see him operate with his usual skillfulness, and it was inevitable that he should have been invited to join Harper's staff.

Here at Harper Hospital, Dr. Ballin found an apt arena for the development of his special surgical talents in the healing art, and the hospital did indeed benefit greatly by his work, bringing "fame and honor and added luster"² to that institution.

Although Dr. R. C. Moehlig states that Dr. Ballin became "Consulting Surgeon at Harper in 1906, attending in 1908. . ."³ the 44th Annual Report of Harper Hospital (1907) already lists him as "attending surgeon," as does the 45th Annual Report.

Later, he became chief of the Department of Surgery (1917) as well as "head of the Department of Special Surgery"⁴ and head of "Surgery of the Nervous System and Thyroid Gland." Additionally, from 1920 — 1932, he was the Chief of Staff, except for two years of this period when he was chairman of the entire medical staff and on the Executive Committee of the Medical Department. For many years, he was also on the general Board of Trustees of Harper Hospital.⁵

From the very beginning of his association with Harper Hospital in 1906, Dr. Ballin's personality and superb medical and surgical training made itself felt in the various areas where he worked.

The authors of *Harper of Detroit*, writing of the "Era of Ex-

*This is the third and last article on Dr. Max Ballin in the series, "Some Early Jewish Physicians in Michigan." Part I appeared in the January, 1970 issue of *Michigan Jewish History*; Part II appeared in the July, 1971 issue of *Michigan Jewish History*.

IRVING I. EDGAR, M.D. is a past president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, and currently he is the editor of *Michigan Jewish History*. Dr. Edgar is in private practice in Detroit, and he also serves on the staffs of Harper-Grace, Sinai and Doctors Hospitals.

pansion" of that hospital at the beginning of the 20th Century, remark that although "the Medical Staff of the Hospital was slower to change. . .the old names and faces. . .still in evidence, still doing good work and exercising an almost autocratic control over medical policy, — sometimes to the despair of younger men. . .," nevertheless, ". . .along with them were new men, men who were winning reputations, and who, by the end of the decade and long after, would be giants in their own right. That list of men included Drs. Max Ballin. . ., Louis J. Hirschman. . ., Hugo Freund. . ." among others.⁶

Dr. Ballin was always in the forefront of progressive change at Harper Hospital. Thus in his early years at the hospital, he spoke up again and again for modernization of records, for departmentalization, for specialization, for more teaching. He saw the fruits of much of his work in the development of the hospital. He worked on the important committee to reorganize and to departmentalize Harper, since the only special departments until 1908 were those of surgery and of contagious diseases.⁷

It was early in March, 1909 that this committee was ready to report its recommendations to the Board of Trustees, in spite of the fact that a minority disagreed with the recommendations, opposing the majority "old guard." On December 28, 1909, the trustees adopted the staff majority report which Dr. Ballin helped formulate and develop. And so, Harper Hospital, patterning itself after Johns Hopkins Hospital, finally organized five main departments: Surgery; Medicine; Gynecology and Obstetrics; Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat; and Research. These departments all had subdivisions allowing for the specialization which Dr. Ballin fostered and which had been prevalent in Berlin in the various hospitals with which he had been affiliated.

However, the general practitioners and a faction of the active staff itself opposed reorganization, which to them amounted to making the hospital a "closed" one. The conflict went on for some time, finally culminating in a large meeting at the Wayne County Medical Society to consider the matter in all its aspects and implications. Dr. Ballin was in the thick of the fight. The authors of *Harper of Detroit* comment on the gathering:

At one of the largest meetings ever held by the Wayne County Medical Society, a resolution was passed condemning the Harper action. This was done despite a spirited defense by Dr. Max Ballin who insisted that the change in policy meant nothing because Harper was full at the time anyway and the making of a closed hospital in no way affected the shortage of beds in Detroit.⁹

Dr. Ballin was also in the forefront in the development of teaching at Harper, not only for the interns who by Michigan law (1923) had to take a general rotating internship with provisions for their training, but also for the further professional training in the various specialties, "under the direct supervision of the Chiefs of the various departments. Dr. Max Ballin. . .as Chief of Staff (1922) agitated

for regular postgraduate courses which he was successful in getting started in November 1923." In addition ". . . courses for practitioners were given in early 1924 in Surgery under Ballin." Dr. Ballin considered the results to have been so successful that in April, 1924 he recommended the establishment of a post-graduate school on a permanent basis as a means of keeping "the real hospital of Harper at its proper level." "No hospital," Ballin stated later, "fulfills its full function unless every reasonable attempt is made to use its facilities for promoting the progress of Medicine and Surgery."¹⁰

Dr. Ballin was active in the direct development of the facilities of Harper Hospital. Thus in 1924, he was on the committee appointed by the trustees "to study plans and formulate a policy for the future development of Harper Hospital, number of departments and the number of patients in each department."¹¹ This committee recommended that the hospital be expanded to 650 beds. Soon Albert Kahn, the famous Detroit architect and friend of Dr. Ballin, was commissioned to draw up plans. Once the plans had been given approval, the money started to come in. Dr. Ballin announced the first major donation, \$125,000, for the new operating rooms. It came from Mrs. Alfred G. Wilson, the former Mrs. John Dodge, who had been a patient of his.¹²

Another committee was appointed for further fund-raising, consisting of several of the trustees and of Dr. Ballin.¹³ The committee's work was highly successful and Harper got its increase in beds in the then new eight-story Brush Street Unit Building.

In this present year, as we view Harper Hospital's tremendous growth and its great place in the history of metropolitan Detroit's medical advance, it must become readily evident that Dr. Max Ballin played a significant role in laying the foundations for such developments.

Indeed, that whole quadrumvirate of Jewish physicians — David J. Levy, Louis J. Hirschman, Hugo Freund, and Max Ballin — played a very decisive role in the full development of Harper hospital to its eminent place in the state of Michigan.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- ¹Moehlig, Robert C., "Harper Hospital Profiles: I, Dr. Max Ballin," *Harper Hospital Bulletin*, Jan. - Feb., 1959, pp. 26 - 31; p. 27.
- ²Woodward, Frank B. and Mason, Phillip B., *Harper of Detroit*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1964), p. 317.
- ³See Annual Report of Harper Hospital.
- ⁴*Harper Hospital Bulletin*, Vol. 21, No. 2., April, 1910.
- ⁵See Annual Reports of Harper Hospital.
- ⁶*Harper of Detroit*, pp. 221 - 222; (see also Note 2).
- ⁷*Harper of Detroit*, pp. 237 - 238.
- ⁸*Ibid.*, p. 239.
- ⁹*Ibid.*, p. 242.
- ¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 252 - 253. See also *Harper Hospital Bulletins* IV Second Series,

April, 1924, p. 9. and V, (1st Quarter, 1925), p. 4.

¹¹Ibid., p. 268; Harper Hospital Trustees Executive Committee Minutes, 1915 - 1945, p. 156.

¹²Harper Hospital Trustees Minutes, 1924 - 1933.

¹³*Harper of Detroit*, p. 269.

CORRECTION

Michigan Jewish History, January 1978, page 15 to read:
Mr. Grunauer also asserts that the Myers family did not move to Tower, Michigan in 1897, based on the fact that he visited them in East Tawas in 1901.

A BATTLE IN THE AIR: DETROIT'S JEWS ANSWER FATHER COUGHLIN

By ADAM SIMMS

INTRODUCTION

Detroit was a Mecca for American anti-Semites during the 1930's, and its resident prophet was the Rev. Charles Edward Coughlin (1891 -).

Known to millions of admirers and detractors as "Father Coughlin, the radio priest," the pastor of Royal Oak, Michigan's Shrine of the Little Flower was but one of a small army of anti-Semitic agitators who regularly found sympathetic audiences in Detroit. Some, like Gerald L.K. Smith, William Dudley Pelley, and Gerald Winrod were right-wing extremists whose self-appointed mission was to awaken the American people to the dangers of Franklin Roosevelt's "communist Jew Deal." Others, like Fritz Kuhn, of the German American Bund, and Heinz Spanknoebel, of the Friends of the Hitler Movement in America, urged Americans to emulate the Third Reich and its strictures against "the Jewish menace." Although the field was crowded and the competition amongst them was often fierce, it was Coughlin who, in the closing years of the decade, developed as the most formidable threat to American Jewish security.

Detroit's Jewish community provided the crucial first line of defense and counter-offense in meeting Coughlin's challenge. It was his mastery of radio as a propaganda tool that made him so commanding and dangerous an opponent. To offset and neutralize the Royal Oak pastor's impact, Detroit's Jewish community leaders, under the aegis of the Jewish Community Council, met Coughlin on his own ground — the airways — with the Rev. Walton E. Cole, a Unitarian minister, as their spokesman.

The following account outlines the initial stages of the Jewish Community Council's campaign. It is taken from an unsigned carbon copy of a memorandum which appears to have been written by William I. Boxerman, then the Council's executive director, and has been edited for length. The document is currently located in the Council office's files.

— A. S.

ADAM SIMMS is an Assistant Area Director in the American Jewish Committee's Chicago Midwest Regional Office. He served as Community Affairs Associate of the Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Detroit from 1974 - 1977. Mr. Simms earned his Master's degree and Candidate in Philosophy certificate in history at the University of Michigan. He is currently writing a book about the efforts of the Rev. Walton Cole and the Jewish Community Council in countering Fr. Coughlin.

(Editor's Note: At the author's request, misspellings and other linguistic errors in the original text of the document have been preserved here for the sake of authentic quotation.)

JULY 26, 1939

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS IN PROGRAM UNDERTAKEN
AGAINST FATHER COUGHLIN WITH
REV. WALTON E. COLE AS A SPEAKER

After considering various approaches to the Coughlin situation the executive committee of the Jewish Community Council, in May 1939, decided to enlist the services of Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver as a speaker on a series of radio programs emanating from Detroit. A committee of two visited Rabbi Silver, but was unable to secure his cooperation because of ill health and several other factors. However, Rabbi Silver suggested Rev. Walton E. Cole, minister of the First Unitarian Church in Toledo, Ohio, as a man who, from his previous talks against Father Coughlin, might be well qualified to undertake the type of program that we had in mind. . .

We found Rev. Cole very eager to be the instrument for combatting Coughlinism. He related that for the past eight years he had been studying Father Coughlin and his propagandist technique; that he had visited Father Coughlin at the Shrine of the Little Flower, where he had gathered considerable information. . . For the past two years he has been recording in his own home every talk given by Father Coughlin over the radio, and through a careful study of his voice was able to imitate Father Coughlin to a remarkable degree. In short, Rev. Cole felt not only willing but able to embark upon a program against Father Coughlin in accordance with any reasonable plan outlined by the Jewish Community Council. . .

Our executive committee met on Friday, June 9th, at which time the Rev. Cole was present and gave his approach to the Coughlin situation. He was agreeable to the idea of going on the air; he would approach the problem in such a manner as to avoid making it entirely a Jewish issue. In general, there were two ways of doing this, (1) Coughlin's whole propagandist technique had to be analyzed and exposed, (2) a direct approach must be made to Father Coughlin as a personality, he must be discredited not only as a Jew monger, but as one opposed to democracy. Rev. Cole felt that if we so desired, we could secure the endorsement of the Unitarian Fellowship for Social Justice for such a program. After carefully consider-



FR. CHARLES E. COUGHLIN

ing the entire proposition, the executive committee unanimously decided to make proper financial and other provisions for launching a program against Coughlin, including (1) a huge mass meeting at the Naval Armory; (2) one or more radio broadcasts. It was also decided that the program was to be announced as being sponsored by the Unitarian Fellowship for Social Justice, the idea being that although the financing, the ground work, the publicity, and the entire nature of the program was to be determined by us, it be done in such a manner that the general public could make no direct connection between the Jewish Community Council and the program.

Thereafter, throughout the month of June and the early part of July, much time was devoted to working out the details of the program. Because of the fact that Rev. Cole had reason to believe from previous experience that his wires were being tapped and letters intercepted, we conducted all of our negotiations with him through sending a member of our committee to Toledo, who would act as an intermediary between our committee and Rev. Cole.

The mass meeting was set for Monday, July 24th, at the Naval Armory, and time was purchased on WJR, CKLW and WMBC for a half hour of Rev. Cole's one and a half hour address.

As matters developed, we decided to have Rev. Cole address the radio over station WJR on Thursday evening, July 20th, at 9:00 P.M. for a fifteen minute talk, in the course of which he announced the meeting of July 24th.

An elaborate program of publicity was undertaken. Ten thousand letters were addressed to Jews. An equal number was addressed to non-Jews. Five thousand posters were distributed, five hundred of which were carried for one solid week before the meeting on the main street car and bus lines. Contacts were made with unions and many other non-Jewish groups. Announcement was made that tickets would be available at the office of the Unitarian Church. Five hundred ministers received a personal letter from Dr. Shurly

Johnson, assistant pastor of the Central Methodist Church, announcing the meeting and requesting that publicity be given to it in the church bulletins. A very thorough canvass was made of the Jewish community; speakers visited eighty-five different organizations, distributing tickets and emphasizing the importance of the meeting. A special six-minute recording prepared by Rev. Cole was played at the meetings of the largest Jewish organizations, announcing the meeting and extending an invitation for all people to be present. Free announcements were secured on various news periods of the radio stations. Many organizations both Jewish and non-Jewish, sent a special letter to each of their members, informing them of the meeting and enclosing two tickets of admission. It was emphasized that although admission was free, tickets must be obtained in advance.

Through securing a substantial proportion of Jewish attendance, we were able to accomplish three things: (1) to give an emotional outlet to our Jewish groups who had been clamoring for direct attack on Coughlin; (2) to make sure that the auditorium would be filled; and (3) to insure ourselves against the hall being packed with Coughlinites.

...
On Thursday evening, July 20th, Rev. Cole delivered a fifteen minute address from station WJR. Since the talk was purposely of a general nature and made no reference to Father Coughlin, there was no difficulty of getting the manuscript approved. However, there was at first a refusal on the part of WJR to have the announcer at the close of Rev. Cole's talk say in summary something which read as follows: "Is Father Coughlin an anti-Semite? Is he a Nazi propagandist? What about his controversy with Elliot Roosevelt? Rev. Cole answers these questions in his address "Hitler Over America" etc." The station ultimately yielded and gave the announcement as prepared.

...
It is also worth mentioning that when Rev. Cole insisted upon having the announcer make the remarks referred to above, the station demanded the manuscript of the July 24th talk on the ground that they must see whether he really answers these questions about Coughlin being an anti-semite. No doubt they wished to turn the manuscript over to Father Coughlin. However, Rev. Cole and his assistant insisted that the station would receive the manuscript on Monday and no earlier. On Monday the station was shown the manuscript, but the manuscript was not left with the station. The manuscript was shown first of all to stations CKLW and WMBC, since we felt that if CKLW and WMBC accepted the talk, WJR could not very well refuse to run it, and thus it happened. Rev. Cole's representative spent three hours in station WJR before the station finally agreed to take the talk without making any changes in the text. They advanced several arguments against being able

to carry the talk, but they were very weak arguments and the station realized that it had no alternative but to carry the talk.

...
Adequate police protection was arranged for the meeting on Monday evening, July 27th. The service of non-Jewish legionnaires had been offered and accepted. . .

...
Although the meeting was announced for 8:00 o'clock, several hundred people had already gathered between the hours of 6 and 7. These people were permitted to enter the auditorium, but shortly before 7:00 o'clock they were forced to vacate the building because of an over-powering odor of gas which smelled like a stench bomb. However, the management of the building and the policemen insisted that it was only something wrong with the cooling system. Be that as it may, the people were asked to vacate the auditorium and the doors were locked until 8:00 o'clock, when, after some fumigation, the auditorium was fairly tolerable so far as aroma was concerned.

By that time several thousand people had gathered and by 8:15 not a vacant place was to be had in the auditorium, whose capacity is between 7500 and 8000. The doors were locked and an announcement was made that the loud speakers, for which we had made advanced arrangements, would be turned on in the park bordering on the Naval Armory.

In addition to the people inside the auditorium, a crowd estimated at from two to five thousand, gathered in the park to listen through the public address system. Although it is difficult to say how many non-Jewish people were present, there certainly was a goodly proportion of them, although, of course, there were more Jews than non-Jews in attendance.

...
When Mr. Dale DeWitt, president of the Unitarian Fellowship, introduced Rev. Cole, and the latter stepped up to the microphone, there was a deafening applause, and the whole audience arose spontaneously. The applause lasted for several minutes. Arrangements had been made for broadcasting at 9:00 o'clock. Rev. Cole began to speak at 8:45. . . For the first few minutes Rev. Cole was obviously nervous, which was very natural, because he has never faced so large a public audience. The crowd sat very tensely during the introductory part of his talk, waiting for him to come directly to a treatment of Father Coughlin. When Coughlin's name finally was mentioned, there was a prolonged boo-ing. At other points of his talk the Rev. Cole dwelt on Americanism and democracy, and there was a protracted applause. When he two or three times denounced communism. . . even the communists in the audience applauded. (Of course this is in line with their Trojan Horse tactics).

...
Oddly enough there were no disturbances throughout the speech on the part of any nazis or Coughlinites, although a salesman for Social Justice magazines attempted to sell the publication at the

entrance to the Armory. Several Jews began to argue with him, but no fight ensued.

There was one suspicious looking character standing on the balcony who was reported by several people to have carried a large revolver stuck into his waist band with the handle bulging out. A report of this was made to the police during the course of the meeting. . . Beyond doubt this man was a Coughlin employee, for accompanying him into the auditorium was a certain middle-aged individual whom I recognized as being crew manager for Social Justice Magazine. . .

It is worth noting that following the incident of the man with the revolver, the policemen searched all automobiles entering the grounds of the Naval Armory.

A man whom I recognized to be a paid stooge for Rev. Gerald L. K. Smith, with whom I have had personal contact, also was in attendance at the meeting and seemed to scrutinize carefully the individuals passing from the auditorium.

After the meeting Rev. Cole was exhausted by hundreds of members of the audience who insisted upon shaking hands with him and congratulating him upon the splendid job that he was doing. Rev. Cole relates that what impressed him most was the sincerity and the gratitude of many of the Jewish people. He related the incident of a tottering old lady, obviously Jewish, who shook hands with him and said, "May God keep you in good health for many years to come."

Since the meeting Monday night, in various ways, we have sounded out community sentiment in getting the reactions both of our group and the non-Jewish group. These reactions have been almost unanimously favorable. Members of our own group, particularly, were overcome with joy at the thought that finally, after months of inaction in this respect, an answer in the form of a direct attack had been given to Father Coughlin on his own home territory. . .

Following Father Coughlin's [sic: Rev. Cole's] address an informal gathering was held in the home of one of the members of our community. At that time Rev. Cole expressed himself as more than satisfied with the meeting and the reaction of the audience. . .

. . . we have gone ahead with arrangements for a radio talk this coming Monday evening, over station WJR. The station had demanded that the manuscript be submitted on Thursday, July 27th, and Rev. Cole has been forced to comply with this provision. It will be interesting to note whether the manuscript is accepted, and if so, whether W. J. R. gives this manuscript to Father Coughlin, thus permitting him an opportunity to prepare a reply in advance. Our present plans call for at least two more talks, in addition to next Monday's radio talk.

Already we know that many Jews in our community are mailing money directly to the Unitarian Fellowship. Already many of the organizations affiliated with the Jewish Community Council have

raised the question of wh- they are not called upon for funds with which to finance the program.

At this point, it is our hope that the national Jewish agencies will see fit to make arrangements for Rev. Cole to appear on a national hook-up. The whole problem and the whole burden should not be confined to Detroit.

...

For Further Reading

Sheldon Marcus' *Father Coughlin: The Tumultuous Life of the Priest of the Little Flower* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), and Charles Tull's *Father Coughlin and the New Deal* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1965) are the standard accounts of their subject's career.

George Wolfskill and John A. Hudson's *All but the People: Franklin D. Roosevelt and His Critics, 1933 - 1939* (n.p.: Macmillan, 1969), especially Chap. III. "The Jew Deal. . .", surveys the range of right-wing anti-Semitic activity during the 1930's. Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab take a broader, more analytical view in *The Politics of Unreason: Right-Wing Extremism in America, 1790 - 1970* (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1970).

DETROIT JEWRY'S FINEST HOUR

By RABBI LEON FRAM

FORWARD

Our recorded history has demonstrated, among other things, the capacity of our community to respond to the needs of the times. We take justifiable pride in the concern and generosity which our community has displayed when confronted with a crisis. Equally, we may take pride in the achievements and in the contributions of time, effort and intellect of those individuals called upon to serve at a critical period.

One of the most important periods of such community and individual response occurred during the dark years of the Hitler holocaust when an agency was created by an act of the Jewish Welfare Federation and given the function of conducting a boycott of Nazi goods and services. It was designated "The League for Human Rights," assigned a budget and given an office and staff.

As a member of the Board of Governors of Federation at that time I was present at the meeting when Rabbi Leon Fram, a revered and respected rabbi in Reform Judaism and a leader in Detroit Zionism, was appointed to head the agency. The League's activity marks a significant chapter in the history of the Jewish community of Detroit and in the life of Rabbi Leon Fram. It was generally accepted that the League rendered a vital service beyond our local community, for its activity and organization soon became a model for other Jewish communities throughout America.

The League pursued a vigorous campaign of resistance to Nazism during the prewar years by means of educational materials and mass gatherings. Rabbi Fram was later joined by leading Christian clergy, other community figures and by nonsectarian groups. It was the first organization of its kind to inform the general public of the developing tragedy for the Jewish people on the European continent.

As previously reported in Detroit Jewish Community 1899 - 1975, published by the Jewish Welfare Federation on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary, the agency performed its arduous task with great effectiveness on the local scene during its comparatively short life span and quietly closed its doors when its work was completed, part of it being assumed by the then newly created Jewish Community Council.

LEON FRAM received rabbinical ordination from Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio. He came to Detroit in 1925 and served as rabbi and educational director of Temple Beth El under Rabbi Leo Franklin. In 1941 Rabbi Fram founded Temple Israel, where he presently serves as spiritual leader.

In "Detroit Jewry's Finest Hour" Rabbi Fram contributes a valuable reminiscence of an agonizing period. His recollections of The League for Human Rights and of his own leadership role, are of course, personal; however, for those of us who experienced the anxieties of those dark years, they evoke a group recollection. We are indebted to Rabbi Fram for restoring the larger canvas — for reminding us of the scope and the complexity and the ultimate tragedy of the problem our people faced — for impressing upon us that even against overwhelming odds, people of good will, with selfless and courageous leadership, can make a difference.

— George M. Stutz

* * *

This is a reminiscence of a significant chapter in my life. It is the story of the opportunity that came to me to render a vital service, not only to the Jewish community of Detroit, but to the American and the world Jewish community.

This story begins somewhere in the 1930's. The shadow of Nazism had fallen over the earth and even America began to feel the chill of it.

At a meeting of the Board of the Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit, young Simon Shetzer, scion of an influential family in the life of Detroit Jewry, asked for the floor and delivered an impassioned appeal to the leaders of the organized community to do something more than send money abroad for the relief of fellow-Jews who were hungry and destitute. Nazism, he said, was a movement that threatened us in America, as well as the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe. It was not enough, therefore, to defend ourselves against Nazi accusations. We must make war of Hitlerism, take the offensive against it, and act aggressively to undermine its power, he said.

There was a powerful weapon at hand to use against it. It was the weapon of the boycott. Simon Shetzer then proposed that the Jewish Welfare Federation establish a new agency to be known as the League for Human Rights that would enlist the cooperation of our Christian friends in a boycott of Nazi goods and services, and would engage in a campaign of information that would expose the Nazi conspiracy to dominate the world.

Shetzer knew as he spoke that he was addressing a conservative element, mainly business people who believed that the Jewish community should maintain a low profile, should do nothing that might offend any group in the city, and should avoid any activity that would make the Jews of the city the subject of controversy. Any activity that smacked of the political was foreign to the nature of the Federation. Besides, the idea of a boycott was nothing new. It had already been thoroughly analyzed, and conservative opinion regarded the boycott as a two-edged sword that could wound its

wielder as severely as the enemy it was aimed at. A commercial boycott was bound to cause resentment and expose the Jews to anti-semitic reaction.

Nevertheless, at that historic meeting of the Jewish Welfare Federation, a miracle was performed. Such was the eloquence of Simon Shetzer, so telling his arguments, that the Federation was impelled to act in what might well be termed a revolutionary spirit.

The Shetzer proposal was enacted unanimously, and a new agency was born: the League for Human Rights. It was unlike any other agency in the constellation of the Federation. It was to be budgeted not for any acts of charity, but to give expression to the Maccabean spirit of resistance to the world-wide enemy who denied the right of the Jewish people to exist.

The natural head of this new agency would be the proponent of the idea — Simon Shetzer himself. However, young as he was, Simon already had serious health problems which precluded his undertaking a task which required the expenditure of a staggering amount of energy. I shall never know who it was that suggested my name to Federation. I was at that time a young rabbi who had evinced community consciousness and social sensitivity, but my activity had been confined largely to the pulpit and Jewish education. It was perhaps my Zionist activity that brought my name to the attention of the community leadership, as it required courage in those days to espouse the cause of Zionism in a Reform congregation.

At any rate, when the Federation Committee approached me with the proposal that I head the new organization, they found me not only willing, but eager to undertake the project. I was a young man then, and my heart was aflamed with zeal to serve by beleaguered people.

My first task was to enlist two Christian co-chairmen, a Protestant and a Catholic, whose names would inspire the confidence that the League represented the united will of an American community to defy the Nazi power. If our effort was to succeed, it was necessary to find the leaders in the Christian community who would commit themselves to cooperation with us. I thought at once of Detroit's most eloquent pulpit orator, and famous also as a Lincoln scholar, the Rev. Edgar DeWitt Jones of the Woodward Avenue Christian Church.

I had met him on a memorable occasion when he lent his eloquence to the cause of resistance to Nazism. In the early period of the Hitler upsurge, a Jewish community leader and a close personal friend of mine, Milton Alexander, had organized a huge anti-Nazi protest meeting at the Naval Armory on East Jefferson Avenue, one of Detroit's largest auditoriums. The place was filled to capacity by a crowd of Christians as well as Jews, and the press also gave the event ample coverage. Rev. Edgar DeWitt Jones was the principal speaker. He was notably well informed on the international situation,

and with Lincolnesque eloquence, he exposed the threat posed to American democracy and free world security by Hitler's anti-Semitism. He revealed that Hitler was exploiting anti-Semitism as an instrument first for gaining power in Germany, and then for wresting power over all the earth. Filled with admiration for his remarkable insight and compassion, I made it my business to become personally acquainted with him that very night.

Later on, we exchanged pulpits and became personal friends. So when I called on him to accept the co-chairmanship of the League for Human Rights, he readily agreed.

Now I had to find a leading Catholic to serve as the other co-chairman. My attention turned to Monsignor Edward Hickey. This popular Catholic priest and I had served together on Mayor Frank Murphy's Unemployment Commission. He later became chairman of the Commission, while I took the supportive role of chairman of the committee to investigate labor conditions in Detroit's industries. Our common interest in helping Frank Murphy achieve his heroic rescue of Detroit from the Great Depression brought us together in an ecumenical relationship. He too, agreed without the slightest hesitation, to serve as co-chairman of the League for Human Rights.

The wonderful thing about this co-chairmanship was the unspoken and unwritten agreement that the Christian co-chairmen would leave the execution of the boycott operation entirely to Federation and to me. They did not ask to be consulted on either major policy decisions or on operational plans. They understood that they were lending their names to our movement because they believed in it as a principle, and would leave the operation entirely to our discretion. Were it not for this silent agreement, our movement could have been bogged down in sectarian debate, and little could have been accomplished.

The general American populace was inclined at first to be skeptical of the validity of our movement, so that our League for Human Rights had an uphill battle to wage to win the sympathy of even the kindest of people. The fact is that the American people of the 'thirties could not get themselves to believe our accusations of Nazi atrocities. They thought we were trying to "brainwash" them. There was good reason for this attitude on their part.

During the First World War when the Kaiser's armies sped swiftly across Belgium and into the heart of France, the Belgians and the French accused the German invaders of spreading terror through acts of atrocity. The Germans flatly denied these accusations and countered with the claim that those "atrocity tales" were sheer propaganda. After the First World War, historians generally reached the consensus that the anti-German "atrocity tales" had indeed been without foundation. This remarkable instance of the capacity of the propagandist to mislead the public made a deep impression on the liberal-minded everywhere. So when the German Nazis actually perpetrated atrocities both before and during the Second

World War, the liberal world public was geared to disbelieve. "We have heard those atrocity tales before" was the usual response.

An instance of this skeptical response to our reports on Nazism comes readily to mind. I had made it a custom on the eve of the High Holy Days to deliver a radio sermon on the subject of the Days of Awe. WWJ Radio assigned me fifteen minutes of prime time for this purpose. The manager usually asked for an advance copy of the message. At this time I had decided to inform the Detroit public of the Nazi conspiracy to effect a systematic slaughter of the Jews in all Nazi-occupied territories of Europe. No sooner had the manager read my statement than he telephoned me to say, "Rabbi Fram, we cannot permit you to recite this material over WWJ. We cannot allow our facilities to be used to spread sheer atrocity tales."

When I sought to reassure him that I was only telling the truth, he demanded documentation. I knew that my friend and mentor, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, president of the American Jewish Congress, had furnished the State Department with the evidence on the Nazi plot to exterminate the Jews of Europe. I urged the manager to communicate with the State Department. Within hours, he telephoned me to say that Washington had corroborated my charges. So my High Holy Day message was delivered as originally written. This was the first report the people of Detroit received that the Nazis were engaged upon a scientifically organized project to exterminate Jewish people.

Steadily the truth about Nazism broke through all psychological, as well as physical barriers. The League for Human Rights operated in Detroit to accelerate the breakthrough. We fed the press and the radio with every authentic report we could muster. We sent speakers to every organization that wanted the facts on the world situation. We in Detroit, and similar organizations in other cities, carried out this gigantic campaign of education.

For the day-to-day operation of the boycott of Nazi goods, I engaged Nell Schaflander, a woman who had long been active in Jewish community organizations. She was provided with an office and a secretary. This modest equipment proved sufficient for an extensive operation, for Nell proceeded to recruit a core of volunteer "shoppers" who ferreted out every bit of German-made goods on the shelves of the stores in Detroit. We asked the storekeepers to cease financing the enemy of mankind and to remove the "blood-stained" items from their shelves. We met considerable individual resistance, but no such public outcry as had been anticipated over our activities ever occurred. Before long, we had cleared every store of goods of German origin. Even merchants who had been reluctant to throw away saleable articles, refrained from reordering the objectionable goods. Long before Pearl Harbor, the Hitler regime winced from our effective boycott of German exports throughout the United States. We in Detroit received many communications from other cities asking for guidance and thanking us for the ex-

ample we had set.

When in, December 1941, the United States of America declared war against Japan, Germany and Italy, all imports of enemy goods were prohibited by law, and boycott was no longer necessary. Similarly, all enemy propaganda was forbidden by law, and it was no longer necessary to engage in any privately organized counter-propaganda. The whole country was now committed to the struggle against Nazism and Fascism.

The murderous enemy of the Jewish people now stood identified as the murderous enemy of America and all mankind. These facts led me to the conclusion that the League for Human Rights had completed its function, and could now report to the Jewish Welfare Federation with the familiar military expression, "mission accomplished."

In a communication to Isidore Sobeloff, executive director of the Jewish Welfare Federation, I suggested that the office of the League for Human Rights be closed, its budget cancelled, and the organization declared disbanded.

With this reminiscence, I hope that the story of the response of the Jewish Community of Detroit to the catastrophe of Nazism, which is the story of the League for Human Rights, has now been historically recorded as Detroit Jewry's finest hour.

דיא דערטראַיט
אידעשע דירעקטארי

פיר דעם יאר

1907.

ענטהאלטעט נאָכן אַלע ביה אַלע נעמען, אדרעססען און ביל-
שעפטערינגען פון דעם אַיטער אידעשע איד-
וואָהנער, און דאָרשען, פּעראַוינגן, און
ביזנעס, שוואַרץ הונדערט, און
טהאָט אנטהאלטען און
נאָך פּערשיידענע
אונטערשיידענע.

און עיינען פון אַינזיקען און אַינזאג פון
טרייבן, טיפּן און לעטערס,
און נאָך אַנטהאלטענע זאָען.

...אונטערעלט אַלע הערשאַפּענען פון...

ל. קנאָפּו און זיין,
פּרינטערס און פּובלישערס

128 הייבטינגס סטריט

דעטראַיט, מישיגאַן.

THE DETROIT "JEWISH DIRECTORY"

... 1907...

COMPILED AND ISSUED BY

L. KNOPPOW & SONS,
PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS
428 HASTINGS ST.

THE DETROIT JEWISH DIRECTORY OF 1907 AS A RESEARCH SOURCE

By ALLEN A. WARSEN

The Detroit Jewish Directory of 1907 was published and compiled by L. Knoppow & Sons, Printers and Publishers, 428 Hastings St. The directory, written in Yiddish, is a unique publication; probably the only one of its kind in the Yiddish language. The directory lists the names of 2,470 persons, their occupations and addresses. The names are mostly of men. However, not all men¹ are included. Neither are the names of housewives and minors included.

It is noteworthy that within fifty years since it first came into being in 1850, the Detroit Jewish community had grown from 36 persons² to 10,000 in 1900.³

The directory specifies more than eighty occupations. It includes three rabbis, five "reverends," twenty-five doctors, three dentists, a chiropodist, thirteen opticians, twenty-three lawyers, three engineers, a chemist, and a number of teachers. In 1850, with the exception of a blacksmith, all the other settlers were merchants.

Significantly, the two predominant occupations mentioned in the directory were those of clerk and peddler. It lists more than 370 clerks and more than 270 peddlers. It is not surprising, therefore, that the peddlers were organized in a Peddlers and Drivers Protective Union.

In addition, the directory contains the names of the streets and residences where the 2,470 people were living, thus in all, reflecting the demographic, geographic and economic history of Detroit Jewry not just of the year 1907, but of many years preceding and following it.

The directory, it is interesting to note, is interspersed with numerous Anglicized words and expressions. For instance, "ge'cleaned," "ge'bleached."

Unusual are the directory's advertisements. Examples:⁴

Good News: We wish to inform the Detroit Jewish public that we have built a gorgeous Russian and Turkish steambath with all the latest improvements, newest machines, and steam from heated stones. Hot and cold baths at any time, and a kosher *mikveh* [ritual bath] for all the daughters of Israel, which is always open, 186 Alfred St., corner Antoine, Louis Schlusssel, proprietor.

Bread Philosophy: Bread is strength. Bread is life, but it depends on eating the right kind of bread. Such bread you can get at I. Feigenson, 498 Antoine St. My bread is thoroughly sifted and well mixed and baked. My bakery is well lighted and clean. My pumpernickles, bagels, buns, and cakes are tastiest. My Sabbath *hales* are exceptional.

ALLEN A. WARSEN is the founder and honorary president of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.

The following study, based on the directory, portrays some of the vocational and organizational aspects of the Detroit Jewish community of 1907:

MANUFACTURERS

David Blumenthal, Pres. American Lubrication Co.; David Brown, Pres. Peoples Ice Co.; I. Felman, Skirt and Cloak Manufacturer; Louis Goldberg, Manufacturer and Dealer in New and Second-Hand Bags; L. Knoppow & Sons Printers and Publishers.

PROFESSIONS

Teachers: Dora, Miriam and Lena Bucchalter; Harold, Helen and Louise Breitender.

Artists: Wilfred Goldman; Victor Haberlein; Fred Leipziger.

Rabbis: Ezekiel Aishiskin; Leo Franklin; Judah Leib Levin.

Reverends: Hyman Buchhalter; Judah Cohen; J. M. Lachowsky, *shohet, mohel*, cantor; A. Rubiner, *mohel*; Moses Rogoff, cantor.

Doctors: Charles Aaron; Joseph Aarons; Noah Ephraim Aronstam; Emil Amberg; Max Ballin; J. B. Baruch; Albert Bernstein; Joseph Beisman; Moses Fechheimer; Simon Frank; Hugo A. Freund; Samuel Goldberg; William Kanter; Saul Kaufman; Bernard Jacobs; Oscar Lawman; Nathan Levin; Ignace Mayer; Zechariah Naren; Isaac Polozker; Gabriel Samter; Maxwell Silver; Morris Silver; John Weizman; Joseph Shellfish.

Chiropodist: Adolf Greenstein.

Dentists: Walter Black; Karl Fechheimer; Julius Jacobs.

Opticians: Morris Black; Leo Brown; Robert Fler; Solomon Fler; Leon Goldsmith; Albert Jacob; Louis Knoppow; Abraham Lewis; Phillip Lipschitz; Maximilian Melen; Max Redelsheimer; Joseph Silver; Sam Van Vliet.

Lawyers: Emanuel T. Berger; A. E. Blum; Meyer B. Breitenbach; Fred M. Butzel; Leo M. Butzel; Martin Butzel; Solomon Cohen; Max Finkelstone; Arthur Fixel; William Friedman; David Greenstein; David E. Heineman; Benjamin Jacobson; Louis Rosenberg; Charles Simmons; Adolf Sloman; Edmund M. Sloman; Max Smilansky; Louis Smilansky; Alfred Srera; George Srera; Harry Srera; Louis Wolf.

Civil Engineers: Julius Blumberg; Frank W. Kanter.

Engineer: Sidney Fechheimer.

Chemist: John Helfman.

Policemen: George Epstein; Nathan Feinberg; David Gordon; Max Grossman.

Detective: Jacob Golden.

Fireman: Moses Weingarten.

Sheriff's Deputies: Isidore Melen; Aaron Cohen.

Bookseller: Jacob Levin.

The Directory lists 117 Cohens and 3 Cohns.

LODGES AND ZIONIST GROUPS

Lodges: Detroit Lodge; Independent Order Western Star; Michigan Lodge III Order Brith Abraham; Abraham Lincoln Lodge No. 57; Independent Order Free Sons of Jehudah; Montefiore Lodge No. 12 Independent Order Free Sons of Israel; Shapiro 747 Maccabees.

Zionist Groups: B'nai Zion; Poale Zion. (Both groups conducted their activities at the Hannah Schloss Building.)

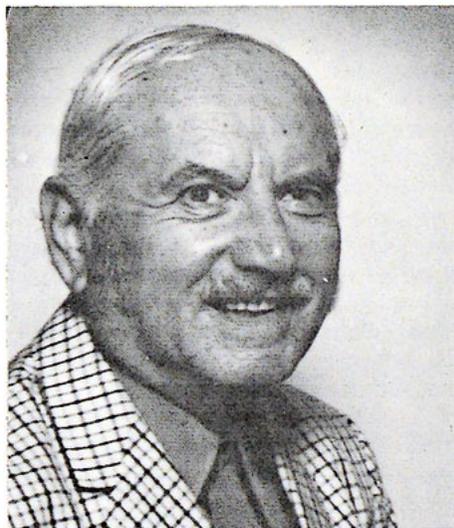
CONCLUDING NOTE

It is noteworthy that the same year L. Knoppow & Sons published the *Detroit Jewish Directory of 1907*, David Emil Heineman, Michigan's first Jewish historian and first Jewish president of the Detroit Common Council, designed the flag of Detroit.

NOTES

- ¹Compare with the "Directory of the Members of Congregation Beth El — October, 1910," in *A History of Congregation Beth El* (Detroit: Winn and Hammond, 1900-1910).
- ²Allen A. Warsen, *Autobiographical Episodes* (Detroit: n.p.), pp. 42 - 43.
- ³Jacob Lestchinsky, "Economic and Social Development of American Jewry," in *Jewish People Past and Present* (New York: Central Yiddish Culture Organization, 1955), Vol. 4, p. 58.
- ⁴See "Advertisements in the 1907 Detroit Yiddish Directory," *Michigan Jewish History* Vol. 8, January 1968, p. 19 - 20.

ALLEN A. WARSEN AT 75



The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan salutes Allen A. Warsen, our founder and honorary president, on the occasion of his 75th birthday. Mr. Warsen founded the Historical Society in 1959, and he was elected its first president, serving for two one-year terms, after which he was elected honorary president for life.

Allen Abram Warsen was born June 19, 1903 in Warsaw, Poland, but he was reared in the city of Mlawa. He attended private Jewish elementary and secondary schools. At the age of 21, he was drafted into the Polish army, where he served for 14 months. Upon his return from the army, he taught Jewish and secular subjects in the Polish towns of Rachonz, Kleshchele, Luna, Wloclawek and Pruzhana.

In 1930 Mr. Warsen married Sara Cohen (who died in 1950), and two years later they immigrated to the United States. The Warsens settled in Detroit, where Mr. Warsen taught in the United Hebrew Schools and in other Jewish religious schools. After receiving his B.A. and M.S.W. degrees from Wayne State University, and his Teachers Life Certificate from the state of Michigan, Mr. Warsen taught in the Detroit School System for 33 years, retiring in July, 1972.

Mr. Warsen's activities in historical and Jewish affairs have been many. Through his efforts, the Michigan Historical Commission approved a marker sponsored by the JHSM, which was erected at Fort Michilimackinac in Mackinac City, in commemoration of Ezekiel Solomon, regarded as Michigan's first Jewish resident.

Mr. Warsen was instrumental in initiating and effectuating a memorial for David Emil Heineman, first Historian of Michigan Jewry and designer of the flag of the city of Detroit. He also initiated action for establishing the state historical marker in the Beth El Lafayette cemetery in Detroit, oldest Jewish cemetery in Michigan.

Through his efforts, the JHSM was able to establish an archive at the Burton Historical Collection in the main branch of the Detroit Public Library.

In 1972 Mr. Warsen was presented with an award of merit by the Michigan Historical Society.

In May, 1973, at the national convention in Detroit of the American Jewish Historical Society, he proposed the formation of a council of representatives of local Jewish historical associations.

The same year, he brought to light the memoirs of Fred M. Butzel, dictated in the 1930's to William Boxerman, then an official of the Detroit Jewish Welfare Federation. The memoirs were published in the *Detroit Jewish News*.

After 18 years of effort, Mr. Warsen was instrumental in having established a commemorative plaque for Detroit's first known Jewish resident, Chapman Abraham. The plaque was recently installed in the library of the main branch of the Jewish Community Center.

The accomplishment of which Mr. Warsen is most proud, however, is his identification of the Jewish settlers of Detroit in 1850. The results of his findings were published in *Michigan Jewish History* and elsewhere.

Mr. Warsen was a member of the Bnai Brith, the Detroit Federation of Teachers and numerous historical organizations. From 1974-78 he was chairman of the Yiddish Committee of the Jewish Community Center.

An active writer, Mr. Warsen served as editor of *Michigan Jewish History* from 1965 to 1970, also writing numerous articles for the journal. He authored *Jewish Communal Institutions of Detroit*, *Autobiographical Episodes*, *The Destruction of the Mlawa Jewish Community* (translated from the Yiddish of Israeli author M. Tsanin), a number of brochures and more than 100 articles for the *Detroit Jewish News*.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following persons who have become members of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan in the past year.

Irwin S. Alpern
Robert S. Amberg
Sidney Barnett
Harmon S. Bayer
Max D. Beal
Mr. and Mrs. Jerome (Gail) Beale
Gertrude Brainin
Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Chapin
Joseph B. Colten
Daniel G. Cullen
William Davidson
Laurence B. Deitch
Joanni Feldman
Evan Fishman
Mr. and Mrs. Micky (Ellen) Fivenson
Frank Friedman
Mr. and Mrs. Larry (Susan) Gormezano
Neal L. Grossman
Richard Gunsberg
Lena Silk Gurwin
Robert C. Gurwin (Life Member)
Mr. and Mrs. Dan Guyer
Mrs. Maurice J. Hauser
Rabbi Richard C. Hertz
Fern S. Katz
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel B. Kelsten
Mrs. Emery Klein
Aid Kushner
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Lockman
Deena Lockman
Alvin B. Lynn
Sam Marcus
Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Miller
Bette A. Roth
Mr. and Mrs. Martin D. Sclar
Markus S. Simon
Mr. and Mrs. Larry (Donna) Sklar
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Leonard H. Trunsky
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