

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



chicago jewish historical society

FORMERLY SOCIETY NEWS  
volume xiii, no.2, January, 1990

# CHICAGO JEWISH History

## A Candid Assessment of Jews In Chicago Politics Since 1920

*A Veteran Independent Looks Back*

*At Varied Achievements, Shortcomings*

by Leon M. Despres

“Jews in Chicago Politics” is a fascinating subject. A complete and accurate account would require the careful attention of a historian, assisted by several students. At best, I am prepared to sketch some aspects in the hope of inspiring someone to carry the subject further. I have taken the period from 1920 on because it covers part of my lifetime and provides me with a frame of reference for the material. I think I can deal with it more accurately than if I tried to go back to the Civil War.

Since about 1920, there has been a Jewish population base in Chicago large enough to encourage ambitious Jewish people to become candidates for public office. I have gone through the records of local aldermen, congressmen, state representatives, state senators, city officials and state officials and compiled a list of Jews among them. You are not interested in the details of that list—how many aldermen there were, how many senators—but it is important to note that there were a great many.

Never a Chicago mayor, however. There were two Jewish candidates for Mayor, Bernard Epton and Bill Singer, but never a Jewish mayor. There were many state representatives and state senators, and several Jewish congressmen, but no U.S. senator. There was one elected governor of Illinois, Henry Horner; and a lieutenant governor, Samuel Shapiro, who became acting governor.

### *Many Jewish Judges*

There were many, many Jewish elected judges because our tradition has attracted Jews into the legal profession. A study of Chicago’s Jewish judges could yield an interesting analysis of their contribution to the law. Among distinguished judges, I mention only Arthur Goldberg, the Chicago lawyer who became a justice of the United States Supreme Court; and Seymour Simon, a Chicago lawyer who became an outstanding Illi-

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## Hold Exhibit-Related Meeting at Spertus On January 14

*Panel Will Discuss*

*Landsmanshaften Roles*

An opportunity to hear about landsmanshaften as well as view an extensive exhibit about them will be afforded members and friends at the Society meeting set for Sunday, January 14, at Spertus College. The afternoon will provide an in-depth education concerning the nurturing and acculturating roles assumed by these friendly societies for

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Although it is well over a hundred years since the first local Jews attained political office, the real heyday of Jewish politicians was the decades following World War I. As the Jewish population disperses itself more widely through the metropolitan area, there are signs that that heyday may be drawing to a close.

The writer of the adjoining article, Attorney Leon Despres, has been active in politics for over a half-century, most prominently as an independent and fearless alderman for two decades before retiring undefeated. He here provides an assessment of “representative” local Jewish politicians since 1920 as well as thoughtful insights into recent political history. This paper was adapted from an address given at a recent Society meeting.

# President's Message

## Exhibits, Books Provide Important Insights

Exhibits and books are two of the customary vehicles used to remind us of our past heritage and history. We have recently been fortunate to be beneficiaries of a number of exhibits and books that relate to us as American Jews living in Chicago.

On Wednesday, November 15, 1989, our Chicago Jewish Historical Society opened a major exhibit at Spertus Museum of Judaica on "Landsmanshaften in Chicago." Despite cold and blustery weather, the opening, under the chairmanship of Janet Hagerup, was well attended and warmly acclaimed by all who were there. The festivities included brief talks by Adele Hast, Sol Brandzel and Sidney Sorkin. Their presentations included the history of landsmanshaften in Chicago by Adele, personal memories of one of these groups by Sol and a fascinating account of how many of the pictures and artifacts were located by Sidney. All were splendid. The exhibit will be on display at Spertus through January and all members and friends are urged to view this unique glimpse of communal life of Jewish in Chicago a few decades ago.

### Vienna Exhibit, Hertzberg History

The following night the Museum hosted the opening of another exhibit alongside ours on "The Jews of Vienna." This exhibit, on loan from the Jewish community in Vienna, Austria is a pictorial account of what was once one of the most "enlightened" Jewish communities in Western Europe. It depicts the history of the Jews of Vienna from early medieval times until their destruction by the Nazis in 1938. It shows us, for example, that at one time late in the nineteenth century there lived on one block in Vienna Sigmund Freud, Gustav Mahler and Theodore Herzl.

At the opening night of the Vienna exhibit, the principal speaker was Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, known to many Chicagoans as past president of the American Jewish Congress, and now a professor and thought-provoking Jewish political leader. Hertzberg's speech compared events in the history of the Jews in Vienna with supposedly comparable events in the histo-



President  
Walter Roth

ry of the Jews of America.

He has just written a book, *The Jews in America—Four Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter*. In his book, Hertzberg recounts the history of the Jews of America from earliest colonial times through the heyday of the German Jewish immigration in the mid-1800's to the mass influx of poor immigrants from Eastern Europe, and then to the post-war movements of Jews to the suburbs. While not focused on Chicago Jewry as such, Hertzberg's book draws a number of controversial conclusions on American Jewry's present status and its continuing struggle to integrate into American culture.

### Deutch Exhibit, Algren Biography

Not far from the Spertus Museum there is another fine exhibit on the main floor of the Chicago Public Library Cultural Center, featuring the photographs of Steven Deutch, "From Paris to Chicago, 1932-1989." A book bearing the same title and featuring the black-and-white photographs which made Deutch famous as a high-style commercial photographer as well as an artistic photographer of everyday life in Chicago (and elsewhere) is on sale at the Center. It notes that Deutch was born in Hungary of a very religious Jewish father. Nothing further is said on this subject in the book except that Deutch's mother and her sons did not share his religious fervor and this "cut a deep chasm in the family." Deutch and his family moved to Paris and then left Europe in the early 1930's as Hitler rose to power in Germany.

Deutch's photographs of skid-row denizens and other scenes give us an unusual photographic glimpse of Chicago. Deutch was a close friend of Nelson Algren, the Chicago writer who wrote of the booze joints and the poor who drank themselves into oblivion along Division Street. Pictures of Algren are included in the Deutch exhibit.

Algren himself is the subject of a

new book titled *Nelson Algren—A Life on the Wild Side*, by Bettina Drew. The book is a fascinating account of this Chicago iconoclast who was born of Jewish parents. His paternal grandparents were originally Christian Swedes who converted to Orthodox Judaism and changed their name from Algren to Abraham. After he began writing, Nelson changed his name back to Algren and rarely referred to this Jewish background.

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society is gratified that its Landsmanshaften exhibit shares the spotlight with the other exhibits which are briefly described above. All are well worth viewing as offering a panoramic view of our life in Chicago and of our European heritage.

Walter Roth  
President

## Spertus Meeting On January 14

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Jewish and other immigrants to America during the past century.

A panel discussion featuring Dr. Adele Hast, David Passman, Maynard Wishner, and Sidney Sorkin will be the main event of the day. Among them they will discuss the formation of friendly societies, the nature of the interrelationships that brought individuals together, the societies' functions both social and service, and the activities in which they engaged.

### Exhibit Reinforces Program

The presentation by the panel will be vividly reinforced by the exhibit just outside Bederman Hall, where the program will be held. The exhibit, which includes photos, ceremonial objects and insignia as well as the music of various Jewish and non-Jewish friendly societies, has been mounted by the Chicago Jewish Historical Society with the aid of a grant from the Illinois Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Janet Hagerup is general chairman.

Contributions came from many sources including the Czechoslovakian Historical Museum in Berwyn. The exhibit remains on display at Spertus, 618 South Michigan Avenue, through January.

### Panel Has Varied Expertise

Dr. Hast, past president of the Society and a historian associated with the Newberry Library, played a major role in

mounting the exhibit. Mr. Passman, a Society Board member, is a member of a family long prominent in a particular landsmanshaft, the Mariampoler Aid Society. Sidney Sorkin, another Board member, has been collecting data on landsmanshaften for decades and is currently compiling a book on the subject. Mr. Wishner will discuss the Bielotzerkover, an outgrowth of the workmen's circle.

The panel presentation at 2:00 PM will be preceded at 1:00 PM by a social hour and refreshment period during which the exhibit may be viewed. The panel will be introduced by Program Chairman Burt Robin.

The term "landmanshaft," literally the Yiddish for an organization of men from a particular geographical area, has become the umbrella term for organizations of immigrants regardless of the basis of their organization or the specific purposes they emphasized. They have sometimes been named vereins, rings, circles or sokols. □

## Offer \$1,000 Award For Manuscript on Local Jewish History

*Minsky Fund To Publish Prize-Winning Entry*

A cash award of \$1,000 and publication of a monograph or study concerned with local Jewish history are being offered by the Doris Minsky Memorial Fund of the Society in connection with its 1990 search for manuscripts. Manuscripts can be submitted to the fund anytime through June 30 according to Chairman Irving Cutler.

The manuscript selected by the fund committee from among those submitted will be published and distributed by the Society and will earn the cash prize for its author. Dr. Cutler reminds readers that a guideline length of 15,000 words has been set and that while the committee is looking for manuscripts which contribute to our knowledge of Chicago Jewish history, it prefers one which will also be of interest to the general reader.

The award and publication by the Society are made possible by income from the Minsky Fund, created by donations from the family and many friends of the late Doris Minsky, a co-founder and long-

**Sol Brandzel examines map locating shtetls at Landsmanshaften Exhibit at Spertus College.**

*Photo by Moselle Schwartz*



time officer of CJHS, who died suddenly in early 1988. Her husband, attorney Joseph Minsky, requested creation of the fund, to which hundreds of individuals from several states contributed and continue to contribute.

Society members are eligible to receive a complimentary copy of each Minsky Fund publication as it appears. No monograph appeared in 1989. Fund committee members, in addition to Dr. Cutler, are Joseph Minsky, Mark Mandle, Norman Schwartz and Dr. Irwin Suloway.

A statement of rules and procedure for the submission of manuscripts may be obtained from Dr. Cutler at 3217 Hill Lane, Wilmette, IL 60091, (708)251-8927 or from the Society office at 618 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605. □

## Appreciative Crowd Enjoys Spertus Exhibit Opening

*Society's Display On View Through January 31*

Approximately one hundred members and friends attended the opening ceremonies of the Society's exhibit on landsmanshaften on Wednesday

evening, November 15. Despite inclement weather, they came to Spertus College for a preview of the exhibit, for brief talks about the display and its importance and for fellowship and refreshments.

Exhibit Chairman Janet Hagerup welcomed guests and explained how the exhibit was developed and put together, merely hinting at the huge effort and hundreds of hours put in by the chairman and her committee.

Dr. Adele Hast, who, among other things, wrote explanatory captions for each item displayed, spoke of the history and importance of friendly and mutual-aid societies; and Sidney Sorkin, the committee's major resource person, discussed how over the years he has collected information about the groups.

Sol Brandzel told of his personal experiences with a particular landsmanshaft, that of Stashover. Mark Mandle served as barman, dispensing wine and monitoring other refreshments.

Constant throughout the evening was the praise by guests for the varied display of photos, objects and maps in the exhibit, which was aided by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

A free catalog folder of the exhibit is available to visitors, who have until January 30 to view the display.

I.J.S.



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# A Jewish G-Man Remembers His Days as an 'Untouchable'

*'Wallpaper' Wolff Worked with  
Ness During Prohibition*

By Walter Roth

**“H**ow did a nice Jewish boy like you become part of the Untouchables?” The question has often been posed to Al “Wallpaper” Wolff, not only by the writer but also by many of his friends. He is the last member of a team of fifteen U.S. Government agents known as the Untouchables, who, under the leadership of Elliot Ness, became famous in Chicago from 1929 to 1933 fighting the bootleggers who proliferated during the years of Prohibition (1920-36) when the sale of alcoholic beverages was illegal in this country.

Al now lives in Lincolnwood, is eighty-six years old and is planning to write a book about his exploits. Perhaps in his book he will give us the answer to the question I and others have asked him. For the present, Al could not give any good reason, and he insinuated that I would have to get my own answer from the story of his life as he tells it.

Al was born in 1903 on Chicago's old West Side near Maxwell Street. His father, Harris Wolff (Hershie Welfe in Yiddish) had been born in Hamburg, Germany, and came to this country in the late 1800's. Harris met and married Rosa, an immigrant from Lithuania, became a physician and opened an office at Twelfth and Canal Streets near the upstairs apartment in which he lived. Al was born there and remembers the cheder and synagogue he attended as a boy was located at Thirteenth and Sawyer Streets (Shaarei Torah Anshei Maariv). He learned his Bar Mitzvah parsha by word of mouth from the rabbi there, helped along with an occasional “potch” to inspire him.

## *Attended Jewish Training School*

He attended the Jewish Manual Training School located at Judd between Clinton and Jefferson Streets. That school, founded by wealthy German Jews to educate children of more recently-arrived immigrants, produced many Jewish communal leaders and successful businessmen during its thirty years of existence. Al's mother was quite religious, wore a shaitel and did not

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Although a number of new career choices opened up for Jewish men during the years following World War I, law enforcement at the federal level was not one which welcomed many. Chicagoan Al “Wallpaper” Wolff was a rare exception to the rule. He not only became a Jewish G-man, he became an “Untouchable,” serving under the famous Elliot Ness. Fortunately, he is still among us and has recounted some of his experiences to Society President Walter Roth, who has narrated in this journal the stories of persons on both sides of the law.

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ride on the Sabbath. Al's father was, however, more “modern” and his children quickly dropped many of the European religious customs of their mother.

Al grew to be six feet, two inches tall with a large frame that stood him in good stead as he grew up in the the Maxwell Street area, a rough neighborhood at times. He learned the art of prizefighting and met many of the Jewish boys who later became great fighters, like Barney Ross, “Zibby” Goldberg, Charlie White and Davey Day. In 1918, though underage, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and was in Hawaii on his way to the Far East when World War I ended.

In 1921, making use of his father's political connections, Al embarked upon his career as a civilian government employee with a job in the office of Denny Egan, bailiff of the Chicago municipal court. It was here that he earned his nickname “Wallpaper” when, as bailiff, he evicted someone (pursuant to court order, of course) he moved out everything except the wallpaper.

## *Joining The FBI*

After four years in the bailiff's office, Al applied for a job with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) under the then young J. Edgar Hoover. He did this despite the advice of Julius “Putty” Annixter, a distant relative of his mother and the owner of a well-known West Side Jewish restaurant and gambling establishment, who told him he could make more money elsewhere, and despite the fact that there were virtually no Jewish FBI agents. FBI agents earned about \$2,500 a year at that time. But Annixter also told him that if he was going to be a G-man, then he should be an honest one and never be on the “take.” It was advice that Al heeded well in his government career, even though he says there were many times when he was offered bribes.

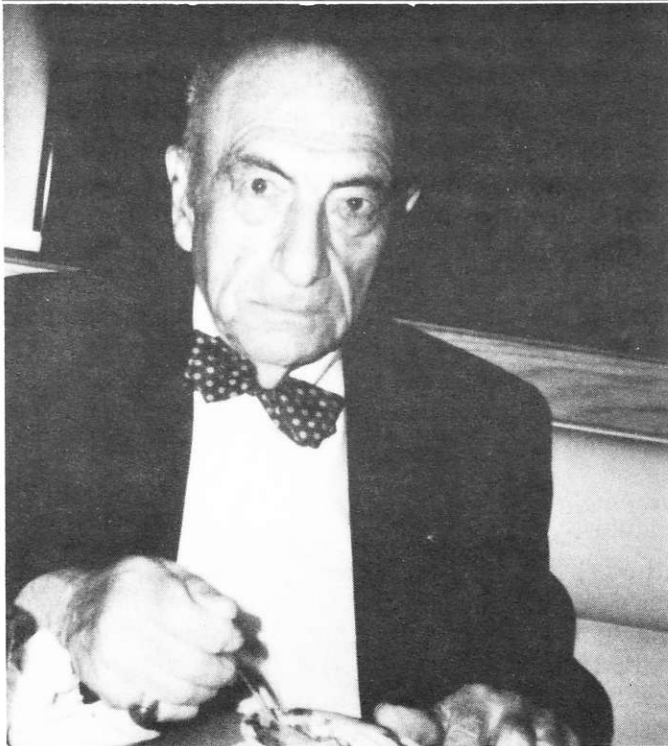
Assigned to the Alcoholic Enforcement Division, Al was sent to places in Kentucky to raid distilleries. In 1929 Al requested a transfer back to Chicago. He was assigned to Elliot Ness' team in Chicago as an undercover agent. Scrupulous honesty and resistance to corruption earned the team the nickname “Untouchables.” He has many stories of his raids on the speakeasies and the numerous arrests of bootleggers in Chicago. Since he was an undercover agent, no one knew his true role, so he says, not even his wife and children. As Al remembers it, he looked like a “Kraut” and when he didn't shave he looked like an Italian.

Al was married in 1926 to Hannah Rubens at Temple Beth Israel, a congregation to which he still belongs, by Rabbi Samuel Mendelsohn. He and his wife had two sons and one daughter who now live in other parts of the country.

## *Attitude Toward Bootlegging*

The stories Al tells of his adventures with the Untouchables would fill a book, and hopefully Al will do that in the near future. For now, Al says he has no hard feelings about the Chicago gangsters and bootleggers, even though he fought them at the time. As Al puts it,





The last of "The Untouchables":  
Al "Wallpaper" Wolff as he looks today

"They were doing their job and I was doing mine." By the late Twenties, Prohibition was so unpopular in larger U.S. cities and public patronage of bootleggers so widespread that they were often thought of as ordinary businessmen. Repeal was near at hand.

He is reluctant to name people he knew or met who were engaged in illegal activities. He doesn't want the children or grandchildren of these men to be brought into the public light again. From his viewpoint he says, many of the so-called gangsters really were good guys to their people. Even Al Capone set up soup kitchens for poor Italians at Christmas time.

He knew many of the Jewish bootleggers but always gave them equal treatment. He remembers going to the bathhouses on Fourteenth Street and, in his undercover role, overhearing the bootleggers discussing their illegal activities. On their way out, he would have them

arrested. Al says he was at the railroad station when Al Capone was finally sent away after his conviction for income tax evasion.

### *Life After the Untouchables*

Shortly after that, in 1932, the Untouchables were disbanded and Al was assigned to different areas of government service. At various times he was in the Narcotics Division, the Internal Revenue Service and during World War II, in the Office of Price Administration. In his years of service, he often encountered open anti-Semitism but his toughness enabled him to survive. As World War II ended, Al returned to Chicago and ended his government employment. He owned and operated a number of restaurants ("Wolff's Inn") in the downtown area and wound up his business career with the operation of a private club at 201 East Superior Street.

Since Al had been an undercover agent, no one knew of his true identity until the filming of the movie "The Untouchables." Then Paramount Studios discovered his whereabouts and used him as a consultant for the movie which, of course, memorialized Elliot Ness and his federal agents. With the passing of his wife a few years ago, Al lives in the limelight and glow of Chicago's turbulent past.

### *Sees Self As Trailblazer*

He is a proud American Jew finally able to talk about his undercover days as an Untouchable. In reminiscing about his extraordinary career in the service of his country and his love for America, he put it this way:

"I think my destiny was for a nice Jewish guy to overcome all these obstacles to working in all those departments as the only Jew. There is no country in the world like America because we still have freedom, we still can pray and do anything we want. We can get married and have children. I am proud to be a Jew, but I'm an American first. I was born and went to schools here. I served in the American Army. I was born an American citizen; I don't know of any other country like America. I was blessed being born here. I am glad my father didn't miss the boat coming here. I would have swum across the ocean to get to America." □

## Newman Recalls Story of Yiddish Theater in Chicago

Featured at the November 12 meeting of the Society was a well-received talk by Danny Newman on the history of Yiddish theater in Chicago. The meeting was held at Emanuel Congregation.

Mr. Newman, a public relations expert who specializes in cultural organizations, spoke from the vantage point of one who grew up with Yiddish theater and later represented its last great stars, including

Maurice Schwartz, Jacob Ben-Ami and of course his late wife, Dina Halpern. Unfortunately, his subject necessarily dealt with the past only, as Yiddish theater in Chicago is no longer commercially viable.

He traced local Yiddish theater from its amateur origins among the immigrants from Eastern Europe in the early 1880's to the first professional group later in that decade, and through the not always high standard but increasingly popular theater companies which followed.

Attention was devoted to the "golden years" which began after World War I when popularity, great actors and high standards were widespread until the Depres-

sion, declining immigration and the acculturating disuse of Yiddish as an everyday language in Chicago resulted in the disappearance of the art form locally.

Mr. Newman also discussed the quality of the repertoire and the acting, recalling titles and names which struck a chord among some older members of the audience.

The speaker was introduced by Society Vice-President and Program Chairman Burt Robin, who presided over the meeting. As usual, refreshments were in the capable hands of Hospitality Chairman Shirley Sorkin.

I.J.S. □

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# A Candid Assessment of Local Jewish Politicians

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nois Supreme Court Judge. We also have a couple of others who received sentences or committed suicide (one) as a result of the Greylord investigation....

## *Contributions Not Always Good*

That brings me to the next point I want to make, an important one. Generally, when an ethnic or cultural or religious group talks about its contributions to the society of which it is a part, the tendency is to stress "the great people we have contributed, the great accomplishments we have made...." In fact, however, the contributions of such groups are always mixed. This is most evident when you hear the Italian-American societies talk about the contributions of Italian-Americans in Chicago.

Italian-Americans have made very great contributions, including many marvelous people and invaluable urban qualities, but there is also Al Capone. Generally, when the Italian-American Civic League talks about contributions to Chicago, it tries to be quiet about Al Capone and some of the others whom they'd rather not mention. But there they are! I think that when a historical society considers the contributions of Jews to politics in Chicago, it owes an obligation to try to be accurate and complete. We can talk about Jewish contributions with pride, but we have to take into account that the contribution is varied. It is a coat of many colors and not all the colors are handsome.

As an example of a proud claim, I cite a statement I found by Jacob Freed, who wrote about Jews in the modern world. In his chapter on the American Jew as a civil servant, he makes this claim for the contribution of Jews:

Pledged to the service and freedom of many for full opportunity to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, they ally the moral qualities and ethical principles of prophetic Judaism to those qualities of the Enlightenment and American life which have given this nation so much of its spiritual stature and civilization and they implemented their insights in the spheres of public life in the court chamber, the legislative hall and the executive office, in the marketplace, public accommodations, and the halls of learning.

You might try after completing this article to judge how well Chicago's contributions meet this standard.

## *Motives for Political Activity*

The German sociologist Max Weber said that in politics there are two kinds of activists—those who are in politics because they live *for* politics, and those who live *off* politics. In all the history of Chicago, most people active in politics have been those who live off politics. Some people in politics are mixed. They have lived

off politics but they have lived also for the goals of government.

Having gone through the list of Jewish persons who have been active in politics, I noted that during these past seventy years nearly all were men. Thus, there's no use our saying "his or her" about them since almost without exception only "his" is appropriate.

Because I cannot give you a detailed history or enumeration of hundred of names, I have taken five individuals to illustrate the history of Jews in Chicago politics. I am going to discuss Julius Rosenwald, Henry Horner, Jack Arvey, Earl Bush and Sidney Yates, whom I have taken as examples. I am using them to illustrate the broader history embraced by my subject.

## *Rosenwald and Republicans*

Everyone knows who Julius Rosenwald was. Although he did not run for public office, he was intensely interested in politics and never shied away from it. He was a committed Republican, but in the 1920's I think most Jews were still Republicans. The party shift from Republican to Democratic did not occur on a really big scale until 1932. Why were most Jews of that time Republicans? Because the Republican party was the party of Abraham Lincoln.

My maternal grandfather, for example, who came here from Hungary in 1867, naturally became a Republican because that was the party that had freed the slaves. It was the party of union and freedom, while the other party was the party of the former slave-holders. So, a liberal, forward-looking person imbued with the ideals of prophetic Judaism would be a Republican.

Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch, who was Chicago's leading Reform rabbi and was considered a liberal, was a Republican. In public lectures she spoke with sarcasm about the Democratic party. My own father, who had populist views, was a Democrat, and many Jews were Democrats; but the prevailing view was Republican. Julius Rosenwald, who was a member of Rabbi Hirsch's congregation, shared the views of most other respectable, successful Jewish persons in support of the Republican party.

In 1926 he did something very interesting that I want to discuss, something I consider noble and fine and in the best Jewish tradition, even though it was unwise. One branch of the Republican Party, which included among others Mayor William Hale Thompson and State's Attorney Robert E. Crowe, was supporting a candidate named Frank Smith for the United States Senate. Smith had been the chairman of the Illinois Commerce Commission, and as chairman he had been unduly favorable to the utilities. He had accepted large sums of money from them. When he ran for the Senate, he received enormous contributions from Samuel Insull, Ira Copley and Clement Studebaker, Jr., the leading utility magnates of Illinois. He had accepted so much money that the election was effectively being bought by the public utilities. Even before he was elected, the Senate

itself conducted an investigation of the campaign. Smith won the primary.

Rosenwald, even though he was a Republican and strongly oriented toward business, was horrified by the corruption and issued a strong statement against Smith. Rosenwald felt that Smith was disgracing the Republican Party and decided to support another candidate, Hugh McGill, a former state senator with fine qualifications. Rosenwald rallied the best elements in the Party to support McGill.

### *An Offer Made*

Then, on his own, Rosenwald took a daring action. He went to see Frank Smith at the Congress Hotel, in hopes that he might prevent the harm Smith was doing to the state and country he loved, and limit the damage Smith was doing to his Republican Party. Fortunately, Frank Smith immediately wrote down what occurred at the Congress Hotel and disclosed his notes five years later. Thus we have a reliable contemporaneous account. Here is part of what Smith put down:

"After we shook hands, Mr. Rosenwald said, 'You would just about as soon expect the Deity himself here as you would me.' And I answered, 'It is said the Deity is ever present. Sit down.' Rosenwald said, 'May I talk plainly?' 'Of course.' Rosenwald said, 'I do not want to hurt your feelings. You know that if you are elected United States Senator, you can't be seated, don't you?' I said I knew no such thing. Then Rosenwald said, 'Last Friday, when we were discussing ways and means of financing a campaign for Mr. McGill, I told them I did not want to be the angel of the campaign, but that if I thought we could elect McGill, I would put up \$500,000. Now, I want to say something to you Mr. Smith. Not in the interest of any candidate, but just because I am a Republican and because I am interested in the Republican party and the State of Illinois. If you will withdraw from the Senate race, I am here to offer you 10,000 shares of Sears Roebuck stock the moment you sign your withdrawal notice. In a few months that stock will be worth \$750,000. You can give as your reason for withdrawing that your health won't permit you to take the campaign, or any other reason you want to give. The 10,000 shares of stock will be deposited in escrow in any bank you name to be turned over to you when your withdrawal occurs.'"

### *Unwise but Noble Gesture*

Well, Smith declined Rosenwald's offer and was elected. The Senate, however, refused to seat him. The disgrace was thus somewhat mitigated. It was imprudent of Rosenwald to make such an offer. It was unwise to offer a candidate 10,000 shares of stock to withdraw in favor of another candidate. Yet it was a very noble act, and I have chosen it as an illustration of the period from 1920 to about 1932 because it exemplifies Republican predominance and also gives us an example of a public-spirited Jewish Republican actuated by the highest ide-



**Julius Rosenwald: noble and fine...but unwise**

*Courtesy Chicago Historical Society*

als. In his political activities, he lived *for* politics, not *off* politics.

Lest I create a false picture of that period, I want to tell you that at the same time, in the 20th Ward, there was a Jewish boss named Morris Eller who was one of the worst committeemen we have ever had. He was a trustee of the Sanitary District during its most scandalous days. He was City Collector. In the same summer of 1926 that saw Rosenwald's effort to cleanse the Party, Eller took part in what they called the Pineapple Primary, in which bombs were used to win elections.

### *A Different Kind of Republican*

Two years later when Eller ran for committeeman again, the ward was beginning to change color, and an African-American named Octavius Granaday filed to run against Eller. When Granaday insisted on running, he was killed by a bullet—not by Morris Eller, but by the people who worked with him. During Prohibition, Eller was a close ally of the Capone gang. He was someone not to be opposed. He controlled the vote in the ward. In the summer of 1926, the vote in the 20th Ward for the key candidates on the ticket was: Savage, 6,918; Trude, the reform candidate, 377. Eller had delivered 94.8 percent of the vote! That was impossible without massive vote frauds and an environment of fraud and coercion.

I mention Eller only to give balance to the account. From 1920 to about 1932, the times were Republican. There were men of great honor, great probity and great ideals; and there were also Morris Eller and others like him.

### *Horner Runs for Governor*

My second example is Henry Horner. He is the Jewish person who has achieved the highest office in Illinois. It is still a source of satisfaction to think that he was elected and that he amassed an honorable record without



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blemish. He was a Democrat. He illustrates the swing of the Jewish vote to the Democratic Party, which has persisted ever since his 1932 election as governor. I do not mean to say that there are no Jewish Republicans. There are. Republican Bernard Epton nearly became mayor in 1983. But since 1932 the great political discussions and careers have been in the Democratic Party.

Horner had been an exemplary judge of the probate court from 1914 to 1932. I remember him in the probate court—a figure of great dignity. He was a man of humor, of splendid appearance and, above all, a man of probity and excellent legal ability. In 1918, when he came up for his first re-election, 1400 lawyers formed a non-partisan committee to re-elect him. He commanded the total admiration of the Chicago bar.

In 1932 the boss of Chicago politics was Anton Cermak. Cermak himself wanted to run for governor. Horner decided, however, that he would run for governor and entered the primary. Cermak realized that his own political reputation was not good enough to win statewide for governor. He was not even sure the Democratic Party would win in 1932, and so he decided to back Horner for governor as a long shot and, perhaps, even as a probable loser. He did this in very much the same way that Arvey later backed Paul Douglas and Adlai Stevenson for high office, based on the calculation that it would help the local ticket even if Horner lost.

Horner's campaign caught on like wildfire. There was a tremendous outpouring of support. There were "Physicians for Horner," "Lawyers for Horner," "Non-partisan Speakers for Horner," "Restaurant Owners for Horner" and a Citizens for Horner group that attracted 100,000 adherents. With an honorable Jewish candidate for governor there was an outpouring of Jewish support such as had never before occurred here. The only phenomenon like it occurred in our lifetime with the 1983 and 1987 outpouring of African-American support for Harold Washington.

#### *Attracts Near Universal Support*

There was enthusiasm, really super-enthusiasm, over Horner's breakthrough as a splendid candidate who was Jewish. There had been a fine Jewish candidate for governor thirty-two years earlier when Samuel Alschuler of Aurora ran against Richard Yates, but Alschuler was a Democrat, Illinois was a Republican state and most Jewish voters were then Republican. In 1932 Reform Jews, even if Republican, supported Horner. He was a member of Sinai Congregation. Conservative Jews supported him. Orthodox Jews supported him too.

As the votes showed, he also appealed to Poles and Swedes and Germans. Two hundred University of Chicago faculty members formed a committee for Horner. The president of the University of Chicago, Robert Maynard Hutchins, declared for Horner, a declaration for governor which I think a University of Chicago president would not make today. The Women's Republican Club of Evanston came out for Horner, thereby demonstrating the breadth of support that Horner

had stimulated.

In the primary, he won. In the 24th Ward, where Jack Arvey and Mo Rosenberg were active, Horner received 15,614 votes and his opponent Michael Igoe 241. That was 98.4 percent, better than Morris Eller had done in the Pineapple Primary of 1926. You cannot say that there were no vote frauds in that 24th Ward election because there undoubtedly were irregularities, but in that primary in that ward the unusually high percentage and high turnout were attributable to the outpouring of Jewish voters, just as Washington was able to win similar majorities later.

#### *Anti-Semitism Appears*

In the election Mayor Thompson campaigned against Horner. Around Illinois he argued that "they've gone to Jerusalem to get a governor for you." If Horner is elected, he told farmers, the price of pork will go down. He appealed to anti-Semitism, but when the election returns came in in the fall of 1932, it was a Roosevelt sweep, and Horner ran far ahead of Roosevelt. Roosevelt's Illinois majority was 449,000; Horner's was 566,000. Horner had contributed to the sweep of the whole Democratic ticket.

He was a very good governor although always a party office-holder. I remember the time he spoke to University of Chicago faculty members at the Quadrangle Club. Professor Jerome Kerwin told me about it afterwards. The faculty questioned him about patronage. They asked, "What are you going to do about patronage appointments?" He answered, "I'm going to appoint the best people the party can find for me." I was a little shocked then by his statement, but I suppose I was really expecting too much of him. He did appoint the best people the party could find, and he inaugurated excellent programs.

One of his best programs was the strengthening of the Illinois Commerce Commission and its excellent programs to protect consumers of electricity, telephone and gas. Then, toward the end of Horner's first term, Mayor Edward Kelly was able to drive through the Illinois legislature a bill to license handbooks. Handbooks were a great source of income to the Mafia and also to the political machine, but if handbooks were licensed, Kelly apparently felt that he could become the senior partner with the Mafia. Horner was shocked by the measure and, without consulting Kelly, vetoed it with a very strong veto message. That finished Horner with Kelly. When the 1936 primary came, Kelly found a candidate to run against Horner, Dr. Herman Bundesen, Chicago's health commissioner. Kelly figured that Bundesen's free book on baby care, which had had very wide circulation, would get him so many votes that Bundesen could beat Horner.

#### *Running Against the Bosses*

Horner rose to the occasion. Instead of giving in, this judge, who had never been in such a campaign before, really lashed out. He began talking about "Boss

Kelly." "Dump the Bosses." "Get rid of Bossism." "Let's get rid of vote frauds." "Let's have honest elections." "Let's have permanent registration." He went up and down the state with his campaign. Pat Nash, the co-chairman of the Cook County Democratic Party, said permanent registration would cost the machine 200,000 votes, and so all the strength of the machine was mobilized to oppose Horner.

Horner had a good friend, Ben Lindheimer, who was himself very rich and was able to raise money for the campaign. They raised money from state employees also and from state contractors. The campaign became a crusade. Edmund Jarecki, the county judge in charge of Cook County election machinery, was on the outs with Kelly and favored Horner. Many Republicans crossed over to vote for Horner.

On the other hand, Bundesen was indeed very well known. Forty-seven out of Chicago's fifty ward committeemen supported Bundesen, not Horner. Even some Orthodox Jewish leaders came out for Bundesen. Like National Chairman Ron Brown's coming to Chicago to support Daley, the federal government, Harry Hopkins and the WPA threw support into Chicago to help Bundesen. The Washington government and national party support the official nominee, whether Bundesen or Washington or Daley.

Horner won the primary. In the 24th Ward, almost entirely Jewish, where Arvey was ward committeeman, the vote was overwhelmingly for Bundesen. You might have assumed it would have been for Horner, but the machine had to deliver and the committeeman was first of all a Party Democrat. He delivered for the party chairman.

In the fall, Horner was the nominee and was re-elected. In his second term he was very good again. He sponsored, supported and pushed through all kinds of social programs of importance to this state. In the 1938 primary, he won another victory when Scott Lucas won the nomination for United States Senator with Horner's strong support. Unfortunately, two days before the 1938 election, Horner suffered a cerebral thrombosis, a stroke from which he never recovered. From then until the end of his term he was only nominally governor. A group of men around him ran the state. In October, 1940 he died. Like Julius Rosenwald, Horner is certainly a person who lived almost entirely *for* politics and not *off* politics.

#### *Arvey, an Interesting Character*

Third, I want to discuss Jack Arvey, a very interesting character. Arvey's record illustrates the fact that careers could be built and were built in the Democratic Party. He represents most of the Jewish officeholders since 1920. He lived *off* politics, but also to a great extent he lived *for* politics. He was primarily a ward committeeman, primarily in the business of politics, but also a man deeply interested in the goals of government.

He dropped out of Crane High School but later attended John Marshall night law school. In 1914 at the age of nineteen he engaged in his first political activity.



**Henry Horner: honorable record without blemish**

*Courtesy Chicago Historical Society*

It was anti-machine. He was supporting the campaign of William Lindsay, who was running against the machine and years later he made a judge. It was the last time he worked against the machine. After Lindsay lost, Arvey joined up.

In 1918 Arvey became an assistant State's Attorney. You have to remember that the State's Attorney's office was then in Republican hands. When Arvey went in, he became a bi-partisan protege of a Republican State's Attorney. He was like Abe Marovitz, a lifelong Democrat who also became an assistant State's Attorney under a Republican State's Attorney's auspices. This was a reflection of the predominance of the Republican Party at that time.

In 1923 Arvey became alderman. The solid Jewish population in the 24th Ward provided a base for ambitious Jewish candidates. Arvey was alderman for eighteen years. During those years he rose remarkably. In 1934, after he had been alderman for eleven years, he became committeeman and ran the ward organization, very efficiently and very tightly. He tolerated no dissent. He saw to it that the votes were enormous. Franklin D. Roosevelt said that Chicago's 24th Ward was "the best Democratic ward in America." In the 1936 election, the ward's vote was 98 percent for Roosevelt, 29,000 to 700. That was just eight months after Arvey had corralled votes to try to beat Horner.

#### *Becomes Democratic Boss*

Arvey became chairman of the City Council finance committee and the number three political person in Chicago, after Kelly and Nash. In the City Council Arvey did not tolerate much discussion, and certainly no dissent among party aldermen. He was effective in the City Council as he was in the ward. In 1941 he joined the National Guard and was in the Pacific as a judge advocate and colonel until 1945.



Jack Arvey: accomplished much...not wholly admirable

*Courtesy Dr. Irving Cutler*

After he returned, he became Cook County party chairman in 1946. He had a very good vision of where the party could go and what it could do. 1947 was the year of the mayoralty election. Although Kelly had pushed Arvey into the party chairmanship, Arvey decided that Kelly could not be the candidate for mayor.

Kelly had acquired a bad political reputation among reform elements for his debasement of the public schools and the corrupt atmosphere of his administration. However, what finished him was a strong statement he made on the right of people to live anywhere in Chicago regardless of race. In doing so he had aroused such strong hostility among anti-Black whites that Arvey felt Kelly would not win. Arvey used Kelly's statement to win committeemen's support against him, and Kelly was dumped. I am sure Arvey was not a man who advocated racial prejudice, but he concluded that Kelly's statement was the reason Kelly could be dumped. The Democratic Party did win the mayoralty, and Kelly's successor, Martin Kennelly, was mayor for eight years. Arvey had saved the office for his party.

### *Political Acumen Pays Off*

In 1948 the year again seemed politically dismal. It was believed that Truman would lose, Dewey would win and the Democratic Party would be out of national office. It was already out of state office. With brilliant insight, Arvey decided to throw the dice, take a chance and back a couple of distinguished non-professional candidates. Under his influence, the party regulars agreed to support Professor Paul H. Douglas for Governor and Adlai E. Stevenson for U.S. Senator. Then they realized that that decision might be a mistake because they feared that Douglas as governor might show dangerous independence just as Horner had done a few years earlier. So they chose Douglas for senator and Stevenson for governor.

It was a tough election contest. Nobody knew how it would turn out. But Douglas and Stevenson won by more than half a million, and Truman carried the state. The morning after election day, at a general meeting of the Democratic precinct workers in one of the downtown hotels, Arvey announced, "We're in business wholesale." It was a great phrase. What he was thinking was, "We've got the president, we've got the governor, we've got the senator, we've got the state's attorney, we've got everybody up and down the line. We're in business wholesale." He had made a brilliant, brilliant move. Illinois was indebted to his farsightedness for a wonderful governor and U.S. senator.

### *Arvey Stumbles and Falls*

In 1950 Arvey stumbled: he backed Daniel Gilbert for Sheriff of Cook County. "Tubbo" Gilbert had been a police captain and top assistant state's attorney. It was disclosed that on a modest police officer's wage he had amassed a fortune. "I made wise investments," he said.

When the press disclosed Gilbert's wealth, the whole 1950 Democratic ticket was discredited. It went down to defeat, and Arvey was removed as chairman. He was switched to Democratic National Committeeman, a far less important position, and remained there until 1972. He did not get along well with Mayor Richard J. Daley. In 1960 Arvey wanted to support Stevenson for president. Daley was for Kennedy and they disagreed openly. In 1972 Arvey voted for liberal changes in the national delegates rules, and Daley removed him as national committeeman.

In 1976, when the party came to choose delegates for the Democratic National Convention, Daley did not even put Arvey's name on the slate. Of that action Arvey said, "I've been a delegate to every Democratic National Convention except 1944 when I was in the Pacific. I might not have gone if I had been elected, but I feel hurt not even to have been named." As long as Daley lived, Arvey had no effective part any more in the Democratic Party organization.

### *The Final Years*

He became wealthy through his law practice and also devoted himself energetically to raising money for charity, for Hebrew University, Israel Bonds, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, Brandeis University and Weiss Memorial Hospital. He achieved an enviable name and reputation.

When Daley died, the party then elected him chairman emeritus, with the intention of restoring some honors to him. Arvey said, "I have been a Democrat all my life and I will die one." When asked what he thought of Daley, his mortal party enemy, Arvey said, "I regard Daley as a good friend and ally. All through his political career I have been at his side to help him. I did not hurt him. He was a very impulsive man, but he was a great mayor and a great leader." Arvey was not a person to say anything mean about anyone.



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In the summer of the year in which he died, in a interview with Roger Simon, Arvey said, "I want to say one more thing, one more thing to sum up what politics and the organization mean to me. I will tell you something. I am not a strictly religious man, this I know; but my life has been guided by what I learned at a Yom Kippur service. No, no, you cannot print it. This is too corny. Not while I'm alive. Wait. Wait until I'm gone. Then you tell them what I learned from Isaiah: that you do not please the Lord by wearing sackcloth and ashes and by showing grief. You please the Lord by feeding the hungry and clothing the naked and doing justice to your fellow man. When I'm gone you tell them that this quote explains me.

### *A Mixed Legacy*

Arvey lived *off* politics and he lived *for* politics. He was a remarkable person—with some sides that were not wholly admirable, but he was the prototype of hundreds in the Democratic Party organization. He elected Congressman Adolph Sabath, who was a useful congressman for many years. He put his law partner, Samuel Epstein, on the bench. Epstein was an outstanding judge. He was responsible for the political careers of dozens of officeholders.

I met Arvey when he became a master in chancery, around 1932. He was still in the City Council. The position of master in chancery was very lucrative because in mortgage foreclosures, and there were then a great many of them, you had to take your case before a master in chancery; and he got a fee depending mostly on the size of the mortgage. I was then a beginning lawyer working for the Sonnenschein firm, and we had a lot of mortgage foreclosures. While I was there, his law partner, Samuel Epstein, whom I knew, came in and told me this was Arvey's first case as master in chancery. He pointed to a picture on the wall, a portrait by John Doctoroff, a skillful portraitist who was then very popular, and said, "That's Mo Rosenberg, Master Arvey's sponsor." I did not know what a "sponsor" was. I was inexperienced in politics and barely experienced in law, but I was impressed by the portrait of Mo Rosenberg and the idea that a man had a "sponsor." Epstein explained that Arvey was a political protege of Mike and Mo Rosenberg. The 24th Ward organization that Arvey grew up in was Mike and Mo Rosenberg's organization.

### *Mo Rosenberg and Corruption*

Soon after my visit to Master in Chancery Arvey, Mo Rosenberg was indicted for income tax violations. In the 1920's and 1930's he had been given, at very favorable sub-market prices, the junk which the utility companies had to get rid of. He was able to resell the junk through Rosenberg Iron and Metal Company at enormous profits. He used those profits in part for himself and in part, as the utilities expected, to support Democratic organization candidates. It was a way the utilities had of making essentially cash contributions to the machine through the device of virtually giving away

scrap metal. Mo Rosenberg was indicted for income tax evasion.

Mayor Kelly and others went to President Roosevelt to ask that the case be dismissed. Roosevelt sent for the file, opened it, looked through it, closed it and said, "I think you'd better go back to Chicago." He declined to intervene. Rosenberg then tried to stave off the inevitable by making a full confession. He went to Washington to the Department of Justice in the presence of the U.S. District Attorney and told how much money he had obtained and to whom he gave it: \$95,000 to Cermak, \$200,000 to George Brennan, \$25,000 for manning the polls in the judicial election of 1929, and so on. He said judicial elections were "very important." He told about the strongbox he had at the old Pullman Trust & Savings Bank, where he kept \$1,000 and \$5,000 and \$10,000 bills. He named dozens of aldermen and legislators and others in politics to whom the money went. The confession still wasn't enough.

The criminal case against him was continued for one reason or another until finally the judge said it would go to trial for sure on the next Monday. On Friday, Mo Rosenberg entered Michael Reese Hospital for an appendectomy and died on the operating table. To this day nobody on the outside knows for sure whether he had a real appendicitis or was just making another effort to stave off the trial.

At the funeral on the following Tuesday, Judge Harry Fisher, who was a great man but a product of the machine, said, "Today Mo Rosenberg appeals to a higher court." Mo Rosenberg is the other half of Arvey and the other half of the people for whom Arvey is a prototype.

### *Earl Bush, an Underrated Politician*

The fourth figure I wish to discuss is Earl Bush. I think he never got his full recognition. He is an example of Jewish people who have been influential and active in politics without holding office. Earl Bush was a newspaper person who became Daley's press attache in the 1954-55 campaign. He was a genius at publicity. After the Election, Daley kept him on as his public relations man.

Bush is personally responsible for the successful public image which Daley projected. Bush managed Daley's public relations, and Daley had the brilliance to see how valuable Bush was. "The City That Works," "The I-Will Spirit" were phrases that Bush pushed. Daley would end almost every speech with an appeal to "The I-Will Spirit." Nobody ever knew what the I-Will Spirit was. Nobody knows today, but it had a great effect, that I-Will Spirit did. "The City That Works" was certainly a great slogan. The city did not work, but the slogan did.

Bush was a genius at turning to advantage whatever occurred. For example, when Daley was responsible once for a three-percent increase in real estate taxes and the papers so reported it, Bush said, "Wait a minute. That's \$8.00 for a man who has a \$5,000 home." In that

way the tax increase did not sound like very much. Incidentally, today \$5,000 does not sound like much for a home.

Bush was constantly covering for Daley. He used astounding pressures to get good publicity. He did not hesitate to apply whatever pressure the machine or the city government had on advertisers to influence the television and radio station and the newspapers. Under Daley's orders, he required that all movie scripts filmed in Chicago be shown to him first because he wanted to make certain that they gave a good image of the city. When Daley gave his order to shoot to kill looters and then denied he gave it, and the television cameras replayed Daley's statement to show that he did give it, Bush said it was "damned bad reporting." "You should have reported what he *meant*," Bush said, "not what he said."

When the BBC did a fine documentary on Chicago, Bush made sure it could not be shown publicly anywhere in Chicago. I had to see it in a private home. It was a great documentary, but it was not totally complimentary to Chicago.

### *Bush in Trouble*

When 1968 came with an impending Democratic convention in Chicago, Bush said, "This year I'll give police permission to chase the cameras." Sure enough, he did give "permission to chase the cameras" with a very bad result for Chicago. All in all, however, Bush was phenomenally successful.

He finally involved himself personally in a scandal. His first scandal was about his brother-in-law, Henry Holzman, who was shown to have received a questionable contract for building Chicago Dwelling Association prefabs. Earl Bush said, "I don't know anything about it. I never heard about it," and that was the end of that scandal. However, around 1973, it was disclosed that Earl Bush, while pursuing his modest career as public relations assistant to the mayor, had a substantial ownership interest in Dell Airport Advertising Company, which had the monopoly for display advertising at O'Hare. He was indicted and convicted and was fired on October 11, 1974.

This year, January 31, 1989, his conviction was set aside because of the Supreme Court decision about mail fraud cases. Bush never went to jail, but he did community service on probation. Inasmuch as his conviction was finally set aside, it seems only just that he didn't go to jail. In the statement he gave this year, two days after the conviction was set aside, he said, "I feel I never did anything wrong. And under the same circumstances I would do the same thing. It may have been unethical, but it was not criminal."

There are other Jewish persons for whom he is a kind of prototype, other Jewish persons who have had important roles in governmental affairs without holding office. Three examples are Ben Lindheimer, who was

Horner's intimate friend, adviser and supporter; Charles Swibel, who was Jane Byrne's intimate adviser, less admirable than Lindheimer; and David Axelrod who was recently the second Mayor Daley's campaign PR person and virtually a sub-candidate, like Earl Bush.

### *A Genuinely Admirable Politician*

The fifth individual I have chosen to discuss is Sidney Yates. I take him as an example of a genuinely admirable Jewish person now in public life. His parents came from Vilna. He was born in Michael Reese Hospital, lived on Maxwell Street, moved to Lakeview, attended Nettelhorst Public School, graduated with honors from Lake View High School and went to the University of Chicago College and Law School. Between college and law school he played professional basketball. He was an excellent basketball player, who used to get \$5.00 a game, the going rate when he played.

He graduated from law school in 1933, started to practice law and, in 1936, went to work for Governor Horner's Illinois Commerce Commission. In 1936 he worked for Horner in both the primary and the election. In 1939 he joined his father-in-law's firm. Then, like Arvey, he tried independent politics. He started out as an anti-machine candidate for alderman, against James Young, the regulars' candidate. His slogan was "Smash the machine." Well, he lost and, like Arvey, he then joined the regulars. During World War II he was in the U.S. Navy.

When he returned, he was still in the 46th Ward organization under Committeeman Gill, and early in 1948 he went to Gill and said he'd like to run for Congress. Gill laughed at him. The Congressional district was a swing district, sometimes Republican and sometimes Democratic. Gill told him, "No, we have to have a German candidate, and John Haderlein is going to be our candidate." There was nothing Sidney Yates could do. In August, however, when the incumbent Chicago Postmaster died, the party decided it needed a German-American for Postmaster. Haderlein was appointed, thus creating a vacancy on the ticket for Congressional candidate.

It was August, 1948, less than ninety days before the election. The committeeman's problem was to get someone to run. 1948 looked like a bad year. Truman seemed to be a loser. Gill called up Sidney Yates and asked, "Do you still want to run for Congress?" "Yes, I do." "Can you finance your own campaign?" Sidney Yates said he could. He began running for Congress.

I remember that he used to eat lunch downtown with some other lawyers. One of the lawyers told me that one afternoon they were sitting around after lunch, none of them having much to do. Sidney Yates said, "I have to go to a political meeting for my campaign." The lawyer told me, "We said to Sidney, 'What's the use of going? Nothing's going to happen.'" But Sidney left and campaigned, and did so vigorously, and in the great sweep of

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1948 he carried his district by 18,000 votes.

### *Yates an Outstanding Congressman*

He's been a remarkable congressman, just remarkable. There are two sides to Sidney Yates. One is his side in Congress, where he is courageous, independent and fearless. The other is his position in the city organizations, where he goes along quietly. In Congress he immediately began fighting the oil and gas monopolies and their rates.

When McCarthyism came, he was one of seven Representatives who opposed the terrible Hobbs bill, and he was one of the very few to vote against the internal security law. These were McCarthyite measures which were very popular at the time. It took a lot of courage to be against them.

He was always on the ball on housing. Always on health issues. He has been and is a great champion of the arts. He was slow to oppose the Vietnam War, but he finally began voting against appropriations. He was against the attacks on the environment, especially when they wanted to send SST aircraft over the whole United States. He has been an amazing, even an impeccable, congressman.

In individual cases of injustice he always stands out. Yet when he comes back to Chicago, he does not deviate from his alliance with the machine. When Singer, for example, ran for alderman in the 43rd Ward as an anti-machine candidate, Yates declined to support him. Since then Singer has made peace with the machine and become a prosperous lawyer.

When I ran for alderman in '55, Yates had been a congressman for seven years. By chance we were on the same plane going to Washington. He was most encouraging to me and gave me excellent advice. It was advice that was not confidential or secret, on how to be a candidate what to do, how to act. But at the end he said, "Don't tell anybody I told you all this." He had told me no secrets, but he knew I was running against Committeeman Barnet Hodes' candidate in the 5th Ward, and he did not want me to go around and say that Sidney Yates told me how to behave.

A recent statement by Yates gives his fundamental views: "I still think people will support the Democratic Party because it stands for the New Deal programs and the other social programs that the party gave. The programs we created were supposed to provide a means for people to move forward. Do you go back to creating slums? Do you go back to miserable conditions? Do you do away with education the way Reagan wants to? Do you do away with health research after all the benefits we've seen emerge to make us the healthy people we are? Do you do away with cancer research? Do you do away with public transportation? The fact remains that people in the city still need housing; the problem is that there is so little private housing built for people in the lower economic level. So you look for solutions. The



**Sidney Yates: an amazing, even impeccable congressman**

fact is that urban problems are problems that have to be met by New Deal measures."

### *Inspired Excellence in Public Service*

He has shown undivided fidelity to the public interest. He has been an example for a number of others in politics. I cannot list them all, and if I omit some, it's just because they are so numerous. He is the prototype for Abner Mikva, the state legislator, congressman and outstanding judge; Seymour Simon, a splendid second-round alderman and very great Supreme Court judge; for Robert Mann, a remarkable state legislator; for Robert Marks, Aaron Jaffe, Martin Oberman, Harold Katz. I think I can also name Alan Greiman, Ellis Levin and Arthur Berman.

At the beginning I quoted what Jacob Freed said about Jews in public service and the prophetic ideals. Have Jews in Chicago's public life been faithful to those ideals? In part, many have; in great part, some have; and some, not at all. The picture is mixed like that of other peoples in political life in Chicago.

*But*, I think there is an edge in our favor. We have been a persecuted people and we understand the burdens of discrimination. We have a greater sensitivity than most others to social injustice, and I think that for our numbers we have contributed just a few more than our arithmetical share of people in public life who have been responsive to the prophetic idea. What is the prophetic ideal? I think it was best stated by Amos. It was repeated by Martin Luther King in his 1963 March on Washington speech. I think it is what we would like to have from every Jewish person in public life. Sometimes we get it very generously, but it's what we'd like to have always: "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." □



## Jewish West Side Revived at Penn School Reunion

*1500 Relive Old Times, See Cutler Slide Show*

Although secular in nature, the recent wildly-successful reunion of graduates of the William Penn Elementary School had the overtones of a nostalgic backward look at Chicago Jewish history. Of the nearly 1,500 people attending the reunion, it is estimated that 99.9% were Jewish, as were the students attending that West Side school during the first forty years or so following its opening in 1907.

Located at Sixteenth Street and Avers Avenue in the heart of the Jewish West Side, the school enrolled primarily Jewish students until after World War II; and it was essentially a middle-aged and older crowd who filled (and overflowed) the Rosemont-O'Hare Exposition Center Ballroom on October 28. Hundreds had to be turned away for lack of space.

### *Cutler Slideshow Featured*

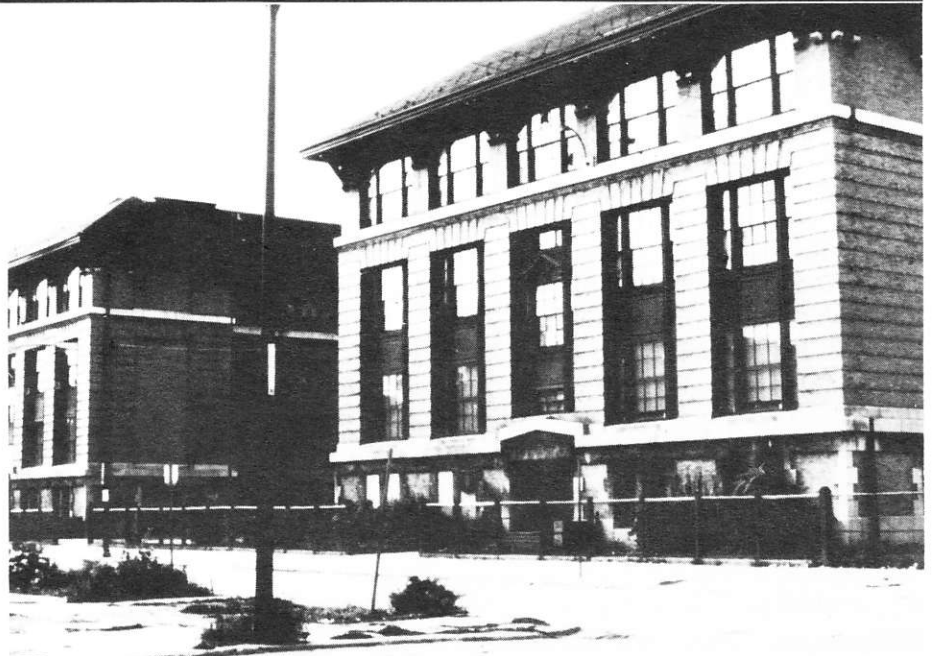
Among the crowd who relived old times in the Chicago area's largest Jewish neighborhood ever and watched a triple-screen slide show on the "Old Neighborhood" given by CJHS co-founder Dr. Irving Cutler were perhaps a dozen former Penn teachers, some of them in their eighties. A twenty-four page oversized souvenir booklet contained a directory, letters from former teachers, memories of growing up in the area and photos of community institutions, chiefly Jewish ones.

Another popular feature of the reunion was Dr. Cutler's West Side Tour, a CJHS summer staple, which though given twice for the graduates on October 29 had, as usual, to turn away disappointed applicants.

### *People Came from 28 States*

Preference for the tours was given to out-of-towners attending the reunion. These were 42 from California, 14 from Florida, 3 from Arizona and 25 from other states. One attendee had graduated from Penn almost seventy years ago. The reunion was organized by a completely non-professional volunteer committee created at the suggestion of Fred Bass of the class of 1948 at Penn.

A complete collection of the various issues of the Pennygram, the school's



The William Penn School building as it currently looks

*Courtesy Dr. Irving Cutler*

newsletter for the years 1937-57, and a full record of the reunion have been given to the Society for the Chicago Jewish Archives. I.J.S.□

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## New Year Means Renewal Time For CJHS Members

Letters reminding readers to renew their CJHS membership are currently in the mail according to Membership Chairman Marian Cutler. All memberships except those of life members and individuals who have joined for the first time since July expired at the end of the calendar year, and timely renewal is necessary in order to insure receiving *Chicago Jewish History* and meeting notices.

### *Many Benefits of Membership*

Among the other benefits available to members are reduced rates for the Society's popular summer tours, the right to attend the annual members' brunch, invitations to exhibit openings, discounts on purchases at the Spertus Museum and free bus service to meetings at distant locations. Members in good standing are also eligible to receive a free copy of each monograph published by the Doris Minsky Memorial Fund as it appears. A 1990 publication is planned.

Although extremely modest, the Society's dues structure makes possible most Society efforts to preserve local Jew-

ish history, including exhibits, the taping of oral histories, the collection of archives, publication of *Chicago Jewish History*, provision of speakers and meeting places and the customary social hour which precedes meetings.

### *Dues Purposely Kept Low*

Dues are kept low in order to enable anyone actively to participate in the Society's efforts. Regular dues begin at \$25.00 per year, with seniors and students able to belong for lesser sums. A full schedule of dues appears on the last page of this publication. Mrs. Cutler reminds us that the voluntary decision by many to select one of the higher dues categories is what makes it possible to continue our lowest rates.

She also advises members to send in their renewals without delay to prevent any interruption in Society benefits. They are a bargain as well as a contribution to the preservation of Chicago's Jewish history. □

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## Flash

Plan now to attend our March meeting devoted to Dankmar Adler, the architect, with Louis Sullivan, of the world-famous Auditorium Building now celebrating its centennial.

Plans call for a meeting in the building and a tour of the structure, including the theater. Some of his descendants will be present. More details later.



"Graduates" of the Chicago Home for Jewish Orphans about 1921. Can you identify any of these young persons and/or tell us about their present whereabouts? See story for details.

## Donation to Archives Recalls Days of Jewish Orphanages

### *Seek Identification Of Those in 1921 Photo*

**F**orty-six years ago, just as it was approaching its fiftieth year of operation, Chicago's first Jewish orphanage closed. It was a victim of changing social service philosophy, which by 1943 held that foster homes were less institutional and more desirable (and cheaper) places for orphaned children.

That the Chicago Home for Jewish Orphans did a good job of providing for parentless children has been testified to in reminiscences published previously in this journal and elsewhere. It was reinforced some ten years ago, however, when over 200 "alumni" held a reunion at the Max Dolnick Center.

### *Located in Woodlawn*

The "Aitchkays" or home kids as they were called when they lived at the home at 6208 South Drexel Avenue and attended Fiske School and Hyde Park High School met in September of 1978 to remi-

nisc and renew friendships, some of which started fifty or sixty years before. They gathered from sixteen states across the country. The reunion was organized by Roy Klowden.

An early photograph, presumably of a group of "graduates" and the home's director, and stories of the reunion have recently been donated to Society archives by Carolyn Wollner. The photo appears to be from 1921 and is reproduced on this page. The Society seeks to identify as many individuals as possible. If you can help, get in touch with the editor at 348-2800.

### *Founded with Donation*

The Chicago Home was founded in 1894 with a cash gift from a wealthy Jewish businessman in Waverly, Iowa, W. K. Slimmer. It opened its doors in a rented house at 3601 South Vernon Avenue with a capacity of thirty-one children. In 1899 it moved into its own larger, purpose-built quarters on Drexel Avenue, across from the Jewish old people's home earlier established by Chicago German Jewish community.

The Chicago Home was later supplemented by the Marks Nathan Home on the West Side, which primarily served children of Eastern European background. Virtually no orphanages exist in the area today. □

## New Members Add To Society Strength

**T**he Society continues to grow as new members assist us in our efforts to collect, preserve and disseminate the records of Chicago's Jewish past. Joining the Chicago Jewish Historical Society during the past few months were the following:

Mike & Rose Ann Abrams	Marvin P. Meyer
A.G. Beth Israel	Paul Hyman Meyer
Congregation	Seymour H. Persky
Oscar Z. Fasman	Idah Riskind
Malcolm M. Gaynor	Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth
M. H. Hecht	Riskind
Milton Herst	P. A. Riskind
Theodore Horwich	Rose Rosenheim
Hervey Juris	Irving Sachs
Herbert A. Klaff	Marcia & Michael Saper
Mary Leman	Eva Shure
Albert Levin	Howard Walchak
Nancy Merrill	Marvin Weiss

This list brings the total new membership for last year to 117. Since many were for couples, the actual number of individuals added to our rolls in 1989 is very near 150. They materially augment our strength and assist us in our various efforts to preserve our past.

Marian Cutler  
Membership Chairman

# About the Society

## Officers 1989-90

Walter Roth.....President  
 Burt Robin.....Vice President  
 Elaine Suloway.....Secretary  
 Herman Draznin.....Treasurer

### Directors

Leah Axelrod, Daniel Beederman, Charles Bernstein, Sol Brandzel, Dr. Irving Cutler, Marian Cutler, Clare Greenberg, Dr. Adele Hast\*, Janet Hagerup, Rachel Heimovics\*, Mark Mandle, Dr. Edward Mazur, Tom Meites, Joseph Minsky, Elsie Orlinsky, David Passman, James Rice, Muriel Robin Rogers\*, Moselle Schwartz, Norman Schwartz\*, Milton Shulman, Shirley Sorkin, Sidney Sorkin, Dr. Irwin Suloway

\*Indicates Past President

## Chicago Jewish History

*Chicago Jewish History* is published quarterly by the Chicago Jewish Historical Society at 618 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60605. Telephone (312) 663-5634. Appropriate manuscripts are invited and should be directed to the editor at 3500 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60657. Single copies: \$1.50 postpaid. Successor to *Society News*.

Editor .....Irwin J. Suloway

### Editorial Board

Marian Cutler, Mark Mandle  
 Norman Schwartz, Sidney Sorkin, Elaine Suloway

## What We Are

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society was founded in 1977 and is in part an outgrowth of local Jewish participation in the American Bicentennial celebrations of 1976. Muriel Robin was the founding president. It has as its purpose the discovery, preservation and dissemination of information concerning the Jewish experience in the Chicago area.

## What We Do

The Society seeks out, collects and preserves appropriate written, spoken and photographic records; publishes historical information; holds public meetings at which various aspects of Chicago Jewish history are treated; mounts appropriate exhibits; and offers tours of Jewish historical sites.

## Minsky Fund

The Doris Minsky Memorial Fund, established in memory of one of the Society's founders and longtime leaders, seeks to publish annually a monograph on an aspect of Chicago area Jewish history. Members may receive a copy of each monograph as it is published. Manuscripts may be submitted and contributions to the Fund are welcome at any time.

## Membership

Membership in the Society includes a subscription to *Chicago Jewish History*; each monograph published by the Doris Minsky Memorial Fund as it appears; discounts on Society tours and at the Spertus Museum Store and the opportunity to learn and inform others concerning Chicago Jewish history and its preservation.

Membership in the Society is open to all interested persons and organizations.

## Dues Structure

Membership runs on a calendar year, from January through December. New members joining after July 1 are given an initial membership through December of the following year. The following dues schedule applies to categories indicated:

Regular Membership.....	\$25.00
Family Membership.....	\$35.00
Patron.....	\$50.00
Sponsor.....	\$100.00
Senior Citizen Membership.....	\$15.00
Student Membership.....	\$10.00
Synagogue or Organization.....	\$25.00
Life Membership.....	\$1,000.00

Checks should be made payable to the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. Dues are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Look to the rock from which you were hewn  
 הַבֵּיטוּ אֶל-צוּר הַצְּבָתָם



chicago jewish historical society  
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