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Jews and Anti-Semitism in Early Pennsylvania

WHEN IN 1782 that first great apostle of American exceptionalism, Hector St.-John de Crèvecoeur, proclaimed that in British North America the typical European, "leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners," was "melted into a new race of men," he listed as examples "English, Scotch, Irish, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes."[1] He left out the Jews, but can hardly be blamed. They comprised an almost infinitesimal proportion—less than one-twentieth of 1 percent—of the population of eighteenth-century British North America. Perhaps thirteen hundred to fifteen hundred Jews, out of over three million people,

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[1] Hector St.-John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782; reprint, New York, 1963), 64, 62.

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lived in the new United States at the time of the first national census in 1790. The largest Jewish communities, in Charleston and New York City, numbered 188 and 242, respectively.[2] Only a small number of Jews lived in early Pennsylvania. From the 1760s to the early 1790s, except when refugees swelled their numbers during the American Revolution, perhaps a hundred Jews lived in Philadelphia. As late as 1820, the Philadelphia census listed only 58 Jewish households with a population of 402, and the state had relatively few other Jewish residents.[3]

Nevertheless, the Jewish experience in eighteenth-century Pennsylvania illuminates a multitude of topics that shed light on early American as well as Jewish history. The transplantation of European and English Jewish behavior patterns appears in the close connections Jews maintained with each other throughout the Atlantic world, in the diversity of Jewish immigration which encompassed Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews from an astounding range of places in the Christian and Islamic worlds, and in the assimilation of elite Jews into an Enlightenment culture that transcended national boundaries. At first, like the people of Pennsylvania in general, the colony's Jews maintained a harmonious community among themselves and with other groups that then came unraveled during the era of warfare that began in the 1750s. Despite tiny numbers, Pennsylvania Jews played important roles in Pennsylvania commerce, frontier expansion, the American Revolution, and the partisan battles of the early republic, although in accordance with British practice, they were not allowed to vote or hold political office. And as anti-Semitism turned from a popular prejudice which rarely found political expression in the colonial period into a political issue during the Revolution and early republic in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the question of whether a Jew (and by extension anyone who was not a Protestant Christian) could be a good American became an item on the national political agenda. Only in 1800, with the triumph of Thomas Jefferson, who was himself the target of Federalist attacks for his deist be-

[2] Ira Rosenswaike, "An Estimate and Analysis of the Jewish Population of the United States in 1790," in Abraham Karp, ed., *The Jewish Experience in America*, vol. 1, *The Colonial Period* (New York, 1969), 393; Frederic Cople Jaher, *A Scapegoat in the New Wilderness: The Origins and Rise of Anti-Semitism in America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1994), 123–24.

[3] Ira Rosenswaike, "The Jewish Population of the United States as Estimated from the Census of 1820," in Abraham Karp, ed., *The Jewish Experience in America*, vol. 2, *The Early Republic* (New York, 1969), 7; Edwin Wolf 2d and Maxwell Whiteman, *The History of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial Times to the Age of Jackson* (Philadelphia, 1957), 53.

liefs, was anti-Semitism expunged from the political arenas of Pennsylvania and the United States, though it would reappear when large numbers of Jewish immigrants began to arrive in the mid-nineteenth century.

This essay has two parts. The first briefly discusses the history of Pennsylvania Jews before 1800, summarizing a body of literature produced by historians of early American Jewry. It does not break new ground for those familiar with Jewish history, but provides background for those readers who are not acquainted with a field of scholarship that has flourished largely apart from the mainstream of early American studies. It attempts to integrate this information into the general experience of both Atlantic Jewry and colonial Pennsylvania and its ethnically diverse population. The second part explores both the popular and elite origins of anti-Semitism in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania's anti-Semitism, in large measure, was the product of people who were themselves attempting to prove their own worthiness for citizenship by constructing "others" whose unsuitability would contrast with their own virtue.

Studying the Jewish experience in Pennsylvania will strike many familiar chords for students of European Jewry in the early modern world. By the eighteenth century, both European and English Jewry included a mixture of Sephardic and Ashkenazi elements. Because of persecution, many Spanish (Sephardic) Jews had moved to Italy (where after the Counter-Reformation the popes protected them for the most part), the Near East, North Africa (where Islam was even more tolerant), and the Netherlands (the most tolerant of all). German Jews first were pushed eastward toward Poland during the Reformation, but as would occur time and again after persecutions and wartime devastation, they returned, prospered, and were tolerated from the time of the Thirty Years' War into the early twentieth century. Although many became Christians, they soon found that they could not shed their ethnic identity as easily, for anti-Semites continued to use the converts' Jewish heritage against them. For instance, Felix Mendelssohn converted to Christianity and Karl Marx was the atheist son of a convert, yet their enemies still accused them of writing "Jewish" music and philosophy.[4]

In eighteenth-century London, despite quarrels over how to conduct services, Jews formed a basically united community with London's three

[4] Jonathan Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550–1750* (rev. ed., Oxford, 1989), esp. chaps. 1, 2, 4.

synagogues—one Sephardic, one traditional Ashkenazi, one friendly toward the Enlightenment—all located within a block of each other. No Jews had been allowed to live in England from the time Edward I expelled them in 1290 until 1655 when the efforts of Menasseh ben Israel of Amsterdam in pleading for their readmittance and naturalization brought forth a secret community that lived in London's East End. After 1655, England "naturalized" Jews, permitting them to stay, do business, and own property without granting them political rights. Wealthy English Jews, however, Christianized more rapidly than those on the continent and abandoned distinctive dress, religion, and culture. This "radical assimilation" occurred, historian Todd Endelman persuasively argues, because Jews had not been persecuted in England and enjoyed the right to live peaceably and earn their keep, for the most part, on equal terms with other inhabitants.[5] Because there was no long-standing Jewish cultural community in England—its rabbis came from abroad—the Jews had nothing like the tradition of limited self-rule that had been granted to Jewish authorities on the continent. In England, limited toleration meant that Jews did not have to live in ghettoes or otherwise maintain their cultural distinctiveness, while laws restricting political office and the civil service to Christians encouraged conversions, most notably that of Isaac D'Israeli, father of the great prime minister. Elite relations with Jews were sufficiently friendly that the term "philo-Semitism" has been commonly used by scholars to describe the interaction of English upper-class Jews and gentiles who shared a philosophical commitment to the Enlightenment.[6]

In early Pennsylvania, the pattern was much the same. Intermarriage, business partnerships, and mutual respect among Jews and the gentile elite were common. Midrach Israel, for instance, married Mary Paxton, an Anglican; their son Israel, born in 1744 and baptized a Christian in Philadelphia two years later, became the principal target of Federalist anti-Semitism in the 1790s for his Republican activism. David Franks, who had

[5] W. D. Rubinstein, *A History of the Jews in the English-Speaking World* (London, 1996), 61. One exception was the London Stock Exchange, on which so many Jews sought seats that their number was limited to twelve of one hundred. This reflects their prominence in financial circles since Jews numbered far less than 1 percent of the total population.

[6] Frank Manuel, "Israel and the Enlightenment," *Daedalus* 111 (1982), 33–51; Adam Sutcliffe, "Myth, Origins, Identity: Voltaire, the Jews, and the Enlightenment Notion of Toleration," *The Eighteenth Century* 41 (1998), 107–26; Todd Endelman, *The Jews of Georgian England, 1714–1830*, rev. ed. (Ann Arbor, 1999).

moved to Philadelphia from New York to tend to his wealthy family's business interests in Pennsylvania, married Margaret, daughter of Peter Evans, Philadelphia's Registrar of Wills. Their children were baptized at Anglican Christ Church while Franks continued to be active in Jewish affairs, sometimes attending synagogue in New York before Philadelphia Jews began to hold their own services in the 1760s. The elder Franks' faith did not preclude his family's rise in high society, as a poem written by Joseph Shippen to honor the belles at the 1774 Assembly Ball attests: "With just such elegance and ease / Fair charming [Miss] Swift appears; / Thus [Miss] Willing, whilst she awes, can please; / Thus Polly Franks endears."[7]

Like Pennsylvania's early colonists, the first practicing Jews to settle in Philadelphia had diverse origins, although the majority of early Pennsylvania Jews were of central European or Ashkenazi origin. Philadelphia's first permanent Jewish settlers, the Levy brothers, Nathan and Isaac, arrived in the late 1730s. They had been born in New York, a home for Jews since 1654, where their father Moses was a prominent merchant and synagogue leader. The Levys were of Sephardic and Iberian origin, but the Franks brothers, David and Moses, who followed them in 1740 from New York to Philadelphia, were of German descent. Nevertheless, the two families had intermarried and the Franks had been reared in New York's Sephardic congregation. Levy and Franks was the first Jewish merchant partnership in Philadelphia; their ship *Myrtilla* brought the "Liberty Bell" to America in August 1752.[8] The Franks, in turn, did business with Solomon Henry Gratz of London, a merchant whose trading connections stretched from the East Indies to the Western Hemisphere. The Gratzes, for their part, had originally come from Cracow by way of Prague and had then been the first Jewish settlers in the town of Langendorf in Austrian Upper Silesia. An orphaned cousin of Solomon Henry, Barnard Gratz arrived in Philadelphia in 1753 or 1754, his brother Michael in 1760.[9] The Rev. Mr. Jacob Raphael Cohen, hazzan or minister at the first Philadelphia synagogue from 1784 until his death in 1811, was of uncertain origin, but was commonly believed to hail from the Barbary Coast. He had arrived by way of London, then Canada—where he presided at the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish

[7] Richard Brilliant, *Facing the New World: Jewish Portraits of the Colonial and Federal Era* (Munich, 1997), 37; Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 33, 63.

[8] Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 26–29.

[9] Sidney M. Fish, *Barnard and Michael Gratz: Their Lives and Times* (Lanham, Md., 1994), 1.

congregation of Montreal—and finally New York. Haym Salomon, the great financial supporter of the Revolution, was born in Poland of Portuguese stock and then fled to Philadelphia from New York during the Revolution. Benjamin Nones, heroic major in the Revolutionary War, interpreter for the French and Spanish to the United States government, ardent Jeffersonian Republican, and powerful apologist for Jewish citizenship, came from Bordeaux, France, and Savannah, Georgia. Jonas Phillips, of Spanish descent, was born near Aix-la-Chapelle in the Prussian Rhineland, and came to Philadelphia by way of London, New York, and Charleston.[10]

The great mobility of early modern Jews did not reflect a rootless people, but rather the tight connections maintained between a series of communities on the North American mainland—Newport, New York, Charleston, Savannah, and Philadelphia—with those in Europe and the West Indies. For example, while young Barnard Gratz was working for David Franks (the most prominent Jew in pre-revolutionary Philadelphia), his brother Michael was placed through family connections first in Berlin, then in Amsterdam, followed by time in India before settling down in Philadelphia. The Franks family supplied British troops in Jamaica during the War of Jenkins' Ear and King George's War (1739–48), while also, through their agents in Charleston, assisting James Oglethorpe of Georgia in his attacks on the Spanish in Florida. Two daughters of merchant Samuel Myers Cohen of New York married, respectively, Barnard Gratz and Mathias Bush of Philadelphia; one of Cohen's sons wed the daughter of Lancaster's Joseph Simon, a Jew who was that town's most prominent midcentury merchant. London Jews appealed successfully to their American brethren for funds to aid their coreligionists in Palestine, a major repeated destination for European Jewish charity.[11]

Such trans-Atlantic connections were not peculiarly Jewish: Rose Beiler has demonstrated similar networks among Pennsylvania German Christian sectarians, many of whom could understand their fellow Jewish immigrants since Yiddish is a dialect of German. Quakers and Anglicans, among others,

[10] Fish, *Barnard and Michael Gratz*, 11–12, 16–30; for more international connections among Jews, see Miriam Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Bloomington, Ind., 1997) and Alan F. Benjamin, *Jews of the Dutch Caribbean: Exploring Ethnic Identity on Cuaraçao* (London, 2002), esp. 54–59.

[11] Jacob R. Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew: 1492–1776* (3 vols., Detroit, 1970), 2:712–13; Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 40, 55–56.

also supported each other across political boundaries.[12] But Jewish ties seem to have been exceptionally close, due in part to the prominence of the Franks family and its numerous connections in mid-eighteenth-century commerce, and in part to habits of mutual assistance that grew out of the experience of persecution on the continent. In the exceptional diversity of their population, in their role in occupying borderlands in Pennsylvania and elsewhere, and in their desire to prove themselves worthy members of the body politic, Jews exemplified trends found among ethnic groups on the cultural margins of the British world.[13]

Jews of sufficient gentility, for instance, were accepted as members of an anglicized Philadelphia elite to which Quakers, Anglicans, and Presbyterians all belonged. Benjamin Franklin set the pattern of philo-Semitism when on September 15, 1737, about the time the Levys first settled in Philadelphia, he wrote in the *Pennsylvania Packet* that: "The Jews were acquainted with the several Arts and Sciences long e're the Romans became a People, or the Greeks were known among the Nations." Jews were welcomed in various Philadelphia institutions associated with Franklin, such as the Academy (later the University of Pennsylvania), where "the greatest liberality prevailed" of any college in America. When the Franklin Academy (later Franklin and Marshall College) was founded in Lancaster in 1787, four of the students to enroll in its first class were Jews. In 1754, David Franks became a member of the Library Company Franklin had organized. Institutions not particularly associated with Franklin opened their doors to Jews as well. A significant proportion of the town's Jewish men belonged to Philadelphia's Masonic lodges: at the height of the influx of refugees during the American Revolution, thirteen of the fifty-six members of the Sublime Lodge of Perfection were Jews, including the deputy grand master, Solomon Bush. Moses Sheftall of Savannah came north to study medicine with Dr. Benjamin Rush. Four of the original subscribers to the Chestnut Street Theatre were Jews.[14] On the other side of the coin,

[12] Rosalind J. Beiler, "Distributing Aid to Believers in Need: The Religious Foundations of Transatlantic Migration," in Nicholas Canny et al., eds., *Empire, Society, and Labor: Essays in Honor of Richard S. Dunn*, special supplemental issue of *Pennsylvania History* 64 (1997), 73–87; Frederick B. Tolles, *Quakers and the Atlantic Culture* (New York, 1960); Carl Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics, 1689–1775* (New York, 1962).

[13] See especially the introduction to Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Strangers in the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* (Chapel Hill, 1991).

[14] *Pennsylvania Packet*, Sept. 15, 1737; Leon Hüchner, "Jews in Connection with the Colleges of the Original Thirteen States Prior to 1800," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*

gentiles Benjamin Franklin, Thomas McKean, Charles Biddle, and David Rittenhouse were among the donors when in 1788 the congregation Mikveh ("the hope of") Israel desperately needed money to finish and furnish its synagogue.[15] Portraits of eighteenth-century Pennsylvania Jews are indistinguishable from those of contemporary Christians.[16]

During the Seven Years' War (1754–63), well-to-do Pennsylvania Jews assumed a role their European brethren had filled for over a century. Like the "court Jews" of various nations who had occasionally received titles of nobility—although more minor titles than those given to gentiles for comparable services—the Pennsylvania Jews were responsible for a good deal of wartime contracting and finance. Jews throughout Europe had played a critical role in supplying the armies of Marlborough and Prinz Eugen in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–13), not because they were richer than Christian merchants and bankers, but because their international network permitted an especially rapid transfer of funds from one end of Europe to another, and then from Europe to America. Similarly, the Jewish merchant community anchored by the Franks family of New York and Philadelphia, and their connections, was among the giants of the colonial firms that supplied British and colonial forces in the 1750s and early 1760s.[17]

The role played by Pennsylvania Jewish merchants in the Seven Years' War resembled that performed by Benjamin Franklin. They too served as mediators between British officers who demanded that the provincials provide the sinews of war and Americans who did not want to part with their lives, wagons, or draft animals. They made numerous deals with reluctant colonials, cajoling or threatening them to do their duty, all the while trying to placate the British, as the following two examples illustrate. On June 8, 1760, David Franks wrote from Carlisle to his clerk Barnard Gratz in Philadelphia: "Give the Waggoners a strict Charge not to Stop by

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(hereafter, *PAJHS*) 19 (1910), 120–24; Samuel Oppenheim, "The Jews and Masonry in the United States before 1800," *PAJHS* 19 (1910), 42–49; Jacob R. Marcus, *American Jewry: Documents, Eighteenth Century* (Cincinnati, 1959), 7, 69; Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 184; R. William Weisberger, "Freemasonry as a Source of Jewish Civic Rights in Late Eighteenth-Century Vienna and Philadelphia: A Study in Atlantic History," *East European Quarterly* 34 (2001), 419–45.

[15] Henry Samuel Morais, *The Jews of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1894), 19–20.

[16] For portraits, see those following page 68 in Eli Faber, *A Time For Planting: The First Migration, 1654–1820* (Baltimore, 1992), and Richard Brilliant, *Facing the New World: Jewish Portraits in Colonial and Federal America* (Munich, 1997).

[17] Israel, *European Jewry*, 123–45.

the Way, or they'l Loose their pay and be hang'd." During Pontiac's Rebellion, Slough and Simon, the Frankses' subcontractors at Lancaster, explained in June 1763 to Colonel Henry Bouquet, commander of the British forces in Pennsylvania, why he had to pay wagon drivers more than he had expected. Apologizing for their direct language, Slough and Simon added a postscript: "You will please excuse our dictating to you in this Manner, as it is our best for the Good of the Cause." Bouquet did more than excuse his correspondents, replying to them that he considered himself "much obliged to you for the Pains you have taken on this occasion."[18]

Like the colonists in general, Jews had hoped to profit from the war's successful conclusion. Many had invested heavily in land companies in the Ohio Valley, and were thus angered by the Proclamation of 1763 which forbade settlement in that region. Pennsylvania Jews were at the forefront of those investors who sought revocation of this measure. On December 7, 1763, at a meeting at the Indian Queen Tavern in Philadelphia, David Franks's brother Moses, a prominent London merchant, was authorized, along with gentile Indian trader George Croghan, to present to the British government "A Memorial of the Merchants and Traders, relative to the losses sustained in the late and Former Indian Trade, occasioned by the Depredations and war of the said Indians." David Franks joined three others in preparing the memorial. Of £86,000 requested by twenty-three merchants, Simon, Franks, Trent, Levy, and Company claimed the largest amount, £25,000. What they hoped for was not cash, but compensation in the form of extensive land grants in the Old Northwest.[19]

While the status of the Jews' claims to western lands hung in limbo, Britain imposed the Stamp Act in 1765, requiring payment of a tax on all legal documents, a special burden on Pennsylvania's Jews. Of about twenty-five Jewish families who lived in Philadelphia, a dozen were headed by merchants whose businesses depended on the transfer and authentication of letters of credit and invoices for goods that stated their value and place from which they were imported. On October 25, 1765, nine or ten (one person's religion is uncertain) Jews joined Philadelphia's merchant community in adopting a Non-Importation Agreement, pledging not to import goods from

[18] Fish, *Barnard and Michael Gratz*, 50, 57–58, citing material from the Etting Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter, HSP), and *Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, ed. Sylvester K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent (5 vols., Harrisburg, 1940–43), 1A:191, 240.

[19] Fish, *Barnard and Michael Gratz*, 81–132.

Britain until the Stamp Act was repealed.[20]

Even as Pennsylvania Jews were experiencing threats to their well-being from imperial rule, they were also becoming aware of a threat from below: the increasing gap between rich and poor which historians Gary Nash and Billy Smith have described in the postwar city. Although Philadelphia did not have a synagogue until 1771, during the High Holy Days of 1768, two rival minyans met in people's houses. Since ten men were required for worship and there were only about twenty-five Jewish families in the city, this split indicates that the community was fairly evenly divided. New Yorker Jacob Henry offered a clue to the problem when he inquired whether Philadelphia's anticipated synagogue would be modeled on the "Hambro [Hamburg], Pragg, or Poland style." Of the possible models, the Hambro (Hamburg) synagogue was noted in Europe as the center of Enlightened Judaism, whereas Prague and Poland were strongholds of the more conservative Ashkenazim. When meeting in unison, Pennsylvania Jews, although primarily of Ashkenazi descent, worshipped in the Sephardic manner of New York, from whence many of them had emigrated. Not only was the Sephardic service considered more socially respectable, the Sephardim were more liberal in their customs and assimilationist in their attitudes than the frequently poor eastern European and German-speaking Ashkenazim, who clung more tenaciously to dietary and marriage regulations and strict observance of the Sabbath.[21]

Henry expressed a wish that Philadelphia's Jews could unite in "the old mode of Pennsylvania," which "Seemingly Suites every Body." But it was not to be. Poor Jewish immigrants were making their way to Philadelphia in the aftermath of war. In 1772, the *Pennsylvania Packet* quoted a London newspaper that "Jews are brought into this kingdom, who beg their passage, and are set on shore without sixpence in their pocket." Some of these unfortunates moved to the New World: at least three Dutch Jewish indentured servants arrived in Philadelphia that year, along with poor Jews from Germany, France, Ireland, and the West Indies in the early 1770s.

[20] Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 47.

[21] Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979); Billy G. Smith, *"The Lower Sort": The Laboring People of Philadelphia, 1750–1800* (Ithaca, 1990); Marcus, *Colonial American Jew*, 2:880; Faber, *Time for Planting*, 58–60; Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 54, quoting Jacob Henry to Barnard Gratz, Jan. 7, 1771, McAlister Collection, HSP.

Two of the newcomers turned out to be scoundrels. Emmanuel Lyon, a German who had lived in London, and "pretended to be a great scholar and well versed in the Hebrew tongue," was "abusive" and used "threatening language" when his benefactress Rachel Moses asked him to repay money she had advanced to set him up in trade. Isaac Jacob, another German who arrived by way of Ireland, was an "atrocious villain" who absconded with merchandise he had promised to sell on commission. Considering the small number of Jewish families living in the city, Jews provided more than their proportion of the unprecedented immigration to North America that occurred after the Seven Years' War. Like the majority of urban voyagers traced by Bernard Bailyn, the Jewish immigrants of the early 1770s were poor, single men in search of the main chance.[22]

Elite Philadelphia Jews had no use for such newcomers. Not only did they impose financial burdens—religious denominations were expected to care for their own poor—but they were likely to produce an anti-Semitism that previously had appeared only rarely. Mathias Bush wrote to Barnard Gratz in London: "Pray prevent, if it is in your power to hinder any more of that sort to come." Rebecca Samuel, who later moved to Petersburg, Virginia, put her finger on how even a handful of disreputable Jews boded ill for Christian-Jewish relations. Hostility toward Jews in Philadelphia came from two sources, she believed: "German Gentiles and [German] Jews. The German Gentiles cannot forsake their anti-Jewish prejudice; and the German Jews cannot forsake their disgraceful conduct." Discounting her prejudice, Samuel correctly diagnosed that as the city's poor and middle-class German Christians became politically active during the Revolution crisis, their anti-Semitism would be reinforced by the presence of poor German Jews who fit the stereotype of rootless and unscrupulous people.[23]

Thus, the Philadelphia Jewish community was dividing along class lines precisely when lower-class city folk in general were organizing a political alternative to both the Quaker and Proprietary factions. This split among the Jews was institutionalized in 1801, when an Ashkenazi group, which had

[22] Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York, 1996). For information on Jews in this paragraph, see Marcus, *American Jewry*, 399–401.

[23] Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 54, quoting Mathias Bush to Barnard Gratz, Nov. 7, 1769, Etting Collection, HSP; Samuel quoted in Jonathan D. Sarna, Benny Kraut, and Samuel K. Josephson, eds., *Jews and the Founding of the Republic* (New York, 1985), 84.

first formed a permanent minyan in 1795, incorporated as the Hebrew German Society Rodeph Shalom and purchased its own cemetery. In 1812, they began to worship "according to the German and Dutch rules," conducting services in Yiddish and expelling any members who attended the rival Sephardic synagogue. Thus, the class and ethnic divisions which characterized Pennsylvania by the mid-eighteenth century appeared in its small Jewish community shortly thereafter.[24]

Renewed problems on the frontier added to the distress of Pennsylvania's Jews. Until the early 1770s, they retained hopes that they might acquire land in the west after all. Intense political maneuvering in England had led to the creation of the Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, and Vandalia Land Companies, all of which had prominent British investors, and in 1768 several Indian nations made a massive territorial concession at the Treaty of Fort Stanwix. But only in 1773 did the Board of Trade recommend that the "Suffering Traders of 1763"—who had at various times joined with and been opposed to the "Suffering Traders of 1754"—be allowed to start a new colony west of the Appalachians. And before they could do so, the Quebec Act of 1774 quashed all provincial claims to the west by placing the region north of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi under the jurisdiction of Quebec.[25]

Unlike those of their Christian neighbors, social divisions among Pennsylvania's Jews were not reflected in divided revolutionary allegiances. With one prominent exception, Jews supported the Revolution. Twelve-year-old Jacob Mordecai belonged to a boys' military group that escorted the Continental Congress into Philadelphia when it first met in September 1774. Militarily, Philadelphia's Solomon Bush was the most distinguished Jew in the Revolution, retiring as a lieutenant colonel after serving as deputy adjutant general of the state militia. Pennsylvania Jews lived up to the expectations of a British correspondent of Barnard Gratz, who hoped that "the colonies will not give up their freedom and be like the Irish."[26]

Only one family of Jewish loyalists from Pennsylvania can be identified. The head of this household was David Franks, who served as agent for the

[24] Jeannette W. Rosenbaum, "Hebrew German Society Rodeph Shalom in the City and County of Philadelphia," *PAJHS* 41 (1951–52), 84–86; Edward Davis, *The History of Rodeph Shalom Congregation, Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1926), 11–32.

[25] Fish, *Barnard and Michael Gratz*, 81–132.

[26] Ibid., 134, citing Andres H. Grob to Barnard Gratz, London, Oct. 24, 1770, McAlister Collection, HSP; Marcus, *American Jewry*, 74, 278.

suppliers of British troops in Philadelphia, acted as the British intermediary for the exchange of prisoners, and was arrested twice by American authorities. Franks and his brother Moses, who lived in London, belonged to one of the wealthiest London Jewish families, and respectively handled much of the Philadelphia and British business for Oliver Delancey, their brother-in-law and one of New York's leading loyalists. Even Franks, however, must have expressed some sympathy for the American cause, as conservative patriots defended him as a businessman who filled a vital role in clothing and feeding American prisoners of war behind British lines. Nevertheless, the anti-elite, anti-Semitic Constitutionalists who took over Pennsylvania in 1776, exposed a letter in which Franks stated that under the new government, supposedly disloyal "people are taken and confined at the pleasure of every scoundrel"—a statement with which even many Pennsylvania revolutionaries agreed. Although twice acquitted of treason by sympathetic jurors, Franks was forced to leave the city. His imprisonment and trials proved a cause célèbre which Constitutionalists used to demonstrate Tory sympathies among their opponents, and Republicans cited to show how the radicals ran roughshod over individual rights. Franks ultimately received an annual pension of £100 from the British government as partial compensation for losses totaling £20,000. This relatively paltry sum induced him to return to Philadelphia after the war, where his kinsmen proved forgiving if not forgetful. Unlike their Philadelphia counterparts, New York and Newport Jews included a fair number of loyalists, as did the Philadelphia elite in general.[27]

Franks's own daughter Rebecca, although a belle of the Meschianza, the huge farewell pageant the British enacted before they left Philadelphia in 1778, also expressed ambivalent loyalties. She qualified her allegiance to the crown with at least one sarcastic jibe. When commanding General Sir Henry Clinton once ordered a band to play the tune, "Britons, Strike Home!" she quipped, "he meant to say: 'Britons, go home!'" But Franks's wit was nonpartisan. On another occasion, after the British had left Philadelphia and

[27] Lee M. Friedman, *Jewish Pioneers and Patriots* (Philadelphia, 1942), 227-44; Cecil Wroth, "Some Jewish Loyalists in the War of American Independence," in Karp, ed., *Jewish Experience*, 1:307–8. For the Delanceys' complicated and extensive relationships with the Frankses, see *Letter Book of John Watts, 1762–1765, Collections of the New-York Historical Society* 61 (1917), and Leo Herskowitz and Isidore S. Meyer, eds., *The Lee Max Friedman Collection of American Jewish Colonial Correspondence: Letters of the Franks Family, 1733–1748* (Waltham, Mass., 1968), whose extensive notes and commentary extend far beyond the given dates.

Lt. Col. Jack Steward of Maryland dressed in scarlet to ape their appearance, she commented: "How the ass glories in the lion's skin."[28] Rebecca Franks was one of many astute women on both sides of the fence in the middle colonies who acquired political consciousness during the revolutionary era. In her case, she used her wit and family connections to express both political dissent and generational conflict in a humorous manner that did not endanger her safety.[29]

Following the end of the British occupation in 1778, Philadelphia Jews took in numbers of their coreligionists fleeing from other cities during the war, temporarily enlarging the local Jewish community. Savannah, Charleston, Newport, and especially New York, sites of the other major Jewish communities in the new nation, were all occupied by the British for much longer than Philadelphia. As a result, Philadelphia became for patriotic Jews what New York was for loyalists—a magnet for political refugees. In 1782, when Philadelphia Jews sought to construct a new synagogue for its congregation, Mikveh Israel, 103 men subscribed. By 1790, Philadelphia had no more than twenty-five Jewish families, so most of the synagogue's subscribers must have gone home. So did the community's hazzan and de facto rabbi Gershom Mendes Seixas, a Portuguese Jew who returned to New York City in 1784. Philadelphia's Jewish community then reverted to roughly its pre-revolutionary size.[30]

Anti-Semitism became a political issue in Pennsylvania during the Revolution. If the triumph of Jeffersonian Republicanism in 1800 ended threats of persecution and foreshadowed the general acceptance of Jews in the United States, the partisan smears of the preceding quarter century anticipated an undercurrent of intolerance that frequently has resurfaced. It is arguable that the debate in revolutionary and Federalist Philadelphia over the role of Jews in the republic fused for the first time in the United States two strains of anti-Semitism—one popular, one elitist—which served to scapegoat Jews in the political life of the new nation.

[28] Cited in Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 37.

[29] See Judith Van Buskirk, "They Didn't Join the Band: Disaffected Women in Revolutionary Philadelphia," *Explorations in Early American Culture* 2 (1998, supplemental issue to *Pennsylvania History* 65), 306–29, for loyalists and neutrals, and Carla J. Mulford's introduction to *"Only for the Eye of a Friend": The Poems of Annis Boudinot Stockton* (Charlottesville, 1995).

[30] Rosenswaike, "Jewish Population in the United States in 1790," 397; Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 15–16, lists all the founders of Mikveh Israel.

Popular anti-Semitism came first; such resentment was already widespread in Europe. Christianity had long condemned the Jews both for their religion and for the crucifixion of Christ. Peasants in the countryside and the poor in the cities resented their financial dependence on Jews who turned to loaning money at interest when Christians barred them from other occupations. Employed in western Europe as tax collectors and in eastern Europe as estate managers set over peasants by the Polish and German nobility, Jews were the objects of much of the popular wrath that ought logically to have been directed against their Christian overlords. Even in Britain, the "Jew Bill" of 1753, which merely granted to immigrant Jews the same naturalization privileges already held by native Jews, unleashed a wave of protest from country members of Parliament and the opposition press. This so stunned the pro-Jewish Newcastle administration that the law was withdrawn.[31] Visibly concentrated in ghettoes or particular neighborhoods, Jews on the continent could be attacked by Christians who dared not directly oppose the aristocracy under whose regimes elite Jews prospered. At the same time, some Jews themselves reacted against an assimilation problem which became more pronounced as the Enlightenment progressed. Like the Protestant Great Awakening in Britain and North America in the 1740s, the Hasidim in eastern Europe during the 1740s also questioned an increasingly secular, rational, and cosmopolitan society. No Hasidim, however, are known to have come to America before the nineteenth century.[32]

Popular anti-Semitism must have existed in early Pennsylvania, or a handful of Jews would not have been plausible scapegoats for political problems during the early republic. But before the Revolution hostility only surfaced occasionally. Jews were simply too few in number compared to the Germans, Scots-Irish, French, and Native Americans, who posed far greater problems. The major possible source of anti-Semitic literature was the Philadelphia printing industry, the largest in British North America, though nowhere near the institution London's "Grub Street" had become. But before the 1790s Philadelphia's printers offered little that attacked Jews. Pennsylvania's elite, although divided between the Quaker and Proprietary factions, was philo-Semitic and dominated political life without much popular input between the arrival of the first Jews in the 1730s and the

[31] Rubinstein, *Jews of England*, 46–56.

[32] Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Toleration: Studies in Jewish-Gentile Relations in Early Modern Times* (New York, 1962), chap. 6; Israel, *European Jewry*, esp. 22, 47, 59, 161–63, 239–45.

revolutionary crisis. Elite anti-Semitism—the calculated appeal to popular anti-Semitism for purposes of influencing public opinion and elections—only emerged with the more popular politics that accompanied Pennsylvania's revolution against both Britain and its conservative colonial government.

Nevertheless, anti-Semitism did exist in Pennsylvania before the Revolution. The earliest public, institutional presence of Philadelphia's fledgling Jewish community was a tiny cemetery established by Nathan Levy. In August of 1751 Levy was forced to run the following advertisement in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* to bring to a halt a spate of graveyard desecration not experienced by any comparable Christian cemetery in the colonial era:

> Whereas many unthinking people have set up marks, and fir'd several shot against the fence of the Jewish Burying-ground, which not only destroyed the said fence, but also a tomb-stone included in it; there being a brick-wall now erected, I must desire those sportsmen to forbear (for the future) firing against the said wall: If they do, whoever will inform, so that the offender be convicted ther[e]of before a magistrate, shall have Twenty Shillings reward, paid by
>
> NATHAN LEVY.[33]

It is hard not to read the words "unthinking" and "sportsmen" ironically. "Unthinking" may also have a double meaning: that the people who shot at the fence not only did so without premeditation or consideration, but were not gifted with intelligence. The brick wall must have done its job, however, for further notices do not appear. Still, if there were other tombstones there in 1751, they have disappeared, the oldest surviving grave at the tiny Mikveh Israel burial ground, still preserved at Spruce and Ninth Streets, being that of Nathan Levy himself, who died in 1753. His probated will demonstrates the cosmopolitanism of the Jewish elite, for his books included the laws of Massachusetts, dictionaries in several languages, works by Plutarch, Voltaire, and John Locke, and twenty-five music books in addition to numerous items in Hebrew.[34]

The first anti-Semitic joke in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, operated by Benjamin Franklin's partner David Hall after the former's retirement in 1748, also appeared in 1753. It was reprinted from a New York source. In

[33] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Aug. 29, 1751.

[34] George Alexander Kohut, "The Oldest Tombstones in the Jewish Cemeteries of Philadelphia and Newport," *PAJHS* 6 (1897), 107–12; Marcus, *American Jewry*, 9–10.

two paragraphs it managed to present four popular stereotypes about Jews: they were greedy, dishonest, uncouth, and lusted after Christian women. The story went that a peddler came to a house and showed his wares to a woman. She said she could not buy anything as her absent husband had the key to the money-box. The peddler then "offer'd to make her a Present of a Piece of Calicoe upon condition of her giving up her Charms to him." She agreed to this and the exchange was made. Shortly thereafter the peddler met the husband on the street and told him that he had just sold his wife a piece of calico on credit. Claiming that he could not afford the cloth, the husband returned with the peddler and insisted his wife give it back. She did, but put a piece of burning coal inside. The Jew "march'd off, pleas'd with Thoughts of His Success; but for his Sweet Meat he soon found Sour Sauce." He then encountered a man, who upon noticing the flames in his pack, asked him where he came from. "From Hell," replied the peddler, to which the man responded "so I perceive." Seeing his goods on fire, the Jew began to "stamp and rave like a mad Man, and curse his Folly in cuckolding the poor Man."[35] This brief anecdote is rich with meaning. The Jew is presented as completely immoral, seducing a woman and then thinking nothing of cheating her husband. "Hell" is suggested as the appropriate place for the Jew, and only his symbolic sentencing to the flames makes him see the error of his ways. When he finally does, his "cleverness" is shown to be inferior to that of a Christian woman.

The diary of Hannah Callander Sansom (1737–1801), daughter and wife of prominent Quaker merchants, also shows that expression of anti-Semitic prejudices required little prodding. Sansom visited New York in 1756, attended that city's synagogue, and commented: "There moode of worship has nothing solemn in it, nor their behavior neither." Bound by the "Slavery of Tradition, this people once the chosen people, [had become] the scum of the earth!"[36] Sansom's strong language shows that not all members of the elite shared the generous attitude toward Jews exhibited by Benjamin Franklin, the Masons, and the College of Philadelphia. One of the reasons little anti-Semitism was visible in pre-revolutionary Pennsylvania may simply have been that the Jews themselves did not worship in public until 1771, whereas in New York they had maintained a synagogue since at least the

[35] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 13, 1753.

[36] Hannah Callander Sansom Diary (1756), p. 55 (original), American Philosophical Society; transcription by Karin Wulf. Thanks to Susan Klepp for this reference.

1690s.

However, it is also worth noting that anti-Semitic jokes and stereotypes, while present in the colonial era, were far less numerous than those against other groups such as the French, Spanish, Scots-Irish, Germans, and Roman Catholics in general, all of whom posed serious international or domestic problems for colonial societies. For example, in the fifty-odd pamphlets that emerged during the Paxton Boys' march on Philadelphia in 1764 and 1765, the targets were the Germans, the Scots-Irish Presbyterians, and the Quakers.[37]

Yet beginning in the 1750s, scapegoating of Pennsylvania's handful of Jews, while not routine, was definitely disproportional to their numbers and influence. Pennsylvania's midcentury wars and their aftermath thus brought to the surface a latent anti-Semitism. It spread beyond Philadelphia as well. Like their gentile counterparts who used the metropolis as a point of departure for inland settlement, Jews settled at Chestnut Hill, New Hanover (a few miles north of Philadelphia), York, Reading, Pittsburgh, Easton—where one of eleven town founders was Jewish—and present-day Allentown and Harrisburg. (The supposed Jewish settlement at Schaefferstown, about twenty miles north of Reading, dating from around 1720, however, is mythical.) Most of these Jews were men, merchants, and peddlers, whose commercial occupations exposed them to the stereotype that Jews were greedy and nefarious.[38]

Pennsylvania's largest Jewish community outside Philadelphia, however, was in Lancaster. Joseph Simon, one of the town's wealthiest men, presided over several Jewish families, for a minyan of ten men permitted religious services to be held there as early as 1747. In 1766, in *Der Wochentlichte Philadelphische Staatsbote*, Ludwig Weisz referred to Simon when he attacked "the Jew landlords" as "terrible people [who] make false claims and purchase land for a small sum of pocket money, then set upon German plantations" to the "ruin" of the families who lived there. Weisz implicitly compared Jewish financial practice to Indian warfare as a source of devastation

[37] See, for example, Robert K. Dodge, *Early American Almanac Humor* (Bowling Green, Ohio, 1987), 53–84; Alison Gilbert Olson, "The Pamphlet War over the Paxton Boys," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (hereafter, *PMHB*) 123 (1999), 31–56.

[38] Marcus, *The Jew in America*, 1:326–31; David Brener, *The Jews of Lancaster, Pennsylvania* (Lancaster, Pa., 1979), 7–13; Gustavus N. Hart, "Notes on Myer Hart and Other Jews of Easton, Pennsylvania," *PAJHS* 8 (1900), 127–34; Marcus, *American Jewry*, 358–60, for Meyer Josephson of Reading.

for peaceful families.[39] A wealthy merchant, Simon, who had prospered as frontier refugees flocked to the town during the war, was a conspicuous target. Even David Brener, the sympathetic historian of Lancaster's Jews, termed Simon a "wheeler dealer of the first degree," although he qualified this remark with the phrase "he did it with class and honesty."[40]

The very source of the testimonials to Simon's character in response to Weisz illustrate why ordinary German farmers would dislike him. His support came from prominent inhabitants such as gunsmith William Henry, who called him "a Wealthy Jew of High Character," and Lancaster's Anglican minister Thomas Barton, who termed him "worthy [and] honest." On the other hand, Presbyterian minister David McClure condemned the town's Jews for their punctilious observance of the Sabbath, while also contending that they "hesitate not to defraud," and "neglect the weightier matters of the Law, as Judgment, mercy, and faith": "They swallow a camel but strain at a gnat."[41] That community leaders thought so highly of Simon may explain why spokesmen for the area's disgruntled German and Scots-Irish settlers may have criticized him, for provincial Lancaster was a conflict-ridden town and county.[42] Even among the elite, there may have been latent anti-Semitism. Brener notes: "It is interesting that most Gentiles found it necessary to describe Jews as being of high character or honest as if this were the exception rather than the rule."[43]

The attacks on Simon also show how condemnations of biblical Jews could serve as a storehouse of popular anti-Semitic stereotypes to be trotted out when the occasion was ripe. To be sure, most of the time when Christians mentioned biblical Jews negatively, they did so to criticize each other. As Natalie Z. Davis has noted, such references to Jews in the Bible "are so standard that they don't necessarily refer to literal Jews in the eighteenth century. That is, sometimes Christians used biblical discussion of the Jews to talk about themselves." For instance, in a colony committed to pacifism until the Seven Years' War, David Dove, one supporter of the war, likened the Pennsylvania Quakers to a tribe of Old Testament Jews who

[39] Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 45, who translate the quotation from the May 12, 1766, *Staatsbote* (supplement).

[40] Brener, *Jews of Lancaster*, 8–11.

[41] Ibid; Marcus, *American Jewry*, 275.

[42] For unrest in Lancaster, see Thomas P. Slaughter, "Interpersonal Violence in a Rural Setting: Lancaster County in the Eighteenth Century," *Pennsylvania History* 58 (1991), 98–123.

[43] Brener, *Jews of Lancaster*, 8.

were unprepared for battle and thereby perished. His *Fragment of the Chronicles of Nathan Ben Saddi* also compared the advocates of peace to false prophets who misled the ancient Hebrews. On the other hand, in the aftermath of the war a Quaker termed the "Presbyterians" who justified the massacre of Conestoga Indians "Pharisees"—a group of Jews biblically associated with sanctimonious hypocrisy and the death of Jesus. But when the Reverend Mr. McClure explicitly pointed to Lancaster's Jews as punctilious observers of the law who lacked human decency, he was clearly linking them to the biblical Pharisees, and implying that Jews were ethnically, that is innately, more prone to hypocrisy than Christians.[44]

Linked attacks on both Jews and Pennsylvania's cosmopolitan elite explain why, despite their patriotic exertions in both the Seven Years' War and the War for Independence, Jews failed at first to win the equal rights they had sought during the Revolution. Unable to vote or hold public office before 1776, Jews were doubly victimized—by provincial as well as imperial laws in which they had no voice. Like the underrepresented people of Berks, York, Northampton, and Cumberland counties and the unrepresented lower orders of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania's Jews fought not only for home rule, but to earn the right to be among those who ruled at home. However, the grassroots "radicals" from western Pennsylvania and Philadelphia did not extend to the Jews the same rights they seized for themselves. Popular anti-Semitism was implicit in the new constitution of 1776 that required a Christian oath for voting and office holding. As historian Owen Ireland has so tellingly argued, there was nothing "democratic" about this internal revolution. Rather, it marked the ascendance of previously disfranchised elements who sought to exclude from power those who had previously ruled: paradoxically, although Jews had not exercised political rights, several of them had attained notoriety as members of the elite that the radicals were hoping to supplant. The oath of allegiance disfranchised nearly half the state's voters, not only Jews, but also Quakers and all those who in conscience would not swear loyalty on a Christian Bible to a controversial new constitution.[45]

[44] [David Dove], *A Fragment of the Chronicles of Nathan Ben Saddi, A Rabbi of the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1758); for more discussion, see Alison Gilbert Olson, "Pennsylvania Satire Before the Stamp Act," *Pennsylvania History* 68 (2001), 507–32; [Anon.], *The Quakers Assisting, to preserve the lives of the Indians in Barracks, vindicated . . .* (Philadelphia, 1764), reprinted in John R. Dunbar, ed., *The Paxton Papers* (The Hague, 1957), 387–95, quotation on 395.

[45] Owen S. Ireland, *Religion, Ethnicity, and Politics: Ratifying the Constitution in Pennsylvania* (University Park, Pa., 1995).

On September 26, 1776, as this new constitution was being debated, the *Philadelphia Evening Post* brought the radicals' anti-Semitism into the open. An anonymous correspondent urged that an early draft that had omitted the Christian oath be changed. The author predicted that Jews and Turks might "become in time not only our greatest landholders, but principal officers in the legislative or executive parts of our government, so as to render it not only uncomfortable but unsafe for Christians, which I hope every American would wish to prevent as much as any other national slavery." He then lamented that if the authors of the state constitution did not "give a testimony to their Christianity. Wo unto the city! Wo unto the land!"[46] The biblical language with which the pamphlet concludes argues that to be a practicing Christian requires striving to make Pennsylvania, and by extension, the United States, a Christian country, excluding nonbelievers from citizenship and political participation. In whatever other sense the new Pennsylvania constitution was "radical," it marked perhaps the first significant triumph for anti-Semitism in the new nation, less than three months after the Declaration of Independence proclaimed (ambiguously) that "all men are created equal."

That some twenty-five Jewish voters in Pennsylvania could enslave some three hundred thousand Christians seems to be an extreme case of paranoia. But exclusion of Jews from political rights reflected several popular prejudices. In Anglo-American political rhetoric Jews were frequently linked with Turks, infidels, and occasionally atheists as diabolic conspirators who threatened liberty throughout the world. Hostility to Turks can be explained readily enough, for colonial writers regularly called attention to the "Great Turk" (the Ottoman sultan) and "bashaws" or "pashas," who served as symbols of a severe form of despotism toward which the British Empire might be heading.[47]

But why were Jews mentioned in the same breath? The driving force behind the Christian oath was Heinrich Melchior Muhlenberg, senior minister of the United Lutheran Church in America, who ten days earlier had tried to persuade his fellow Philadelphia ministers that granting political rights to non-Christians might lead to the latter's taking over the country.

[46] Cited in Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 81; *Philadelphia Evening Post*, Sept. 26, 1776.

[47] For examples, see Bernard Bailyn, *The Origins of American Politics* (New York, 1967), 41, 137, 149, 150.

On September 16, Muhlenberg had lamented "that the condition of the Christian religion seemed in danger after independence had been declared." However, he found little support for a franchise restricted to believers from Philadelphia's Reverend Dr. Francis Alison, a conservative "Old Light" Presbyterian minister, and Rector Jacob Duché of the Anglican Church, leaders of the two most elite and pro-Enlightenment congregations in the city, whose members socialized freely with Jewish merchants and their families. To Muhlenberg's plea that without the religious test it would seem "as if a Christian people were ruled by Jews, Turks, Spinozists, Deists, [and] perverted naturalists," Alison spoke for himself and Duché by remarking "it was of no consequence and it would be sufficient if the officials would only give testimony to the Supreme Being as creator and preserver of all things." Muhlenberg had not only placed Jews first on the list of threats to the republic, he included the apostate Dutch Jew Spinoza as the logical prelude to deism and atheism. Looking at the spread of Enlightenment tendencies in Europe, Muhlenberg used Spinoza—generally considered an atheist philosopher—and tolerant Holland as examples to argue implicitly that Judaism, even where numerically minuscule, could be the first step toward rejection of the deity altogether.[48]

Getting nowhere with Philadelphia's elite ministers, Muhlenberg spoke to the Swedish and Reformed clergy the following day, who approved of his request. He may even have written or inspired the September 26 plea to the convention's delegates. His motion was then passed on to the constitutional convention by none other than Benjamin Franklin. Franklin, who had praised and done business with Jews before and would later contribute to Philadelphia's first synagogue, sacrificed the state's tiny Jewish minority to what he considered the more urgent need of Christians to tolerate each other. He wrote to scientist Joseph Priestley that he was "overpowered by Numbers" and effected a compromise that "no further or more Extended Profession of Faith" than mere Christianity "should ever be exacted." It was critical that Franklin go along with the radical revolutionaries, whose titular head he had become, to erase the stigma placed on him for having been the leading supporter of a royal government for Pennsylvania in the 1760s. A model for Pennsylvania's elite anti-Semitism thus appeared for the first time: immigrants such as Muhlenberg and Reformed minister Caspar Weyberg

[48] Letter of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, Oct. 2, 1776, *PMHB* 22 (1898), 129–31.

(who, Muhlenberg admitted, was "not thoroughly conversant in the English language"), uncertain of their own place in America, and members of the elite whose loyalty may have been suspect—as for example was Franklin's—capitalized on or compromised with populist anti-Semitism to secure their own interests.[49]

Attacks on Jews were pretty much "free shots" that could be taken by any of the political, ethnic, or religious groups in Pennsylvania when they were trying to show that they themselves were not outsiders, but "real" Pennsylvanians or Americans.[50] Jews could muster at best a handful of voters before the mid-nineteenth century and were no threat to anyone. Anti-Semitism thus passed from one group to another as suited the various political climates of 1775–1800. But such attacks on a tiny group would have made no sense unless anti-Jewish feelings were widely held among Christians. For instance, despite the fact that with the exception of the Franks family Philadelphia's Jews supported the Revolution, Philadelphia poet, musician, radical revolutionary, and signer of the Declaration of Independence Francis Hopkinson had no trouble linking loyalists and Jews in his 1780 broadside, "A Tory Medley." Calling attention to the fact that seven of Philadelphia's Jews (about one-third of all heads of household) were "brokers"—people who exchanged currency, lent money, accepted goods on pawn, and auctioned off the items of delinquents—Hopkinson wrote about a Tory "broker" in cahoots with a "cock ey'd Jew": "His designs with mine Tally," claimed the Tory. Much like the Philadelphia militiamen who attacked James Wilson's house in 1779 for his alleged friendliness toward loyalists, Hopkinson sought to demean Jews as false patriots who, like the loyalists, were victimizing their countrymen financially at this economic low point of the Revolution.[51]

Anti-Semitism also appeared in 1782 when Philadelphia's Jewish community attempted to build a synagogue. The site chosen was next to the

[49] Ibid; Morton Borden, *Jews, Turks and Infidels* (Chapel Hill, 1984), 11, quoting Albert H. Smyth, ed., *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin* (10 vols., New York, 1905–07), 9:266–67.

[50] Michael Zuckerman provided this insight at the McNeil Center presentation of this paper.

[51] Hopkinson, "A Tory Medley," (Philadelphia, 1780), copy at the Library Company of Philadelphia. I am grateful to Brendan McConville for this reference. See Marcus, *American Jewry*, 447, for brokers. For Fort Wilson, see Steven Rosswurm, *Arms, Country, and Class: The Philadelphia Militia and the "Lower Sort" during the American Revolution* (New Brunswick, 1987), chap. 7, and John K. Alexander, "The Fort Willson Incident of 1779: A Case Study of the Revolutionary Crowd," *William and Mary Quarterly* 31 (1974), 589–612.

German Reformed Church in Sterling Alley. The German congregation, which at that moment was supporting a revolution against royal authority, found no inconsistency in confronting the Jews with the universal practice of monarchical Christian Europe requiring that synagogues be located "in such a place where the neighbors and the public in general will not be inconvenienced by too much clamor." This citation, in fact, came from Frederick the Great, from whose military despotism many Pennsylvania Germans had fled. In an effort to be accommodating, the Jews offered the Reformed church the chance to purchase the property they had selected at the same price paid, but the church refused. Rather than keep the controversy alive, the Jews auctioned off the property and relocated to Cherry Alley, where they began to hold services in September 1782.[52]

Since the Pennsylvania Constitutionalists, of whom Reformed Germans were an important element, refused to grant Jews political rights, the Jews overwhelmingly supported their Republican, soon to be Federalist, opponents. In 1783, with the war successfully concluded and the anticonstitutionalist Republicans gaining political ground in the state, the Jews made an effort to repeal the Test Oath. Led by hazzan Seixas, Barnard Gratz, Haym Salomon, and others, members of the congregation of Mikveh Israel pointed out the unjust "stigma" placed upon them:

> The Jews of Pennsylvania in proportion to the number of their members, can count with any religious society whatsoever, the whigs among either of them; they have served some of them in the continental army; some went out in the militia to fight the common enemy; all of them have cheerfully contributed to the support of the militia, and of the government of this state;[53] they have no inconsiderable property in lands and tenements, but particularly in the way of trade, some more, some less, for which they pay taxes;[54] they have upon every plan formed for public utility, been forward to contribute as much as their circumstances would admit of; and as a nation or religious society, they stand unimpeached of any matter whatsoever, against the safety and happiness of the people.[55]

[52] Jacob R. Marcus, *Early American Jewry: The Jews of Pennsylvania and the South, 1655–1790* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1951–53), 2:124–31.

[53] A dig at the many Quakers and Anglicans who could vote yet did not support the Revolution.

[54] An allusion to the idea that taxation required representation.

[55] J. Paul Selsam, *The Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776: A Study in Revolutionary Democracy* (Philadelphia, 1936), 216–18.

The state council, however, tabled the petition.

On the national front, Jews were more successful. Pennsylvania Jews were Federalists—at first. In the 1780s, not only had the Constitutionalists or Antifederalists spurned their plea for equality, but the Jewish revolutionary experience fit the Federalist profile. They had spent the war at the seat of power, experiencing America's problems from a national rather than from a local perspective. They were involved in the military, national government, and international commerce. They too suffered from the economic woes of the early 1780s. Four of Philadelphia's twenty-odd Jewish heads of household declared bankruptcy in the mid-1780s.[56] Furthermore, the most prominent of the Founding Fathers had personal relationships with Pennsylvania's Jews and were well aware of their patriotism. As Robert Morris's papers show, Haym Salomon helped significantly to negotiate the European cash transfers which gave the new government what fiscal backing it had.[57] Along with James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, Arthur Lee, and others, Morris benefited from Salomon's hospitality in Philadelphia. Salomon even helped Madison out with emergency personal loans. During and after the War for Independence, diplomats John Jay, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams worked extensively with David Salisbury Franks (not to be confused with loyalist David Franks) and his European connections to obtain funds and arrange commercial transactions. Franks's abilities led Congress to choose him to negotiate the new nation's commercial treaty with Morocco in 1785.[58]

As a result, when Philadelphia Jewish leader Jonas Phillips petitioned the members of the 1787 Constitutional Convention to attach no religious qualification to office holding, he was too late: the convention which so hotly debated the powers of the president and the representation of slave owners had already agreed upon that point without a murmur.[59] Jews are conspic-

[56] Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick, "The Founding Fathers: Young Men of the Revolution," *Political Science Quarterly* 86 (1961), 181–216; Jack N. Rakove, *The Beginnings of National Politics: An Interpretive History of the Continental Congress* (New York, 1979); Marcus, *American Jewry*, 477, for bankruptcies; the modern biography of Salomon is Charles Edward Russell, *Haym Salomon and the Revolution* (New York, 1930).

[57] See numerous entries in the *Papers of Robert Morris*, ed. E. James Ferguson et al. (9 vols., Pittsburgh, 1973–99); I thank Mary Gallagher of the Morris Papers for calling these to my attention; Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 148.

[58] Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 163, 148–49.

[59] Quoted in Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 23.

uous by their absence in the debates of the Federal Convention; it is as though the Founders did not even conceive of excluding them. But the praise heaped upon immigrants, to whom the new republic would be open, by Pennsylvania's James Wilson, would explain the convention's attitude toward Jews as well: "Almost all the general officers of the Pennsylvania line (of the late army) were foreigners. And no complaint had ever been made against their fidelity or merit. Three of her deputies to this convention (Mr. Morris, Mr. Fitzsimons, and himself), were also not natives."[60]

Until 1793, when the Federalists turned against the French Revolution—which granted Jews full political and civil equality—and the Jews turned against the Federalists, political anti-Semitism remained the tool of the Federalists' opponents. The only two disparaging remarks to Jews in the state debates over the Constitution that I have discovered were made by Antifederalists, neither of them from Pennsylvania.[61] When Alexander Hamilton proposed his financial program in 1790, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and the *New York Journal*, both Antifederalist organs, printed items linking Federalists, financiers, and Jews as traitors to their country who profited from the high taxes required to pay off the government's outstanding debts:

> Tax on tax young Belcour cries
> More imposts, and a new excise.
> A public debt's a public blessing
> Which tis of course a crime to lessen.
> Each day a fresh report he broaches
> That Spies and Jews may ride in coaches.
> Soldiers and Farmers don't dispair
> Untax'd as yet are Earth and Air.[62]

The next year, "Square Toes," in an article in the *Philadelphia Advertiser*, also reprinted in New Hampshire and Connecticut, again invoked the specter of anti-Semitism by including "Amsterdam Jews" along with "British riders, . . . American tories, and speculating Lawyers, Doctors, and Parsons,"

[60] Max Farrand, ed., *The Debates of the Federal Convention of 1787* (3 vols., New Haven, 1911), 2:268–69.

[61] I have checked Herbert Storing, ed., *The Complete Anti-Federalist* (7 vols., Chicago, 1981), and Jonathan Elliott, ed., *The Debates of the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution* (5 vols., Philadelphia, 1863–1891).

[62] *Pennsylvania Gazette*, March 17, 1790; *New York Journal*, April 26 and May 1, 1790.

as the people who really benefited from the American Revolution through profiteering and speculation, whereas ordinary people had "ruined themselves by their honesty and industry." The term "Square Toes" refers to someone wearing wooden or homemade shoes; whether or not the author was of poor or middling condition, he clearly was appealing to the belief that ordinary folk regarded Jews as members of a greedy elite. Ironically, as historian Richard B. Morris has noted, "every conspicuous Jewish figure who was involved in financing or supplying the Continental forces," including Haym Salomon, "ended up broke."[63]

But even in a Pennsylvania dominated by the Federalists in the early 1790s, practical equality for Jews beyond the franchise was another matter. Although Jews as individuals finally received the vote in Pennsylvania and the technical right to hold public office under the Federalist-sponsored Constitution of 1790, respect for the Jewish religion as equal to Christianity was another matter. Solomon Bush, a wounded war hero, petitioned four times in vain for various posts in both the Pennsylvania and federal government between 1780 and 1795.[64] In 1793, prominent merchant Jonas Phillips was fined £10 for refusing to be sworn as a witness in a court of law on a Saturday. The following year, the Pennsylvania legislature passed a law forbidding work on Sunday, which meant in effect that Jews who could only work five days a week had to compete with Christians who could work six. In 1816, Abraham Wolff was convicted for violating this law despite his contention that he kept his own Sabbath.[65]

One person, at least, gave unqualified support for full Jewish equality: George Washington himself. Upon his ascension to the presidency, he turned the office into a forum praising Jews and urging their full acceptance in American society—as Jews. He not only responded separately to various congratulatory addresses from Jewish congregations throughout the states, as he did to Roman Catholics and small Protestant sects, he had all of his replies published in the *Gazette of the United States* to circulate throughout the new nation: "I rejoice that a spirit of liberality and philanthropy is much

[63] Donald H. Stewart, *The Opposition Press of the Federalist Period* (Albany, 1969), 58, 671, citing the *Philadelphia General Advertiser*, July 14, 1791, *Exeter (N.H.) Gazette*, Aug. 5, 1791, and *Norwich (Conn.) Packet*, Aug. 18, 1791; Richard B. Morris, "The Role of the Jews in the American Revolution in Historical Perspective," in Sarna et al., eds., *Jews and the Founding of the Republic*, 21.

[64] Marcus, *American Jewry*, 278–80.

[65] John Samuel, "Some Cases in Pennsylvania Where Rights Claimed By Jews are Affected," *PAJHS* 5 (1897), 35–37.

more prevalent than it formerly was among the enlightened nations of the earth, and that your brethren will benefit thereby in proportion as it shall become more extensive," was one of several responses he penned to the nation's Jewish communities. In fact, as though he could have imagined the culture wars two hundred years in the future, Washington specifically endorsed and distinguished diversity from toleration: "It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as it if was by the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights."[66]

Washington's tolerance was extraordinary, for even people who supported political rights for Jews often qualified their acceptance of Jews as social equals. Some Americans believed that since the United States was God's chosen nation, the conversion of the Jews, a stipulated precondition of the Second Coming of Christ in the Book of Revelations, would begin in the United States. Granting Jews equality would persuade them to think favorably of Christianity and renounce their Judaism. As a newspaper correspondent explained in 1784, full political equality for Jews "would tend to the propagation of Christianity, by impressing the minds of the Jews, from this generous treatment; with sentiments in favor of the gospel."[67]

Pennsylvania's Dr. Benjamin Rush, a Jeffersonian Republican, on the other hand, accepted toleration philosophically while expressing his distaste for Jews who failed to convert. On the one hand, Rush noticed with joy "the Rabbi [actually, hazzan] of the Jews locked in the arms of two ministers of the gospel" in Philadelphia's Fourth of July parade for 1788. There "could not have been a more happy emblem" of "that section of the new constitution which opens all its power and offices . . . to worthy men of every religious sect." On the other hand, Rush lamented what he considered the Jews' excessive concern with earthly advancement, their anticipation of "a mere temporal instead of a spiritual kingdom."[68]

Rush's correspondence with Thomas Jefferson opened the question of whether Jews were fit citizens for a republic that required exceptional virtue, or devotion to the common good, to survive. Early American Jews were almost exclusively city and town dwellers; many were involved in commerce

[66] Lewis Abraham, "Correspondence Between Washington and Jewish Citizens," in Karp, *Jewish Experience*, 1:352–61, reprints several such messages by Washington to Jews.

[67] Marcus, *American Jewry*, 131.

[68] Benjamin Rush to Elias Boudinot, July 9, 1788, and Rush to Elkanah Winchester, May 11, 1791, in Lyman H. Butterfield, ed., *Letters of Benjamin Rush* (2 vols., Princeton, 1951), 1:470, 581–82.

and currency exchanges. For Jefferson, virtue rested in the yeoman farmers, many of whom, like Jefferson himself, were in debt to merchants. While Jefferson as president would appoint both practicing and converted Jews to political office, and he himself had renounced Christianity for deism, he looked with personal favor only on Jews who had abandoned "superstition" for Enlightenment and reason. To be sure, Jefferson was critical of Christian "superstition," especially Catholicism, but he singled out the Jews for special censure. The statesman who wrote Virginia's statue of religious freedom considered Jews "repulsive & anti-social, as respecting other nations," their idea of god "degrading and injurious," and their "ethics . . . often irreconcilable with the sound dictates of religion and morality."[69] Despite having observed at first-hand the Jews' loyalty and sacrifices, Jefferson and Rush had internalized the stereotypes that Jews were greedy and dishonest. Jefferson stood on its head the Jews' justifiable solidarity in protecting themselves from persecution and assimilation by claiming that the Jews took the initiative in isolating themselves.

Jews thus joined blacks and Native Americans in Jefferson's mind as people who lacked the moral character required for membership in the republican experiment. Unlike these groups whose racial qualities were ineradicable, Jews could convert and cease to be Jews. Whereas Jefferson believed blacks and Indians had to be removed for both their own and the national good to Haiti and the Louisiana Territory, respectively, Jews could shed their ethnicity. But they had to renounce both their religion and the character traits associated with it. Many early Americans held similar views about other minorities. Whereas Jews (like Quakers) were frequently criticized for their cleverness and wealth, Germans were fat, stupid, and drunk, Scots-Irish violent and drunk, and French, Spanish, and other "Papists" slaves of their tyrannical rulers and the Catholic Church, although hot-blooded and overly amorous as individuals. All had to give up such unrepublican behavior to be good Americans.[70]

[69] Thomas Jefferson to Benjamin Rush, "Syllabus of an Estimate of the Merit of the Doctrines of Jesus Christ, compared with Those of Others," April 21, 1803, in Paul Leicester Ford, ed., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (9 vols., New York, 1892–99), 8:226.

[70] See Peter Onuf, "'To Declare Them A Free and Independent People': Race, Slavery, and National Identity in Jefferson's Thought," *Journal of the Early Republic* 18 (1998), 1–46; Christian B. Keller, "Philanthropy Betrayed: Thomas Jefferson and the Origins of Indian Removal Policy," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 144 (2000), 39–66; Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999). For stereotypes of other

The qualms of Christians who favored granting political rights to Jews were matched by Jewish ambivalence about what it meant to be a Jew in America. As with other ethnic groups, Jews were divided between their desire to be accepted as full and equal citizens and their concern to retain their ethnic and religious integrity. Jews insisted on cultural conformity as necessary for preserving the identity of so small a minority. For instance, Phila Franks, who married Oliver Delancey in 1742, concealed her interfaith marriage for six months; when she revealed it, her mother, who socialized regularly with Christians, nevertheless refused to speak again either to her, or her brother David, who also married a Christian. Male Jews outnumbered females, and the removal of a rare eligible partner from the marriage pool made it more likely that elite Jews would wed outside the faith, thereby making it impossible to raise a Jewish family. Jewish Rebecca Gratz and Christian Samuel Ewing, on the other hand, chose not to marry each other despite their deep affection because they placed religious conviction before romantic love. After its establishment in 1782, the Philadelphia synagogue disciplined individuals who violated the Sabbath (by shaving, for instance) or refused to hold office in the synagogue, and ostracized the descendant of a rabbinical family who married outside the faith.[71]

Doubts about the Jews' suitability for citizenship and the question of who was a Jew or exhibited Jewish behavioral characteristics led Pennsylvania political leaders in the new republic to exploit and give focus to popular anti-Semitism. As with the German-born Muhlenberg and the Pennsylvania Constitution and the German Reformed opposition to the Philadelphia synagogue, people of dubious loyalty and outsiders to Pennsylvania's political world scapegoated the Jews to demonstrate their own loyalty. In 1784, Miers Fisher, a Quaker lawyer who during the Revolution had been sent to a detention camp in Winchester, Virginia, for his loyalist sympathies, tried to persuade the state legislature to abolish the Bank of North America headed by Republican/Federalist Robert Morris and replace it with a rival scheme. Although the loyalist lawyer Fisher was everything the Pennsylvania Constitutionalists abhorred, he was not above appealing to their prejudices in an unsuccessful effort to promote a bank that would supplant the one set

groups, see Dodge, *Early American Almanac Humor*, 53–84, and for Pennsylvania in particular, Olson, "The Pamphlet War Over the Paxton Boys."

[71] Faber, *Time for Planting*, 88, 120–21; Marcus, *American Jewry*, 118; Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 231.

up by their opponents. In a speech which does not survive, Fisher hoped to discredit the bank by pointing to the purchase of its stock by Jewish merchants in Holland and by Haym Salomon, who had just returned to New York from Philadelphia. Fisher's point was clear: the new government was threatened because its primary financial institution depended for support on (foreign) Jewish investments.

Salomon was probably the "Jew Broker" who published the long refutation addressed to Fisher in the March 13, 1784, issue of Philadelphia's *Independent Gazetteer*. Since the italics that follow were Salomon's, it is conceivable that Salomon turned Fisher's language and arguments to his own advantage, depicting himself as filled with outrage that such an "*odious*" character, "*fetid* and *infamous*," known for "Toryism and disaffection," would launch a "*wanton*" attack on an entire "religious persuasion." Salomon stated that he took pride in being both a Jew and a Broker, since "we have in general been early uniform, decisive whigs, and were second to none in our patriotism and attachment to our country!" To Fisher's charges that "the Jews were the authors of high and unusual interest," Salomon retorted: "It was neither the Jews or Christians that founded the practice, but Quakers—Quakers worse than *heathens, pagans, or idolators*" who were "unwilling to venture money in trade during the war." In his anger, Salomon seized on the public stereotype of all Quakers as Tories. We can only speculate, however, whether he did so to show the absurdity of Fisher's accusation or because he was adopting the tactics of his enemy.[72]

Salomon did not have the last word: a "Spectator" condemned the vehemence of Salomon's riposte, claiming to be "at first amazed at the still persecuting spirit of those crucifiers subsisting among us . . . despisers of Christianity" possessed of "worse than a Shylock's temperament."[73] Salomon had the disadvantage that his vitriolic comments were published for all to see, whereas Fisher's remarks only circulated by hearsay. But then the "Spectator" claimed that the "Jew Broker" was but a stalking horse for the owner of the *Independent Gazetteer*, Continental Army veteran Colonel Eleazar Oswald, who in fact probably helped Salomon write his powerful essay. Originally an Englishman who had worked for printers in New York and Baltimore, Oswald, newly arrived in Philadelphia, was a close friend to

[72] *Independent Gazeteer*, March 13, 1784.
[73] Ibid., March 20, 1784.

many in the Jewish community. The town's Jewish brokers paid for much of his advertising space. Furthermore, Oswald was cantankerous: he had been involved in a protracted libel suit in 1783 and would find himself in and out of the courts until he died aged forty-five in 1795 during the third of eight yellow fever epidemics that swept the city between 1793 and 1805.[74]

Calling attention to Oswald's wooden leg, the "Spectator" identified him as "fathering" the "Jew Broker's" article by relating an anecdote that also relied on a stereotype used to demean Jews: that they made money through trickery and cunning rather than honest labor. The author, the "Spectator" claimed, "was a person who not long since, when a subject of philosophy was debated, offered to lay a bet, that he could find a man who would keep his leg in any fluid scalding hot." He was supposedly exposed, however, by "a knowing E[nglish]man, well used to all the various finesse at New Market, the Exchange, etc.," the last of these an implicit swipe at the "Jew brokers." While denying that a Jew had written the attack on Fisher, the "Spectator" nevertheless appealed to traditional anti-Semitic stereotypes by speculating that only a person of comparable avarice and cunning would take their part.[75]

The "Spectator" also was the first Pennsylvanian to express in print a desire to be rid of the Jews: referring to a recent hot air balloon experiment, he wished the device would convey "all the Jew-Brokers to New-Scotland, where they will be more abundantly thought of, than in Pennsylvania." New Scotland was "Nova Scotia," which in 1784 was filling up rapidly with loyalist refugees.[76] The "Spectator" thus tried to link the town's Jewish merchants with the loyalists: although the Jews of Philadelphia were almost unanimously revolutionaries, they could be distorted to resemble British partisans during the immediate postwar era, when the overimportation of British goods by both Jewish and gentile American merchants plunged the country into a postwar depression.

We can only wonder why Oswald printed the "Spectator's" reply: he could have either felt obliged to give both sides their due, or perhaps he thought the "Spectator's" extreme anti-Semitism would appear sufficiently

[74] Saul Cornell, *The Other Founders: Anti-Federalism and the Dissenting Tradition in America, 1788–1828* (Chapel Hill, 1999), 128–35; Vernon O. Stumpf, "Colonel Eleazar Oswald, Politician and Editor" (Ph.D. diss., Duke Univ., 1968); for the first accurate tallying of Philadelphia's multiple yellow fever epidemics, see P. Sean Taylor, "'We Live in the Midst of Death': Yellow Fever, Moral Economy, and Public Health in Philadelphia, 1793–1805" (Ph.D. diss., Northern Illinois Univ., 2001).

[75] *Independent Gazetteer*, March 20, 1784.

[76] Ibid.

ludicrous to his audience that he could safely print it and hope for a backlash. But Salomon/Oswald's analysis had zeroed in on the main reason for elite anti-Semitism in the late eighteenth century. Individuals who themselves were marginalized—former loyalists and recent immigrants—would try to show they belonged in the United States by redefining the new nation as a Christian republic and deflecting and incorporating attacks against themselves onto a group they hoped to stigmatize instead. Since Jews were few and not a major political constituency—although several were prominent for their business activities—they were highly visible targets and yet incapable of harming their persecutors at the ballot box.

During the political crisis of the 1790s, the elite anti-Semitism of the 1770s and 1780s became rampant. Ever mindful of the disabilities placed upon Jews in *ancien régime* Europe, Pennsylvania's Jews cheered the equal rights granted to their coreligionists during the French Revolution. For the sake of that equality, Jews supported the Pennsylvania Democratic-Republicans and actively campaigned for Jefferson and his supporters in national and local elections. As contests between Federalists and Republicans became hotter, Federalist printers and polemicists appealed to an anti-Semitism their leaders had previously repudiated. The elections in Pennsylvania were especially critical in the 1790s. At a time when the two parties were divided almost equally, a handful of votes in Philadelphia could determine the way the state's electoral vote or congressional delegation would swing. Despite their small numbers, Jews were considered by Federalist polemicists to be among the greedy, power-hungry leaders of a motley crew of Irishmen, French "Jacobins," African Americans, and the poor striving to wrest the government from a virtuous elite. A reversal had occurred: the Anti-federalists and their successors among the Jeffersonian Democrats welcomed the Jews in their ranks and defended them. The Federalists, on the other hand, now grouped Jews with the "wild" Irish and French radicals who were trying to destroy their new-found vision of America as a Christian, native-born nation.[77]

As almanac humor and popular literature reveal, stereotypes of Jews, unlike those of most other groups signified negatively in early America, at least gave the Jews backhanded credit for having the intelligence and guile

[77] For an excellent study of how Federalists and their opponents reversed attitudes toward immigrants and minorities between the 1780s and 1790s, see Marilyn Baseler, *"Asylum for Mankind": America, 1607–1808* (Ithaca, 1998), chaps. 4–8.

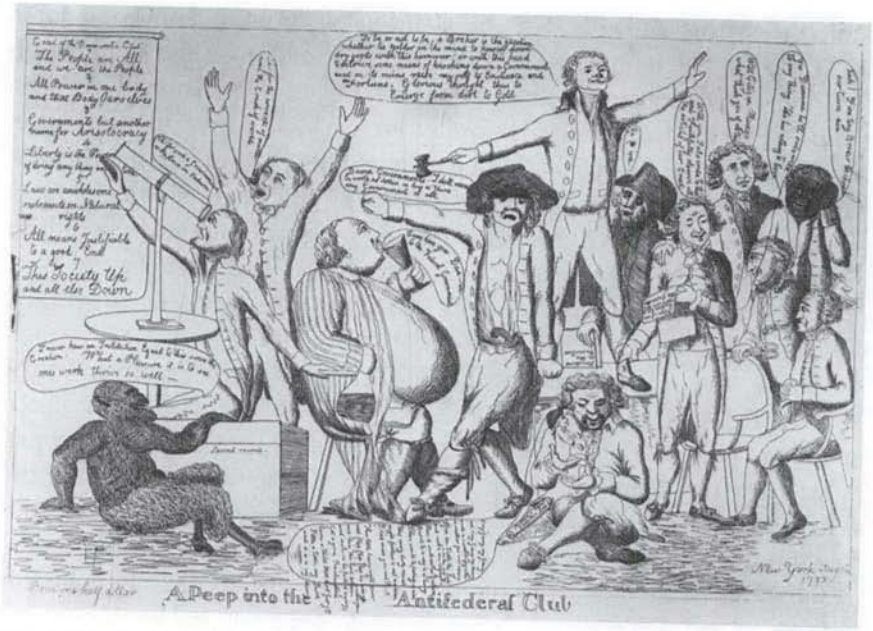

Fig. 1. "A Peep into the Antifederal Club," cartoon, 1793. Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.

to (mis)lead their gullible followers. The first widely publicized expression of Federalist anti-Semitic propaganda, the 1793 cartoon "A Peep into the Antifederal Club," distinguished which undesirable traits characterized each group. Although published in New York, the cartoon attacked the newly formed Philadelphia Democratic Society, demeaning it as both *anti*-Federal rather than supporting a positive ideal, and a "club" rather than a society (fig. 1). The thin man standing on a box or table so that he towers over, and thus directs, the others is probably Israel Israel, and not Thomas Jefferson or Aaron Burr, as previous scholars have maintained. He proclaims: "To be or not to, be, a Broker is the question, whether tis nobler in the mind to knock down dry goods with this hammer; or with this head Contrive some means of knocking down a Government and on its ruins raise myself to Eminence and Fortune, Glorious Thought thus to Emerge from dirt to Gold." Unlike Jefferson and Burr, both out-of-towners, Israel actually was a member (treasurer and later vice president) of the Democratic Society of Philadelphia and a subscriber to its constitution published on July 4, 1793, in the

Pennsylvania Gazette. In addition, the figure in the cartoon is not inconsistent with John Fenno's description (see quotation at n. 91, below) of Israel as "rawboned." Moreover, neither Jefferson nor Burr had to raise themselves from "dirt to gold": both were already in the highest circles of government. Finally, the cartoonist applies to the figure anti-Semitic stereotypes which would make no sense with respect to Jefferson or Burr. He is a greedy "broker," intelligent yet manipulative, and power hungry. The final phrase links Israel with the mysterious and heretical art of alchemy as well. In fact, it is quite possible that without Israel as a prominent Jeffersonian, anti-Semitism would have been absent from the political debates of Philadelphia in the 1790s, for he was the only important person in the city linked even by name with Judaism in the Democratic ranks before Benjamin Nones, a real Jew, in 1800.[78]

The cartoon is notable for other reasons. It mocks the Democratic Society's constitution, at which astronomer David Rittenhouse (the society's

[78] "A Peep into the Antifederal Club" is reprinted and described in detail in Paul Pascal Dupuy, "The French Revolution in American Satire," *Printing Quarterly* 15 (1998), 372–74, and in James C. Kelly and B. S. Lovell, "Thomas Jefferson: His Friends and Foes," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 101 (1993), 144–45. I thank Matthew Hale for these references. In both articles, the authors identify the figure I think is Israel as Thomas Jefferson, while Kelly and Lovell note that Noble Cunningham Jr. considered him to be Aaron Burr. I have examined four portraits of Israel, two at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the one reproduced on the cover of this issue, from the Hannah London collection at the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, and one in Brilliant, *Facing the New World*, 36 (in which he makes the Masonic sign). All differ significantly from each other and from the figure in the cartoon, but all suggest the "rawboned" man described by John Fenno at n. 91 below. Information on Israel may be found in Brilliant, *Facing the New World*, 37–38; John Alexander, *Render Them Submissive: Responses to Poverty in Philadelphia, 1760–1800* (Amherst, 1980), 37–42; Ronald Schultz, *The Republic of Labor: Philadelphia Artisans and the Politics of Class, 1720–1830* (New York, 1993), 145–51; and Kenneth Keller, "Diversity and Democracy: Ethnic Politics in Southeastern Pennsylvania, 1788–1799 " (Ph.D. diss., Yale Univ., 1971), 200–4.

Israel's inability to "lose" his ethnicity, despite his conversion, recapitulates the situation of Isaac Miranda, the first person of Jewish ancestry to live in Philadelphia, who probably came from Italy between 1710 and 1715. Miranda became a Christian, made a good living in the Indian trade, settled near Lancaster, and rose to be deputy judge of the court of vice-admiralty for Pennsylvania. He was placed high enough socially that he offered a handsome sum in his will to James Hamilton, son of lawyer Andrew of Zenger trial fame, if James would marry his daughter, to whom he gave the unmistakably Christian name of Mary. (James didn't.) Despite Miranda's conversion, contemporaries continued to refer to him as Jewish. Miranda's story, fragmentary as it is, encapsulates a number of themes in the early history of Pennsylvania Jews: their diverse origins (he migrated from Italy, but his last name was Spanish), their role in trade, and their qualified acceptance in this land of religious toleration, provided they renounced a Jewishness that, paradoxically, nevertheless remained with them. See Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 40, 55–56.

president) is seen to peer as he speculates about what sort of government exists on Saturn. Black figures—the devil and an ignorant African American—frame the others, who comprise a variety of ethnic groups. Thomas Paine, the fifth figure from the right, holds in his hand a "Plan of an Entire Subversion of the Government." The large German at the center, Michael Leib, was also a leading figure in the society; he is associated with the slothful overconsumption of food and strong drink. The French are present, too; not only the ugly character who says "Ça ira," the title of a French revolutionary tune, but also Edmond Gênet, the French minister to the United States. The small print reveals Gênet to be the diminutive fellow pouring coins into the hands of a seated, cross-legged man (at whose side a scroll reads "Politics is a Better Trade than Law"). This Federalist cartoon is the first instance in American history I have seen in which Jews, blacks, head-in-the-sky intellectuals, and members of immigrant groups are depicted as "un-American" conspirators against the government and tools of a foreign enemy.

A good deal of the political controversy in Pennsylvania in the 1790s centered around Israel, whose father had been Jewish. Although he was baptized two years after his birth in 1744 in Philadelphia by none other than the Lutheran pastor Heinrich Melchior Muhlenberg—people frequently used whatever minister was handy in this era of high infant mortality—and had been an Anglican (as was his mother) before converting to Unitarian-Universalism, his Jewish ethnicity could not be erased. As the vituperative criticism of Israel demonstrates, Judaism was treated by eighteenth-century Pennsylvanians as both a religion, which a practitioner could change, and an ethnic or national affiliation, which he or she could not alter, enabling racial stereotypes to cling to people who were no longer Jews.

Israel had made a fortune in Barbardos before moving to a farm in Delaware in 1775. The British arrested him as a spy for the revolutionaries, but the judge dismissed all charges when Israel flashed him the secret Masonic sign. By the 1790s, he was a well-to-do stable keeper and owner of the Cross-Keys Tavern at Third and Chestnut Streets. Israel's political rise began when he remained in Philadelphia, along with other leading members of the newly formed Democratic Society, to nurse the sick during the horrific yellow fever epidemic of 1793. As with African American inhabitants, who stayed behind while an elite claiming superior public virtue fled en masse for healthier climes, Israel used his life-threatening public service—he remained in the city during the eight epidemics which occurred

until 1805—to dispel prejudice and insist upon full citizenship.[79] Such a claim to civic virtue gained him popularity, or the Federalists would not have gone out of their way to criticize his health-endangering public service. In 1797, when Israel ran for the state senate, "Civis" argued: "Will anyone who values the privilege of an elector, choose a man to legislate merely because he risked his life in nursing the sick, or because he made a fortune by keeping a public house?" After Israel narrowly won that election in October, William Cobbett, the acerbic "Peter Porcupine," bemoaned the "triumph of the Jews over the Gentiles" and sarcastically commented that Israel's public house was "a most excellent stand for collecting the sentiments of the *sovereign* people, who never speaks his mind freely except when he's half dun [drunk]." Israel ran repeatedly for public office in the 1790s, always losing—his disputed 1797 election was reversed by a special ballot the following February—until the Jeffersonian triumph of 1800.[80]

Israel and one of his leading opponents, the Federalist printer John Fenno, actually came to blows in 1795 during the annual campaign for the state legislature. Understanding how the fight began requires some background. As political parties were just forming, the two contending slates of candidates were known as the "Treaty" (Federalist) and "No Treaty" (Democrat) parties based on their stance on the Jay Treaty. On October 7, reflecting the fact that the modern idea of an organized opposition to the government had yet to achieve legitimacy, a supporter of the treaty calling himself a "Federalist" wondered whether the Democratic Society "represent[ed] the People of this district generally, or the particular, and perhaps clashing interest of their own Society." Arguing that only the elected government could represent the people, he suggested that the Democratic Society issue "a formal declaration of independence," and apply for "a regular admission into the Union as having an acknowledged interest separate from

[79] See n. 78 above for sources on Israel Israel. For an excellent treatment of the yellow fever epidemics, see Taylor, "We Live in the Midst of Death," 188–209. Taylor links the rise of Republicanism more generally, as well as Israel's in particular, to the willingness of non-elite people who became active in the Jeffersonian movement to remain in the city. For black civic participation and ideology, see Thomas E. Will, "A Prescription for Black Civic Participation: Public Virtue, Acquisitive Individualism, and Christian Charity in African-American Thought in the Early Republic," forthcoming article in *Pennsylvania History* 69 (Fall 2002).

[80] *Gazette of the United States*, Oct. 9, 1779; *Porcupine's Gazette*, Oct. 16, 1797; the story of Israel's election losses from 1793 to 1798 is concisely told in Richard G. Miller, *Philadelphia: The Federal City—A Study in Urban Politics, 1789–1801* (Port Washington, N.Y., 1976), although Miller accepts the charges that Israel was Jewish.

the rest of the union."[81]

At this point, the "Federalist" revealed himself to be an anti-Semite as well as an early proponent of the "America, love it or leave it" school of thought. He urged that since the Democratic Society complained that the nation suffered "in a state of aristocratic vassalage" under the Federalists, its members should leave for the newly secured territories of the Old Northwest. This, the "Federalist" sarcastically remarked, would "be a second going out of the Children of Israel, or rather of *Israel Israel*; and rather than they should not go, I will engage that the quiet citizens will be more willing than the Egyptians were of old to lend them, if not *jewels*, such other articles as may be more useful in a new country." The similarity of the words "Jews" and the italicized "Jewels," along with the linking of Jews and the lending of money, identified the Democratic Society members not only as un-American, but as dupes of a non-Christian, a Jew.[82]

Five days later, the *Gazette of the United States* attacked Israel again. The previous year, while the Democratic Societies in Pennsylvania had formally joined with the Federalists in condemning the Whiskey Rebellion, evidence exists that many of the members privately supported what in retrospect seems less like a rebellion and more like a traditional case of the tax resistance endemic in Pennsylvania since the late 1770s.[83] The Federalists made Israel the special target of their charge that the societies had fomented the unrest. Someone claiming sarcastically to be a "Member of the Demoncritic Society" argued that Israel had "uttered a pious wish (for you must know he is accounted a pious man) that all those might be cut off and sent to heaven who had wickedly marched against our western brethren who had righteously taken up arms (but rather too soon for our society as matters were not thoroughly ripe for execution against the unjust measures of government)."[84]

In addition to accusing Israel of treason, the anonymous writer charged that he and his cohorts had concocted a scheme in which they would manufacture accusations of prejudice against themselves in the hope of

[81] *Gazette of the United States*, Oct. 7, 1795.

[82] Ibid.

[83] For Democratic societies, see John W. Davis, "'Guarding the Republican Interest': The Western Pennsylvania Democratic Societies and the Excise Tax"; for tax resistance, see Terry Bouton, "'No Wonder the Times Were Troublesome': The Origins of Fries' Rebellion"; both in the special issue on Fries' Rebellion, *Pennsylvania History* 67 (2000), 21–62.

[84] *Gazette of the United States*, Oct. 12, 1795.

generating a backlash. They were plotting to "remind the people, that our [Society's] Vice-President was once a Jew and that he is now an ugly Christian, and insert such other matters respecting his character as will enable me to say, in reply, a number of things in his favor." When one Democrat supposedly objected that this "artifice will be seen through," the consensus was that the ruse would fool "the ignorant, who are by far, the most numerous." Federalists who attacked Israel Israel on ethnic grounds to win the support of anti-Semites thus also hoped to attract tolerationist voters by claiming that Israel himself was inventing the anti-Semitic accusations. The Federalists played what they hoped would be the trump card of prejudice in two contradictory ways at the same time. Their satirist then went on to show that, to win votes, the Democratic Society ran along with Israel a "knight of the funding system," a Quaker sugar-refiner, and a wealthy member of the German Reformed church—none of whom was fit for public office—to attract ethnic votes.[85]

This satire is significant in two ways. First, at this early stage of political organization, the Republicans were putting forward a "balanced" ticket representing Philadelphia's diverse population, though Federalists claimed that the ticket aligned the Democratic Society with "particular" interests rather than with the welfare of "the People . . . generally." Yet the Federalists were clearly playing to ethnic prejudices themselves by implying that only a Jew and a traitor could have misled the society into adopting both treasonable politics and an unethical appeal to ethnicity to win votes.[86]

Secondly, the Federalists who attacked Israel were aware that a significant number of voters would not share their prejudice against Jews. As Owen Ireland has shown, Pennsylvania Federalists—unlike those in the more ethnically homogeneous New England and parts of the southern tidewater where they predominated—had accommodated Pennsylvania's diverse population and traditional resistance to paying taxes, which they reduced almost to the vanishing point, to fare well politically in the state. They were undermined, however, by the zeal of Federalists associated with

[85] Ibid.

[86] The most sophisticated study of public opinion in the Federalist era is Christopher Young, "Contests of Opinion: The Public Sphere in Post-Revolutionary America" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Illinois–Chicago, 2001). Young shows that the Federalists were every bit as active in courting public opinion as the Democrats but denied particular minorities or interest groups the right to develop permanent, extragovernmental organizations to effect policy and elections.

the national government from other countries (Britons Charles Nisbet and William Cobbett) or regions (John Fenno, the Boston-born editor of the *Gazette of the United States)* who were not familiar with Pennsylvania's politics of diversity.[87] One such overly partisan Federalist was Joseph Dennie, a New Hampshire man who served as Secretary of State Timothy Pickering's personal secretary in 1799 and 1800. Dennie believed that his career as a writer had failed in Philadelphia because "this region, covered with the Jewish, and canting and cheating descendants" of the first Quakers, gave "polar icy" treatment to "men of liberality and letters" such as himself.[88]

Why did the Federalists renounce the toleration of the Constitutional Convention and Washington's initial addresses? New England and southern Federalists, used to more stable and deferential polities, were uncomfortable with the ethnic mixture and lively political life of the nation's temporary capital in Philadelphia. New Yorkers such as Alexander Hamilton also lived in a pluralistic state, but one where politics were sharply polarized rather than accommodationist, as were Pennsylvania's in the 1790s. For example, during that decade, Thomas Mifflin, a bipartisan candidate, was elected governor of Pennsylvania every three years, twice almost unanimously, and once by a nearly two to one margin. He distributed patronage to both parties and refused to call out the state militia against the Whiskey Rebels. Furthermore, many "trans-Atlantic radicals"—most notably Joseph Priestley, discoverer of oxygen and Jeffersonian pamphleteer, driven from the British Isles for supporting the French Revolution—arrived in Philadelphia and promptly began opposing Federalist conciliatory policies toward Britain. There they joined a large Catholic and Protestant Irish immigration of perhaps some 26,000 people between 1780 and 1800, lending a veneer of plausibility to Federalist fears that it was not "the people" who were opposing them, but in the words of Fenno's *Gazette*, "the revolutionary vermin of foreign countries." Jews would make an ideal scapegoat in this atmosphere as non-Christians who had been granted equal rights by the French Revolution's "atheist" government.[89]

[87] Owen Ireland, "The Invention of American Democracy: The Pennsylvania Federalists and the New Republic," special issue on Fries' Rebellion, *Pennsylvania History* 67 (2000), 161–70.

[88] Morris U. Schappes, "Anti-Semitism and Reaction, 1785–1800," in Karp, *Jewish Experience*, 1:383–85.

[89] For Pennsylvania politics in the 1790s, see Ireland, "The Invention of American Democracy"; Miller, *Philadelphia*; Harry Tinckom, *Republicans and Federalists in Pennsylvania, 1790–1801* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1950); Michael Durey, *Trans-Atlantic Radicals and the Early Republic* (Lawrence,

Any possibility that Israel and his supporters might have written the outrageous article of October 7 to generate a backlash in their favor was disproved on October 14. John Fenno reported that the day after Israel and his "No Treaty Ticket" lost their election by about 1,500 to 1,000 votes each, "he met me in the market, and without ceremony told me that if I ever published anything about him, he would flog me (his exact words). I answered that I should continue to publish as I had heretofore done, a free & impartial paper. He repeated his threat, & walked off. I was buying some apples, he returned & attacked me very unexpectedly by giving me a violent blow on the mouth. It rained, I had an umbrella, with which I struck him twice. It was then taken from me and we exchanged five or six blows with our fists. The bystanders then rushed in & parted us."

Fenno, who was bested by Israel, "a rawboned man six feet high at least," commented that the assault proved to his satisfaction that Israel was "a very improper person to make a representative." Israel's rightful course would have been to take legal action after requiring Fenno to divulge the author of the libels. But Fenno did not take Israel to court either: he "suffered no pain nor confinement" from this "true-blooded Jacobin," and claimed, "I do not regret the attack since he & his coadjutors were defeated."[90] Nor did Israel "flog" Fenno when it seemed Israel had won his senate seat in 1797 and Fenno printed the notice that: "A Jewish Tavern Keeper, with a very Jewish name (viz. Israel Israel) is chosen one of the Senators of this commonwealth for the city of Philadelphia solely on account of his violent attachment to the French Interests." This time, Fenno made certain that the author, Charles Nisbet, another non-Pennsylvanian, a Scots-born Presbyterian divine of extreme antidemocratic and anti-French prejudices, took the credit (or blame).[91]

Anti-Semitism remained a political issue in Pennsylvania as long as the Federalists were viable contenders for political power. For instance, on August 5, 1800, the year of the Adams-Jefferson race and numerous state and federal campaigns, the *Gazette of the United States* attacked the Democratic Society of Philadelphia as "composed of the very refuse and filth of society." After designating

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Kan., 1997); quotation from *Gazette of the United States*, Nov. 12, 1798. For other examples, see Keller, "Diversity and Democracy," 201–3.

[90] Letter of John Fenno, Oct. 26, 1795, Fenno Papers, Chicago Historical Society, copies at Paterno Library, Penn State. I thank Sally A. Heffentreyer, who presented a paper on "The Letters of John Fenno," at the 1999 meeting of the Pennsylvania Historical Association, for this reference.

[91] *Gazette of the United States*, Oct. 9, 1797; David W. Robson, "Anticipating the Brethren: The Reverend Charles Nisbet Critiques the French Revolution," *PMHB* 121 (1997), 303–28.

a Negro as "Citizen Sambo," an "Observer" then noted the presence of "Citizen N— the Jew," who stated in dialect: "I hopsh you will consider dat de monish is very scarch, and besides you know I'sh just come out by de Insholvent Law." Several others replied: "Oh yes let N— pass." In other words, "N" could enter the Democrats' deliberations precisely because he was bankrupt.[92]

"N" was Benjamin Nones. At the siege of Savannah, Georgia, in 1779, he had come to the attention of General Pulaski. His French commander, Captain Vernier, commended Nones for "behavior under fire in all the bloody actions we fought [that] has been marked by the bravery and courage which a military man is expected to show for the liberties of his country." In his reply to the "Observer," which Fenno's paper refused to print but which William Duane of the Jeffersonian *Aurora* seized upon eagerly, Nones showed that his courage had not deserted him. In defiant terms reminiscent of Salomon's reply to Miers Fisher of 1784, he rejoiced in the very epithets hurled against him. "I am accused of being a Jew, of being a Republican, and of being Poor," he began before explaining why he "gloried" in each of these accusations. Other Jews had included "Abraham, and Isaac, and Moses and the prophets, and . . . Christ and his apostles; I feel no disgrace in ranking with such society, however it may be subject to the illiberal buffoonery of such men as your correspondents." A Jew had to be a Republican, for "here, in France, and in the Batavian republic alone we are treated as men and as brethren. In republics we have rights, in monarchies we live but to experience wrongs." And Nones argued that his poverty was honest, his family "soberly and decently brought up. They have not been taught to revile a Christian because his religion is not so old as theirs." Only among a "purse-proud aristocracy" would poverty be considered a crime, and the French-born Nones offered to pay his creditors when the nations of the world stopped making war on republican France and permitted him to correspond with his debtors there.[93]

The Federalist criticism of Nones reflects the party's desperation in 1800. Some Jews were blamed for being wealthy brokers who prospered in America, while others proved their unfitness for democracy by failing to succeed. By grouping Jews with blacks, Federalists who were becoming more elitist in their ideology and relying more on their ethnically Anglo-Saxon base of support

[92] Morais, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 26; Schappes, "Anti-Semitism and Reaction," 386–87.

[93] *Philadelphia Aurora*, Aug. 13, 1800, reprinted in the first volume of *PAJHS* 1 (1892), 111–15, and in Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 210–11.

were indiscriminately lumping groups signified negatively in the popular mind. Federalist elite anti-Semites appealed to popular anti-Semitic prejudices, and thereby set an unsavory precedent for American politics.

Another last gasp of eighteenth-century anti-Semitism occurred in Pittsburgh. John Israel, a son of Israel Israel, had printed the *Herald of Liberty* in Washington, Pennsylvania, since 1798, but for the election of 1800 he moved to Pittsburgh and began the *Tree of Liberty* to challenge the only paper then printed there, John Scull's Federalist *Pittsburgh Gazette*. Neither man was polite: if Scull pulled out all the usual stops, charging the "Jew Press" with "sedition" and "Jacobinism" and terming its office a "synagogue," it was in response to Israel's claims that the Federalist candidate for governor was "an open Reviler of Religion; a Deist; an Atheist; a Speculator; a Landjobber; an active Agent in exciting the Western Insurrection; and . . . altogether under Foreign Influence." If anything, the Federalists lost more decisively in the west than the east. Like his father, John Israel was not a Jew. He married the daughter of David Reddick, a Christian who had been a leader of the Whiskey Rebellion in Washington County several years earlier.[94]

In the years following 1800, anti-Semitism died out in the public debate. It would resurface again in the 1820s, significantly, in schoolbooks and missionary tracts. These published materials emerged from a reinvigorated New England and its midwestern migrants, as people who were, or would have been Federalists switched from electoral politics to social and religious reform movements.[95] In the interim, Thomas Jefferson, whom Federalists had grouped with Jews and atheists as a threat to the republic, appointed ethnic as well as practicing Jews to public office. His party's overwhelming victory demonstrated the futility of political anti-Semitism outside of New England. While anti-Jewish prejudice did not die out, its practitioners in the early republic at least had the intelligence to refrain from using this

[94] Jeffrey L. Pasley, *The Tyranny of Printers: Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic* (Charlottesville, Va., 2001), 112–14, 170–71; Schappes, "Anti-Semitism and Reaction," 388–89; Russell J. Ferguson, *Early Western Pennsylvania Politics* (Pittsburgh, 1938), 151, 161–63, 172–73; Carl E. Prince, "John Israel: Printer and Politician on the Pennsylvania Frontier, 1798–1805, *PMHB* 91 (1967), 46–55. John Israel died in 1806 at the age of twenty-nine.

[95] Jaher, *Scapegoat*, 130–69; and Leonard Dinnerstein, *Anti-Semitism in America* (New York, 1994), 16–22, agree that the period between 1800 and 1840 marked an ebb tide for American anti-Semitism. Part of the reason was there were few Jews in the new nation; many of the early Jews converted to Christianity. For instance, like the Jewish community in Newport, Lancaster's Jewish congregation, which probably outnumbered Philadelphia's for a while, totally disappeared. Brener, *Jews of Lancaster*, 12.

counterproductive ploy in public debate. Israel Israel received the satisfaction of becoming the elected sheriff of Philadelphia in 1800. The same year, Benjamin Nones was appointed notary public by Pennsylvania's new Jeffersonian governor Thomas McKean, a position that enabled Nones to pass on applications for citizenship by immigrants.[96]

As the eighteenth century drew to a close, a shadow was cast over both the traditional toleration and the revolutionary achievement of Pennsylvania's Jews. Anti-Semitism, confined largely to folk culture in a colonial society dominated by a cosmopolitan Quaker/Anglican elite, paradoxically became more visible and a political issue as Jews worked vigorously to bring the new United States into being. The Jews' hearty endorsement of the French Revolution permitted elite opponents of radicalism to use anti-Semitism as a political weapon. But because Jews were such a minuscule percentage of the population, the worst of anti-Semitism lay far in the future. For the moment, French "Jacobins" and "wild" Irishmen posed a far more potent threat to the Federalist party.

It is easy to applaud the peaceful transition of parties in 1800 and forget what a near thing it was. Had the High Federalists been able to raise their army during the Quasi-War with France and suppress their opponents—much as the administration of William Pitt the Younger did in contemporaneous Britain—the United States would have been significantly less open to immigrants, significantly more intolerant than it became. What is less well known, however, is that the Revolution of 1800 also repudiated an anti-Semitic strain in Federalism which otherwise might have assumed a far more prominent place in the nation's political life.[97]

The Pennsylvania State University WILLIAM PENCAK

[96] Faber, *Time for Planting*, 130; Wolf and Whiteman, *Jews of Philadelphia*, 216–17, 280, 444; Schultz, *Republic of Labor*, 151.

[97] Daniel Sisson, in *The American Revolution of 1800* (New York, 1974), 452, writes: "With its emphasis upon individual liberty, equality, and democracy, all arrayed against elitism and the increasing power of the state, Jefferson's rhetorical skill gave voice to the hopes of men everywhere."