ON May 20, 1946, 795 displaced persons arrived on board the SS Marine Flasher to a cheering throng in New York harbor, and four days later the SS Marine Perch brought an additional 566 refugees to America. These were the first immigrants to come to this country from the displaced persons camps of Europe established for refugees after World War II.

While the newcomers began their lives in states around the country, the northern industrial states claimed the biggest share of the new arrivals. Pennsylvania ranked third in the country behind New York and Illinois, and Pittsburgh numbered seventh among welcoming American cities. By December 1951, approximately 24,200 newcomers resettled in Pennsylvania, with Allegheny County (Pittsburgh area) gaining 2,474, second only to Philadelphia's 7,671. The surrounding counties of Butler and Westmoreland each welcomed 139 and 345 DP's respectively.

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1 Under the DP Act, New York state gained 31.7 percent of the newcomers, Illinois 10.9 percent, and Pennsylvania 7.5 percent. United States Displaced Persons Commission, The DP Story: Memo to America (Washington, 1952), 367. The first residence of displaced persons reporting in Dec. 1950 was listed as following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>10,856</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>4,337</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>3,450</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>2,234</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>1,793</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
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<td>Boston</td>
<td>1,012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>862</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>481</td>
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DP Story, 370.


The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine, Vol. 70, No. 4 (October 1987)
"Displaced persons," as the refugees were called in official parlance, had finally begun arriving in the United States. They could at long last contemplate settling down. But what would they find? What kinds of problems would they encounter? How would they feel about the community into which they arrived, and how would they adjust to lives in a medium-sized American city?

Very little has been written about World War II Polish emigrants in America, either by them or by others. While testimony of Jewish Holocaust survivors has included commentary on adjustment in America, this has been given short shrift compared to their wartime experiences. Furthermore, there has been no comparative discussion of Polish Jews and Polish Christians, both compelled to leave their native land after the war, albeit for somewhat different reasons. Jews by and large refused to go back to what they considered a "graveyard" and/or they feared continued outbreaks of anti-Semitism, which occurred in Poland after the Nazis were defeated. Christians vehemently refused to live dominated by the country that had occupied their land in 1939, and then had engineered the establishment of a Communist government late in the war after the Germans were pushed back.

In December 1945, after learning about the plight of World War II refugees, President Truman directed consular officials to open America's doors to the limit of the law. While his intention was genuine, large scale immigration had to wait for the passage of the Displaced Persons Act in June 1948. And even though the act was rife with discriminatory measures and took many months to enact, nevertheless, the "no vacancy" sign which had hung for so long on our gates before and during World War II was finally taken down. The United States could, once again, as it had up to the early 1920s, lay claim to being a "haven for the oppressed." Under the Displaced Persons Act, nearly 400,000 persons were to come to this country between 1948 and 1952, when the amended law expired. Out of that number, 154,556 were Polish citizens, representing 45.5 percent of the total admitted under the act. While immigration records did not distinguish the number of Polish Jews admitted, 53,541 Jews were admitted under the DP Act, representing 19 percent of the incoming arrivals. Because it is estimated that at least 70 percent of the Jews

4 Ibid., 499; Leonard Dinnerstein, America and the Survivors of the Holocaust (New York, 1982), 287. Dinnerstein, in his notes, indicates that Jews constituted 16 percent of those who came over under the DP Act. This percentage or the Vernant figure of 19 percent is still far less than the two-thirds majority Jews constituted in admissions to the country under the Truman Directive.
in the DP camps were Jewish in 1947, if we apply that percentage to the 53,541 figure, about 37,000 Polish Jews entered under the DP Act.

To find out more about the people who had lived through the most devastating war in modern times and had come from a country which suffered horrendous losses both in life and property, the author undertook a study from October 1982 to November 1983 of sixty Polish Christians and sixty Polish Jews who had come to Pittsburgh after the war. Long interviews were conducted, usually in respondents’ homes, to ascertain the parallel yet distinct paths the two groups had traveled. Interestingly enough, some postwar emigrants in Pittsburgh actually considered their early years in the United States the most difficult time in their lives, a time even worse than the war years. For many others the stress of their early experience in America ranked second.

Sociologists, psychologists and historians have spelled out the factors affecting immigrant adjustment and adaptation. Variables such as the motivation behind emigration, the conditions of departure, and the length and nature of the period of transition were all important. So, too, were the particular ethnic and social backgrounds of the individuals, their personalities, expectations and goals, their skills and attitudes, the so called “baggage” they brought with them to a new situation; all of this entered into the process of adjustment. Beyond these considerations, there was the receptivity of the society into which they were arriving, in terms of economic opportunity and socialization. These factors affected Polish Christians and Jews in some similar and some distinct ways, and the early adjustment of each group was not without its particular blend of irony and paradox.

In some respects, the wave of immigrants who were displaced by World War II resembled the generations of immigrants who had preceded them. They came to this country hoping to rebuild their lives and eager to begin. They came into ethnic and religious communities that already were established and into a society that had accorded newcomers from many lands the right to become contributing members of America. Yet, in some important ways this group was different. They were not just immigrants; they were refugees from a war torn Europe. For Jews, there was the trauma of personal loss and the shattering of a family support system. While immigrant generations of Jews before them had also sought refuge from pogroms in Europe, pain over the loss of their homeland was profound, a loss not only in terms of territory for those who had homes in Eastern Poland (incorporated into Russia), but also in terms of their freedom and independence. The Jews were happy to have left postwar Poland, while the Christians by and large would never have fled their country if the
Communists had not taken over. Their longing for Poland was to continue, but when the Polish Christians arrived in this country, they were ready to do the best they could.

In addition to the violent and traumatic circumstances precipitating emigration, there was an extended period of transition for both Christians and Jews. Because of the time it took to get displaced persons legislation enacted, the transition period of resettlement in America often required four years or more. These circumstances were bound to take their toll.

More often than not, Polish Christians were gainfully employed during their postwar years in Europe because of an involvement with the Polish armed forces under the British (they were officially allies) or as postwar guards for the Americans. They often continued to develop skills which would stand them in good stead in making the adjustment to American society. They continued an education or received training and job skills. The Jews, however, often had nothing to do in the camps, as they waited for final refuge. While there were some job training programs, many Jews were not able to become self-sustaining or learn job skills. As one social worker who dealt with Jewish DPs in Cleveland noted, whatever skills the Jews might have possessed or learned in Europe were "dulled by years of idleness spent in DP camps. Idleness broke down regular work habits so DPs experienced pressures, even on the most simple jobs in this country." 5

Twelve Jews in the Pittsburgh study noted that next to the wartime years, the period in Europe immediately after the war was the second most difficult time in their lives. Nineteen other Jews (nearly one out of three) indicated that the second most difficult time in their lives were their early years in the United States. This sentiment prevailed even though the Jews usually came to this country under the auspices and with the help of a complex network of social agencies extending from Europe to Pittsburgh. This support system included organizations on the national and international level, such as the United Service to New Americans (USNA) and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS). It also included a web of professional and volunteer organizations in the local community. In Pittsburgh, the Jewish Social Service Bureau (later renamed the Jewish Family and Children's Service) handled immigrant aid. It doled out relief when necessary and monitored the arrival and resettlement of refugees who arrived in Pittsburgh through its sponsorship. (With the Truman Directive, community non-profit agencies designated by the government were able to

5 Helen L. Glassman, Adjustment in Freedom (Cleveland, 1956), 30.
sponsor individuals on a corporate or community assurance. This allowed persons to come to the United States who were not able to get affidavits guaranteeing support from relatives or friends, a process which had been required in recent decades.)

There was also the help of the United Vocational Employment Service, which offered work skills and sought job openings. In addition to these organizations, the social facilities of the Young Men and Women’s Hebrew Association were available to immigrants. Free medical care was offered at Montefiore Hospital. A number of volunteer organizations and lay support committees were also mobilized to help with immigrant resettlement. Jewish leaders from the United Jewish Fund and the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies came together to allocate resources to the immigrant effort from money raised by the annual United Jewish Fund drive. (The Federation and the Fund later combined into the United Jewish Federation.) The National Council of Jewish Women and the Friendship Club each spearheaded hospitality efforts and the Council, at the peak time of immigrant arrivals in 1949, actually collected in-kind donations from the community to relieve the severe strain on community funds.

However, it was clear that despite the financial support and commitment of both professional and lay organizations, the Jewish postwar emigrants had a hard time getting a handle on their lives, both after the war in Europe and in America, as well.

Of the nineteen Pittsburghers who had such a difficult time after arriving in the U.S., half were actually sponsored by relatives. Thus, there appeared to be no direct relationship between level of satisfaction and sponsorship. Interestingly enough, sometimes the relatives actually were part of the problem. When Fanny Lieberman came, first to Chicago, she recounted how her aunt had actually gone off and left her husband without anything. When Fanny got sick and had a miscarriage, there was no money to pay the bill. She wrote a much poorer aunt in Pittsburgh, who sent them tickets to come to Pittsburgh. Another Jewish woman complained that relatives who had brought her and her family over seemed to have “no feelings” and did not help them. Nate Forstenzer related how his American relative did not want her son to take out his Polish-born sister, explaining that her son “was an American boy!” Even when relatives were helpful, that does not appear to have been a decisive factor in the perception of ease of adjustment.

Among those twenty-five persons in the study who came under the aegis of the Jewish Social Service Bureau of Pittsburgh, fifteen
made positive references to their experience. Morton Cieply admitted how strange and uncomfortable he felt when he came to Pittsburgh, but "I wasn't scared because I knew I wouldn't starve because of Federation." Sally Melmed praised the financial help she and her family received. So did Rose Turbiner, who got assistance for six weeks until her husband was able to get a job. "They were great!" she exclaimed. "The social worker, a Miss Weinstein, was lovely. She even came to visit me when I was sick." Gabriel Hoffman praised the same woman. For six weeks he went to school as the social worker urged. But then he told Miss Weinstein he wanted to look for a job. She cautioned him not to rush. "But I wanted to get off on my own and not take any money from Federation. I got a job myself at Kaufmann's as a tailor." Frances Spiegel also remarked about her understanding social worker. "She was a life saver; there were always some people who would not be satisfied, but we were." Bernard Gelman commented favorably on the way "they were trying to make you independent. It was hard, but it was the only way you were going to learn. I didn't want to wait for them to find me a job, so I got a job myself as a janitor at Heinz."

Wolf Friede fondly remembered his social worker, a Mr. Nadler, whom he described as a "very good man. He understood our problems. . . . Federation was terribly important for us. We got money. . . . I was a free man; did things myself. They figured we were people and could make our own decisions."

"What Federation did for me, God bless!" exclaimed Harry Feldman. William Friedman gave Federation a lot of credit for helping him. He, like other survivors, was able to get a loan from the Hebrew Free Loan for $745 for tools in 1951. To him, "the Jewish people are enriched to have organizations like that."

Not everybody, however, was so unequivocal in their appreciation for the help they received from the Jewish community agencies. One man commented that in his opinion, he was more frustrated than helped. "They were trying to help, but I had no patience. The social workers had a set of rules and they didn't fit everybody. They wanted me to wait and I wanted to get right to work." Abe Kohane appreciated the relief for the few months that he needed it, but he did feel there was a lack of understanding on the part of both professional and lay people with whom he came in contact. Mordechai Glatstein also felt a void. "They gave you furniture if you needed it, but we needed a social worker, a psychiatrist, and there was no one to help in Pittsburgh." His wife, another survivor, was more outspoken in her
criticism, calling her early years in Pittsburgh a "second Holocaust. We needed emotional support and we didn't get it." Others echoed her complaint. Aron Goldman complained that "when we went to Federation, they didn't have time to talk to us. They didn't understand us. Nobody cared. Nobody asked how we were doing. Federation told me it was up to me to get a job. . . ." Another survivor, Jack Sittsamer, actually described the social workers as "mean." "They didn't seem to care. There was no feeling of warmth." Melvin Goldman also complained. "They brought me over to help me, but they

**Melvin Goldman: "They sent you down a cellar to pick an old coat, but we needed to talk to people."**

didn't. They sent you down a cellar to pick an old coat, but we needed to talk to people." Janina Winkler was bothered by something else. She resented having to go to the offices of the Jewish Social Service Bureau weekly for review. "We were proud people."

While most of the complaints revolved around a perceived lack of emotional support or understanding, two people did criticize the level of assistance. Abe Levenreich, who came in the crunch of December 1949, remarked: "We got not enough to live, but too much to die! . . . I didn't want to take a handout. The social worker couldn't speak Yiddish. She didn't like me. I waited the whole day before she gave me a check. She wanted me to mop floors in the Jewish Home, but I refused. They did try to help me get a job, but I got one myself." Dora Iwler was gentler. She felt that people who had come before them had gotten a "better deal" than she and her husband. (Like Levenreich, she came during the peak months in Fall 1949.) "They gave us furniture that was bad; gave me $8 to buy a dresser. They gave me an old stove that nearly fell down. We fell through the bed we were given!"

What did provoke universal criticism was the housing facility in which most arrivals sponsored by the Jewish Social Service Bureau (JSSB) were placed. The Steel City Hotel on the North Side was where many newcomers were housed for up to six weeks, until other quarters could be located by either the JSSB or the immigrant. No one had anything nice to say about the place. "Horses should live there, not people," commented Harry Friedman. Sam Frost remembered the rats; others, the mice and cockroaches. Marcia Scheingross, who came with her husband and two children, believed the hotel was
worse than the Landsberg displaced persons camp. Sally Melmed’s son wanted to know why so many men kept leaving some women’s rooms! But William Friedman waxed philosophical. “It was a terrible place, but you don’t look a gift horse in the mouth!”

Whether brought in by a Jewish agency or an individual, the question was whether newcomers had felt welcomed by the Jewish community and/or whether they felt they had anything in common with the Jews of Pittsburgh. Of those responding to the question, twenty-two were enthusiastic and seven more were somewhat less so. Opinions ranged from an enthusiastic appreciation to a sense of bitter rejection. Twenty-five persons felt that they had much in common with the Jewish community in Pittsburgh, but an equal number said no, or that they were uncomfortable. Sometimes people felt welcomed by the community even though they did not feel they had much in common with local Jews. Nineteen people specifically cited their early years in this country as the second hardest time for them. Still, there was no clear correlation between feeling that way and feeling unwelcome: about half felt welcomed, half didn’t. The same ratio prevailed on the question of having much in common with Pittsburgh Jews. But only four of these nineteen people felt as if they were both welcomed and had much in common with the local community.

Complaints varied. Some were directed specifically against fellow Jews; others at Americans in general. A number of newcomers griped that Americans were interested only in money, and that since the DP didn’t have any, they were ignored or even ridiculed. Others grumbled about a certain amount of jealousy and that when they started to earn money or purchase a new car, there was resentment. Abe Salem put it this way: “When you’re rich, the Americans are jealous and when you’re poor, they don’t want to know you.” Others felt they were looked down on because they were immigrants, “greeners.” Sam Frost specifically targeted the Jewish community. “They thought we were ignorant, that we hadn’t seen a car or a refrigerator. They made us feel like we had come out of the desert.”

The Friendship Club had attempted to reach out to Holocaust survivors in a social context and nearly one-third of the families interviewed indicated that they had been involved with the club somewhat, going to Chanukah parties, Passover seders, services, dances, general meetings. As one survivor said, “If there was one organization that had an interest in us, it was the Friendship Club. . . . I have to give them a lot of credit.” The newcomers welcomed the conversation and hospitality. Norman Infeld met his wife at a Friendship Club dance.
But even with this group, the majority of survivors from Poland felt a real difference between them and the German Jews, who constituted the Friendship Club, that went beyond the difference in their ages. As one man commented: “I didn’t come to this country to hear German!”

Many survivors like Abe Kohane felt that American Jews had little interest and virtually no understanding of what had happened to the Jews in Europe. Survivors were reluctant to talk about their experience in the Holocaust, not just because it was so painful, but also because

_Sam Frost: ‘Maybe we couldn’t accept the welcome. Maybe it was us; we stood away. Maybe we were afraid.’_

they felt that nobody would really understand what they had been through. A group of survivors organized their own annual memorial observance of the Holocaust, beginning in 1952. One man expressed his bitterness that the larger community was not interested in participating in these services or even in providing any funds for publicity about the event. Furthermore, no survivor talked about any efforts by the synagogues to reach out to them, although they did attend services. In fact, one survivor complained that a local Rabbi of a major congregation announced that in his opinion, the Jews who survived were collaborators!

Many other newcomers did not express a feeling one way or the other. As Harry Drucker said, “I’m the type of person who never expects anything from anybody. When you’re nice to me, I’m nice to you.” Julius Aussenberg also was non-committal. “I didn’t expect anything; I made myself welcomed.” William Friedman remarked that “in the beginning the Jewish community didn’t know what to expect of us, but when they saw we didn’t come out of the dark ages, they always invited us.”

Some survivors recognized that their less-than-positive feelings might have been tied to their own insecurities or lack of communication skills. As Sam Frost mused, “Maybe we couldn’t accept the welcome. Maybe it was us; we stood away. Maybe we were afraid.” Dora Iwler, who had indicated she felt nothing in common with Pittsburgh Jews, also recognized that perhaps her feelings were tied to
the fact that she could not speak the language. Estelle Forstenzer did not feel a real commonality of interest either, but for her "it was like everybody was from a different world. They were better off and it was a gap I felt."

While ego strength is an important factor in the ease of adjusting to a new society, the expectations with which one comes to a new society are also important (and certainly easier to probe for an historian). It would appear from the testimony that most Jewish immigrants had modest expectations and set fairly realistic goals. Many

Gabriel Hoffman: "I'm going to sit down at a table with a table cloth and have a whole bread and cut off as much as I want."

said that they actually had no expectation or that they just wanted to establish a normal life. Their goal was to get married, or if they were attached already, to raise a family and get a job. Morton Cieply remarked: "My only ambition was to have enough bread to be satisfied; to be productive; to make up for lost time." Abe Cymmerman expected only "to take one day at a time." Abe Enzel felt that "whatever I found, I would do. I just wanted to be able to make a living and be happy." Nate Forstenzer "just wanted to be free; that's all. That was our dream in the concentration camp — to live as a free person, to change clothes when we wanted and take a shower." David Guss exclaimed: "I only wanted enough bread and potatoes. I wanted to kiss the ground, be a slave; just let me in!" Gabriel Hoffman also talked about food and freedom. "I'm going to be a free man. I'm going to sit down at a table with a table cloth and have a whole bread and cut off as much as I want." Morris M. wanted only to see the Statue of Liberty. Isaac Mikoswski "didn't want to be a big shot." Gusta Relis commented she never thought the world owed her anything. "What I make, that is what will be." Sally Melmed wanted a good education for her children — that was most important "because that was all we had." Marcia Scheingross felt the same way. "My husband used to say that if it was our last penny, the children were going to college." Other immigrants echoed this dedication to their children. Ruth Weitz summed things up this way: "I just figured that I wanted to get away from the other side of the ocean. Whatever
happened, happened. . . . Father always taught me that you have to work for what you get. Life is two hills: one is up and another down. You pick the one you want to take. Nothing comes by itself."

Interestingly enough, with few exceptions those persons who had had very modest goals indicated their adjustment to America had not been so very difficult. And of the six persons who appeared to have somewhat unrealistic expectations about what they could anticipate in this country, five indicated that their early years in America were indeed the second hardest time for them. The sixth person complained that her entire life had been hard. For these people, expectations and goals were set beyond their reach. One of the persons who was frustrated was Mark Stern. He had wanted to become an engineer, build houses and become rich and influential, and none of that happened. It was hard for him early on in America because "I didn't know which way I was going. I was a stranger. I couldn't integrate; I didn't know the language." Aron Goldman also thought he was going to have it nice and easy. "Gold pieces were going to lay in the streets and I'm going to pick them up. There were rich Jews in America and they would help, but it didn't happen that way." Another survivor, Abe Kohane, expected the Jewish community would be "eager to greet us," but he did not feel it happened that way for him.

In comparing the attitudes and expectations of Jews with Christians who were also coming into the city during this time, there are interesting similarities and differences. There were the universal problems facing the uprooted — of language, jobs, housing, new and different culture, of change and adaptation. And there were the specific problems of this particular Polish emigration. While nineteen Jews in the survey felt their early years in the United States were second only to the wartime period in terms of hardship, six Christians recalled those early years in America as the most difficult time in their lives, while eight more cited those years as the second hardest. As with the Jews, the reasons for the distress varied. There was not only the crunch of establishing a viable economic life, but there were attitudinal problems including their reaction to the response and receptivity of the sponsor or the receiving society, particularly the local Polish-American community in Pittsburgh.

Some Christian newcomers had trouble with sponsors who were either personally known to them or not. One Pole who came under the community affidavit of the National Catholic Welfare Conference cited his early years in the United States as the worst time for him. He found himself working on a farm in Seven Springs, fifty miles from
Pittsburgh. "We were treated worse than animals." His wife continued: "We got $20 a month and worked like slave labor. Our food consisted of leftovers. . . . sometimes with cigarette butts in it. We worked from seven o'clock in the morning till after midnight. I had to clean toilets with a rag. . . ." They tried to get back to Germany, but never heard again from NCWC. Another respondent, Stanley K., [Some immigrants expressed concern for possible reprisals by Polish authorities against family members still in Poland, and asked that their last names not be used in the survey.] came to this country as one of the participants of a Long Island farm plan. It was proudly worked out by Mr. Zachariasiewicz of the Polish Immigration Committee (a group set up in New York City with limited staff and funds) in conjunction with the NCWC, which brought hundreds of Polish DPs over. "We were all guys of 18-25; we were taken from New York on a train to Greenpoint, Long Island. We worked and were put up with other migrant workers in barracks that were like a concentration camp. After four months I left the potato farm and moved to New Jersey to work in a bakery with a friend."

Not everyone, of course, had such trouble with a sponsor, although they still might have considered their early years in America a very difficult time. Through the help of the Polish Immigration Committee, Gertrude J., her parents, sister and brother-in-law, were sponsored by somebody who had a farm at Culpepper, Virginia. To Gertrude, who was just 17 at the time, Culpepper was "a huge nowhere" even though her family had had a small family farm in Poland. She and her family stayed on the farm for seven months with a "nice family" while she worked and learned English.

Two families in the Pittsburgh group were sponsored through the NCWC and were helped in the Pittsburgh area by Father Twardy of St. Leocadia in Wilmerding. However, while they both thought Rev. Twardy was a nice man, they still indicated that their early years in America were very rough. The priest eventually was able to get one man a job and secured apartments for the two families, but his help could not overcome the impression East Pittsburgh made on Mrs. W. She had cried thinking that she would choke from the pollution. "All I wanted was to go back someplace, any place."

Only one person, Francinski D., delighted in talking about the help he received when he came to this country. He and his wife were sent to Greensburg under the blanket assurance of an Irish Catholic judge, through the NCWC. The judge took Francinski and his wife shopping for clothes. "I couldn't believe it," exclaimed Francinski, some thirty-five years later.
The fact of the matter is that most Catholics received very little in outright relief from either a Catholic or Polish agency. It was very clear from the Pittsburgh group, as Edmund W. had observed, that "the NCWC wanted to get as many Catholics over as possible even though it was unorganized. The point was to get us over and then worry about resettling us." The only money given outright was for minimal transportation costs.

The same situation prevailed with the Polish Immigration Committee and the NCWC. In no case did any Pittburgher mention more than $25 being extended to them. A number of persons were angry that they had not been allowed to borrow from the PIC. Walter W. wanted $200 for transportation out of England but was turned down by the PIC. When Fabian B., who had just arrived from England, asked to borrow $11 for a ticket to Pittsburgh, he was refused on the grounds that the Committee only had money to help those DPs from Germany. When they told him to call his uncle, who was his sponsor, he got "disappointed and mad."

A few Poles recognized the disparity between the organized help they received, and what happened in the Jewish community. Stanley W. was disappointed in the big Polish organizations for not assisting more; he envied the "Jewish organizing." Adam S., who felt he received a "so-so" welcome, talked about how the Italians and Jews got more financial and emotional support. "I wanted independence, but a little help would have been nice. I don't know why they didn't help — maybe jealousy, not caring..."

If relief was not extended through the NCWC directly or through a local agency, there was no other agency geared to assist. There certainly were no voluntary clubs or associations like the Friendship Club or the "Y," which existed in the Jewish community to either provide assistance in kind or to reach out with some social hospitality. The Polish Women's Alliance claimed that it offered assistance, but no newcomer talked of this. Nor did any newcomer talk about any help that was extended through the church, with the exception of Father Twardy in Wilmerding, or any local Polish organization. In one account, an emigre was distraught because his local priest had actually called the DPs "Communists" and had told his parishioners not to help them. Adam L. recalled asking his priest why he never helped them. He never received an answer. Another family also remembered how they had gone to a Polish church, but "there was no real interest in us... unless you had money."

What concerned Polish Christian emigres the most was their eco-
nomic security. They sorely felt the lack of an economic safety net. This sense of economic stress simply did not come across in interviews with the Jews, perhaps because they knew that if they were desperate, they could go to the Jewish Social Service Bureau. As Stanislaw S. acknowledged, the toughest problem was just "to survive. Sometimes we didn't have money to buy our children milk." She and her husband had come from wealthy land-owning families in Poland. Her husband, who had been a law student in Poland, took a job at American Bridge Company as a welder and learned on the job. "He was unhappy with it, but he was so afraid to change it. He was so afraid that the children wouldn't have anything in a strange country. . . . He never missed a day until he was disabled in 1973." For her part, she learned to weave, which eventually evolved into a small business. "My mother always used to say: if you don't have what you like, you like what you have. If I hadn't been brought up this way, I never would have been able to cope."

Henrietta P. was also in her 20s, married, with a child. She, too, said, "Our toughest problem was to survive. My husband made $17 a week, so I did anything to help out — like cleaning houses. In England and even in Germany, we were always taken care of. But here we were given $20 and suddenly on our own. It was a shock. For the first time in my life I was thrown into a society with a daughter and husband, who was not physically strong, and left to fight for my survival. It took maybe six months to a year. I felt completely lost. I needed some warm conversation."

A father in his 20s who came to the states put his feeling this way: "It was the hardest time for me when I arrived in New York and I didn't know where to go and I had a wife and child. It scared the hell out of me. During the war there was only me and it was an adventure. Now I had no money, and nothing to eat, no help, no relatives, nothing." Adam L. complained that after he lost his first job, "I didn't have enough money for coffee."

Expectations were also important in the adjustment process for Christians, as well as for Jews. Various observers had indicated that many displaced persons came to this country with unrealistic expectations. One such person who had interviewed DPs sent to Louisiana and Mississippi wrote that most DPs had not received information about this country and thus came here with inflated expectations.6 Yet this assessment did not concur with accounts of the majority of

6 Rudolf Heberle and Dudley Hall, Displaced Persons in Louisiana and Mississippi (Baton Rouge, 1950), 45.
Jewish DPs, or for that matter with Polish Christians, DPs or not. Either they never had such high expectations, or those expectations had been forgotten over the ensuing years, to better accord with reality.

Only one Catholic woman admitted expecting “everybody to be rich, have beautiful homes, maids.” Certainly those Poles who had been in the service and who had gone to England with the Polish Resettlement Corps (which the British had organized to smooth the transition of Polish servicemen back into civilian life), had a great deal of information and understanding about what to expect about life in America. They had had contacts with people from around the world, including Americans, and thus had gotten a more realistic picture. As Robert A., who had been part of the Polish Resettlement Corps in Europe, recalled, “I didn’t expect that it would be much different” in America.

One particular reality which had some impact on postwar Polish Christian newcomers was leaving their country, and particularly their parents and family. Author Joseph Conrad, a famous Polish exile in London of an earlier time, had spelled out what became known as the “Lord Jim complex”: feelings of guilt and shame about abandoning friends, relatives and all Poles to their fate. Jacek Adolf, in his study of more recent Eastern European emigres, found many people touched by feelings of guilt. They saw themselves “like rats deserting a sinking ship.” 7 Joanna G. recalled the early years in the United States and how she cried so much because her family made her feel “like a traitor because I didn’t go back to Poland.” Yet she was the exception in the Pittsburgh group. While love of Poland had been and continued to be an emotional reality, others reported no feelings of guilt. Perhaps the guilt had lessened over the years, or perhaps it was more common for a Polish intellectual elite who dwelt characteristically in places such as Washington, New York and London. Such people often were closely tied to the government in exile. Most persons in Pittsburgh indicated that their family had become resigned to their staying in the West and had put no pressure on them to return, as soon as it became clear that the Communists had entrenched themselves. In fact, by the time the emigres arrived in the United States — the late 40s and early 50s — Poles abroad and in Poland recognized that living conditions were much better in the West. Some Polish families very

quickly began to appreciate having a loved one in the West, so that they could receive additional relief supplies, which virtually all Polish emigres sent to their families in Poland.

With guilt or without, Polish postwar immigrants, even in Pittsburgh, were politically aware and concerned about their homeland. In this way, they differed considerably from earlier waves of Polish emigrants who had come to this country primarily for economic motives and from a Poland that before World War I was divided among three European powers. In fact, the difference in motivation and background was to create a strain between the two groups that was observed right after World War II and was recalled by the emigres in their interviews thirty-five years later. It was certainly cited by Polish Christians in Pittsburgh responding to the question on whether they had felt welcomed by the local Polish community and whether they felt they had much in common with them.

The Polish community in pre-war Pittsburgh was representative of Polish communities in other cities. Polish American emigration into Western Pennsylvania had begun in the 1860s, and in 1875, the first Polish church in Pittsburgh, St. Stanislaus Kostka Church, was founded at 16th Street and Penn Avenue in what became known as the Strip District. By 1900 there were nearly 12,000 Poles in the city. They had spread out from the Strip District to the northern slopes of Herron Hill, and on the South Side near the Oliver Iron Works and the Jones and Laughlin mill.\textsuperscript{8}

By the time of the post-World War II emigration, there were fifteen Polish organizations in Allegheny County, including the Central Council of Polish Organizations, which had been founded in 1935 to act as a central agency and clearing house for all Polish-American organizations in the district. The Polish Falcons were a real presence with national headquarters in the city and thirty-nine local lodges as well.\textsuperscript{9} There was also the Union of St. Joseph of North America, the Polish National Alliance, the Polish Women's Alliance and the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America, the oldest Polish-American organization in the country. In addition to these civic organizations, there were eight Catholic churches with predominantly Polish congregations in Pittsburgh, five of which had been founded either before or at the turn of the century. Thus, the social and fra-

\textsuperscript{9} Archives of Industrial Society, University of Pittsburgh Hillman Library, Record Group 63:1, File I, Drawer 3, Central Council of Polish Organizations.
ternal network among Polish-Americans in Pittsburgh and in other American communities where there were large groups of Poles was quite extensive. While the Jewish community was criss-crossed by even more organizations, including a centralized fund raising mechanism, Polish-Americans were more organized than most ethnic groups.

When Polish displaced persons arrived in Pittsburgh after the war, they found a community structure which they admired. As Stanley K. put it: "We had to give them a lot of credit. They had everything ready for us — churches, organizations, newspapers, clubs." Yet this appreciation did not preclude the development of a certain tension between the two groups related to differences in culture, education, class and circumstances.

The postwar Poles were from varied economic and social backgrounds. Many had at least a modest education continuing beyond grade school either in Poland or after the war, in army facilities or with the Resettlement Corps. The education of the Poles who had arrived before World War I was much less extensive, both formally in school and informally in travel and experience. Moreover, the postwar emigrants had been raised in an independent Poland and this reality had instilled in them a great pride. Those Poles who had migrated from a Poland divided among three major European powers often did not understand or appreciate the nature of the state that had arisen after World War I, nor had they developed a similar sense of attachment to the Polish nation. Not only did they not have the same patriotism, but they were less interested in preserving Polish culture. Poles after the war were "shocked" by Polonia (Polish America). They complained that Polish Americans showed a complete lack of interest in the events of World War II and in contemporary Poland.

Certain class differences surfaced when postwar emigres indicated how appalled they were at what they perceived as a lack of respect for education and for educated people. New arrivals were ridiculed; they were called "princes," "barons" or "masters" by the Polish Americans, as if they were all old time Polish aristocrats. There is no question that there were more sons and daughters of middle-class Polish professionals and entrepreneurs in the post-World War II emigration than before. The Polish press carried repeated exchanges of "insulting words and venomous polemics" between earlier immigrants and DPs. Some emigres felt that Polish-Americans were less receptive to them than were other Americans.

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When Polish Christians in the Pittsburgh sample who came in under the DP Act were asked whether they felt they had had much in common with the older Polish-American community encountered in Pittsburgh, the response was almost evenly split. Fourteen felt they had something in common with local Polish-Americans and thirteen felt they did not and/or were uncomfortable with them. However, the group primarily of professionals who arrived in the United States from other countries after the termination of the DP Act in 1952 all felt they had little in common with the Polish-American community here.

_Lidia M.: _"(T)he old immigrants were the sons and daughters of poor, very simple people. After the second world war it was a political emigration, not economic."

If they are added to the tally, they tilt the scales so that more Polish Christian postwar emigrants indicated they had less in common with the local Polish-American community than those who felt a commonality of interest.

Stanley W. believed his generation of newcomers was well informed about politics, that they were more educated, in better command of the English language and more intellectual than the previous immigration. He felt that he had assimilated more in three months than the earlier generation of Poles had in thirty to forty years. Raymond C. recalled how local people simply did not understand what the newcomers had been through. They said things like, "Didn't your insurance pay for the war damages?" or "Why didn't you vote the Communists out!" Joanna G. recalled being called a "dumb DP" when she arrived, and that she was laughed at because of her appearance. Lidia M. concluded that "the old immigrants were the sons and daughters of poor, very simple people. After the second world war it was a political emigration, not economic. We simply did not have much in common with the old. It sounds snobbish, but we were shocked by quite a lot of things. What shocked us, and is a continuous irritation, was the equation of being Polish with the polka and eating kolbassi and pierogi. When we came, we were scandalized because they had such limited notions of Polish culture. We do not blame them, but nevertheless, that's why Polish jokes exist — because these people present
Polish culture from A to B and do not know the culture from B to Z. I cannot laugh at Polish jokes. I cannot laugh when somebody presents you as an imbecile.”

Bernice N. also found little understanding of Polish life and culture on the part of the Polish-Americans in Pittsburgh. “They think differently than we do. They think badly about Poland. They still think farms don’t have electricity. They asked me if we wear underpants! They came here and did not learn English. They cleaned houses; they had no schooling to go higher.” Another World War II emigre felt that the Polish Americans he met seemed to have “an inferiority complex.” Stanley P. felt that his generation of immigrants, unlike the others, “were not shy about being Polish. If somebody doesn’t like me being Polish, bloody too bad.”

Irena K. explained things this way: “The first immigration was for bread. The second was different. The only thing we had in common was that we were both from Poland. Given the circumstances, there was quite a bit of help and acceptance.” Her ex-husband was sharper. “The first immigrants came from the villages. They were hard working people, but they were a different class. They were not political emigrants. We consider ourselves that. They were very uninterested in politics and not informed about world affairs. They could not see Poland as a free country. They could not relate to the fact that we had grown up in a free country between the wars. We had nothing in common, no common interests. We achieved in a few years what it took them a lifetime. We were successful because of education, a different perspective. We hoped for better things than they and so we got it quicker. We didn’t belittle ourselves or feel we were any worse than Americans. We had education, English and ambition to work in more than the mines.”

Others talked about how jealousy and ill feelings got in the way of a sense of commonality and being welcomed. Joseph G., who had married an American woman from East Vandergrift, spoke of the resentment he encountered because he made a better living than they did. Like a number of Jewish DPs, Stanley W. found that he was welcomed only “until the envy set in when I got on my feet.” Henrietta P. remembered how they used to be called “smart-ales from Europe” because they had wanted more from life than the others. She felt that the Poles who came to America before World War I were “against us” and that many other Polish emigres would agree with her. In her opinion, there was definitely an “us” and “them” kind of mentality.
Barbara S. Burstin

Marina H., on the other hand, felt welcomed and did not sense any jealousy or resentment. She felt that the local Poles thought the DPs were helpless and that they even tried to help out by telling people where to look for jobs. While she explained that "we came from the same culture," she also noted the differences. "The older immigrants came for work and I would never have come to America if Poland was free."

Did the Polish Christian group feel welcomed by the local Polish American community after the war? The overwhelming majority said yes, very much (25) or yes, somewhat (14). Only ten persons indicated they felt they had not been welcomed at all. Thus it was entirely possible that a newcomer could feel welcomed, but also feel that he or she had little in common with the people who were welcoming him. What is instructive is that as with the Jewish group, there was no clear correlation between the perception about the receptivity of the local ethnic or religious community and the feeling about difficulty adjusting to America. Only one-third of those who indicated that their early years in America were the hardest or second hardest time for them also did not feel welcomed.

In the table below we can compare the feelings of Polish Jews and Polish Christians vis à vis the local ethnic group they were meeting.

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<th>Perceptions of Welcome by Local Ethnic Group</th>
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<th>Perceptions of Commonality with Local Ethnic Group</th>
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For the new group of Polish arrivals, Polish-American society as it existed in Pittsburgh was seen as too narrow and superficial. This becomes especially clear if we look closer at the new immigrants. Those
who came after June 1950 were more apt to have come from England and have been with the Polish Resettlement Corps. The people who came to the United States after 1954 were largely professionals who had migrated to another country from Europe before coming to the United States. Thus, they found that while they might have been welcomed by the Polish-Americans they met, they had very little in common.

As a result of having little in common with the earlier immigrants, post-war newcomers formed their own Polish organizations, not just in Pittsburgh, but wherever they settled among established Polish communities. As Ursula T. explained it, local Polish-Americans "were nice, but we were not invited around. . . . Everyone had parties. Everyone helped one another. We considered each other as family. My daughter called the children of some other newcomers her cousins. Because we had no other families, we all got together."

The division of the veterans association reflects the tension between the postwar generation and earlier immigrants and the desire of the latter group to organize themselves. In 1952 the Association of Veterans of the Polish Army required officers to be American citizens, a move that was apparently provoked by the fear that the new arrivals would take control. As a result, a new organization was formed called the Association of Polish Combatants for Polish World War II veterans. In Pittsburgh, virtually all the veterans of World War II joined the chapter of the Polish Combatants that was set up locally. There was real ill feeling between the two groups in the city.11

Displaced persons in the Jewish community also got together among themselves. They organized a group which became known as the Council of New Americans in the East End of Pittsburgh, where many of the newcomers had settled. Sam Frost estimated that there were more than 200 families associated with this group. This used to have meetings at the old "Y" building, which stood on the corner of Negley and Stanton in the East End. Abe Kohane was one of the organizers, along with Abe Salem, Morris Dafner and Wolf Friede. More than a dozen people recalled the parties, the informal get-togethers with families. Many of the women used to meet informally at Highland Park with their children.

Other newcomers gathered at the Blue and White or New Americans Club organized by the YM&HA. A number of younger, mostly

11 In assorted visits the author made to veterans meetings and in interviews with Polish respondents, the hostility between the two groups was openly expressed.
single immigrants went to the "Y" for various social activities including dances. For at least nine (half the single male sample) of the single men in Pittsburgh immediately after their arrival in the United States, the activities of the Blue and White Club and the "Y" dances were a regular part of their lives. Arnold Zweig recalls that there was a whole group — all single men. Jack Sittsamer, who was just 20 when he came to Pittsburgh in 1949, used to go and so did Sam Shear, who was 22. So did Morris M. and Abe Cymerman, who remembered going to the club every Saturday night. Morton Cieply described the club as "a very big deal. It was important to us, because we used to try to forget about our frustrations. We used to plan shows all on our own which we liked."

In looking at where the newcomers tended to live, there is a clear difference between the Jewish and Christian immigrants. The first homes purchased by Jews tended to be either in Squirrel Hill or the East End, which have large Jewish concentrations. A smaller number bought in nearby Greenfield, which also has a significant Jewish population. In contrast, the Polish Christians were not concentrated in any one area, even though the majority of Polish-Americans lived in Lawrenceville and the South Side. While six Polish immigrants did buy houses in Lawrenceville, the remainder bought houses throughout the city, and especially in the suburbs around Pittsburgh. This, if nothing else, was an indication of their willingness on their part to live apart from the local Polish-American community.

Despite whatever problems Polish Christians and Polish Jews might have had in adjusting to the community around them, both groups were able to get jobs within a few months. The Jewish vocational agency actually wanted newcomers to go to school to learn English for a month or two before looking for a job. However, a number of respondents sought work on their own instead, to get on with the business of rebuilding their lives as quickly as possible. Both groups were helped, whether it was by the Jewish job placement service or by relatives and friends in their respective communities.

There were certain establishments that were employment beachheads for a number of newcomers. This was somewhat reminiscent of an earlier time when Poles, for example, were able to immigrate and get jobs at the J&L and Oliver mills, Heppenstalls, Penn Railroad, Armstrong Cork Company and H. J. Heinz. Fifty years later, the H. J. Heinz plant was still a first line employer for both incoming Polish Christians and Jews. American Bridge was mentioned a number of times by Polish Christians and the Hyman Blum Company and Kaufmann's were popular employers for incoming Jews.
The early years in the United States were not easy years for either Polish Christians or Polish Jews. Yet it would appear that the Jews, despite the professional and volunteer efforts that were expended on their behalf, had even a harder time adjusting than did their Christian compatriots. More of them looked back on this period as a very difficult one in their lifetime. More of them felt unwelcomed and not understood by their cohorts in Pittsburgh. Many more Jews did not have the same facility in English that Christians had gained in England. This obviously hindered their adjustment and added to their sense of isolation.

Christians and Jews struggled to deal not only with hard economic realities, but often with emotional and psychological obstacles. Yet they carried on their common struggle isolated from one another, living apart. While they all might not have found the receptivity and commonal interests they anticipated among their compatriots in America, neither did they have it from one another. Each group was on its own.
CALL FOR ARTICLES ON THE
"BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE"

In commemoration of the 175th Anniversary of the Battle of Lake Erie, *The Journal of Erie Studies* will devote the entire Fall 1988 issue to this important event.

The editors are seeking articles on the Battle both from the American and Canadian perspective, the building and fate of the two fleets, as well as the personalities involved in the engagement, eg. Dobbins, Perry, Elliott, Barclay.

Anyone interested in contributing is asked to communicate with the Editor, Erie County Historical Society, 417 State Street, Erie, PA 16501.