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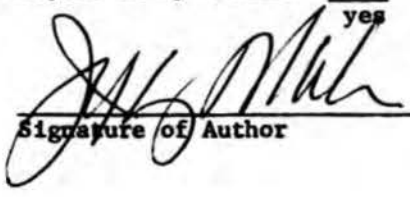

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THE HISTORY OF THE JEWISH COLONY IN CUBA

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D I G E S T

The brief life of the Jewish colony in Cuba reflects a settlement of four distinct communities: the Americans, who began to arrive shortly after Cuba won its independence from Spain in 1898; the Sephardim, emigrating from Turkey and Greece in the years just prior to the first World War; the Ashkenazim, for whom Cuba became a nearby although less desirable alternative when the United States restricted immigration in the 1920s; and the refugees from Nazism who found a temporary haven in Cuba from 1933 until 1949. From its arrival in the island nation, each group developed its own organizations and institutions.

I have found that from the founding of the first Cuban Jewish communal organization, the Centro Hebreo in 1924, the national existence of Cuban Jewry began a trend toward centralization. During the more than seventy-five years of active Jewish life in Cuba, several organizations strove to discharge all the functions of a community center. Yet, because of the disparate nature of the various communities, centralization proved to be impossible. Consequently, the Jewish colony was unable to meet effectively the challenges of diverse communal life; a large influx of European refugees; unfavorable regimes; antisemitism, government appeasement of the Nazis, and ultimately, the Cuban Revolution of 1959.

In researching the history of the Cuban Jewish colony, I have examined the Yiddish-Spanish weekly Havaner Leben-Vida Habañera, other periodicals, and pertinent secondary literature. Through a study of these sources, I have explored the formation, structure, and membership of the various Jewish communal organizations and their relation to their members, each other, and their Cuban environment.

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INTRODUCTION

This is a study of Jewish life in Cuba. In studying Cuban Jewish history, I have paid close attention to the colony's brief heyday, from the establishment of the United Hebrew Congregation in 1904 until the Cuban Revolution of 1959. During that period, four distinct communities settled in Cuba: American Jews, who began to arrive shortly after Cuba won its independence from Spain in 1898; the Sephardim, emigrating from Turkey, Syria, and Latin America at the beginning of the twentieth century; the Ashkenazim, for whom Cuba became a nearby although less attractive alternative when the United States restricted immigration in the 1920's; and the refugees from Nazism who found a temporary haven in Cuba from 1933 until 1949.

Influenced by the Jewish Committee for Cuba, an American organization that aided indigent Eastern European immigrants during the early 1920's, Cuban Jewry began a trend toward centralization. The Centro Israelita, a communal organization of Jews from Eastern Europe supported by the Committee, strove to discharge all the functions of a communal center. Yet, because of the disparate nature of the various Jewish communities, centralization proved impossible and various organizations mushroomed alongside the Centro Israelita. It is my hypothesis that, because no centralized communal organization could be formed, Cuban Jews could not effectively meet the challenges they would face during the twentieth century: diversity of communities, unfavorable regimes

antisemitism, a large influx of European refugees, government appeasement of the Nazis, and ultimately, the Cuban Revolution of 1959.

In this study, I have paid close attention to the available secondary material. Although several brief histories of Cuban Jewry have been written, (They are evaluated in the Annotated Bibliography.), all are inadequate in scope and content. I have examined the Yiddish-Spanish weekly, Havaner Leben-Vida Habañera, the annual Havaner Leben Almanakh, and other Jewish periodicals. Through a study of these sources and pertinent secondary literature, I have sought to answer the following questions:

1. How did pre-twentieth century Cuban Jewry lay the foundation for the modern Cuban Jewish colony?
2. To what extent was the American Jewish community dominant in the communal life of the Jews in Cuba?
3. How did the various other groups relate to the American Jewish community and to each other?
4. How did Cuban Jews meet the attacks of antisemites and the discriminatory political and economic policies of unfavorable regimes?
5. How did the Cuban Jewish colony respond to antisemitism and the influx of refugees from Nazi Europe?
6. How and why did Cuban Jewry prosper in the post-World War II era?

7. How has the Jewish colony fared since the Cuban Revolution of 1959?

The extent to which I have successfully answered these questions is revealed in the pages that follow.

C H A P T E R O N E

Early Jewish Life in Cuba

The Jews who lived in Cuba during Spanish rule not only laid the foundation of its Jewish colony, but had much to do with creating the economic structure of the modern Cuban republic. Jews developed Cuba's only natural resource, sugar, and devised and implemented the system for merchandising it. Jews brought prosperity, economic independence from Spain, and eventual political independence to Cuba. Once Cuba established itself as a republic, an expanding economy demanded an expanding merchant class. Twentieth century Cuban Jewry met that demand.

Most Jews came to Cuba during the twentieth century because they were forced to flee their former homes. Those escaping oppression, war, revolution, and extermination found safety in Cuba. Religious liberty became and remained the guiding principle of the Cuban Republic because of the cruelties Jews suffered at the hands of Spain's Santo Oficio.[1]

The Jewish connections with Cuba began when Christopher Columbus discovered the island during his first voyage to the New World.[2] On November 2, 1492, Columbus sent Luís de Torres and a companion to the island's coastal villages to gather information about Cuba's inhabitants. De Torres, a convert to Christianity, was the expedition's interpreter and spoke, in addition to several European languages, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic. After a brief trip ashore, de Torres returned to his ship, his sole discovery being the natives' curious custom of smoking. Columbus reported in his diary:

> The two Christians (de Torres was a converso, a New Christian) came upon many people roaming the paths of their villages, women and men, with a flaming stick of herb in their hand, taking in its aromatic smell from time to time. The natives reported that they oft-times used this quasi-intoxicant to lull themselves to sleep, in the nude, and therefore never become fatigued.[3]

Columbus, dissatisfied with what seemed to be the island's only resource, continued his expedition northward. But de Torres elected to remain in Cuba as the representative of the Royal Spanish government. He died there several years later.[4]

Jews came to Cuba during the first years of Spanish rule. Many conversos, some of them crypto-Jews, fled from their motherland, dominated by Torquemada, to the far-flung colonies of the Spanish Empire. According to the account of Bartolomé de las Casas (an early resident of Cuba), one of the thirty-nine soldiers at la Villa de Navidad, a converso, was arrested for questioning the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church.[5] A group of Jewish women, forcibly baptized in Europe, accompanied the armed forces that Spain sent to the island.[6] By 1516, the presence of conversos so alarmed the Church that Friar Juan Quevado was appointed Bishop of Cuba, subordinate to the archbishop at Santo Domingo. Bishop Quevado's task was to determine whether or not the presence of so many New Christians in Cuba required the attention of the Santo Oficio. In a letter to Madrid later that year, he wrote that "pratically every ship docking in Havana is filled with Hebrews and New Christians."[7] In 1520, the Santo Oficio came to Cuba.

The Cuban Santo Oficio ruled in secret terror for almost one hundred years before issuing its first sentence in 1613. Francisco López de Leon of Havana was convicted of Judaizing, and was executed. His enormous fortune (almost 150,000 pesos) was confiscated by the Catholic Church. In 1627, the Havana Santo Oficio incarcerated several of the capital's wealthy residents for Judaizing, among them Antonio Mendez and Luís Rodríguez. In 1636, Inquisition officers accused Juan Rodríguez Mesa, Francisco Rodríguez de Solís, and Blas de Paz Pinto of being Jews and fined them each 150,000 pesos in gold.[8]

The arrest and execution of many prominent residents of Havana, among them Luís Méndez de Chávez, Luís Gómez Barreto and Manuel Alvarez Prieto, continued during the next decade. When the Inquisitors tried Gabriel de Granada in Mexico City in 1648, the accused attributed his Jewish training to his uncle, Miguel Nuñez de Huerto, of Havana. Although Nunez de Huerto was dead, his body was exhumed in 1649. He was tried, convicted of being a Jews, and his bones were burned.[9]

It is ironic that while the Santo Oficio was trying and convicting many Cuban crypto-Jews, Cuba also served as a temporary Jewish haven.[10] On February 24, 1654, the caravel Valck (Falcon) set sail from Recife, the former Dutch colony in Latin America, for Martinque. The Valck carried the Calvinist preacher of Itamaracá, Brazil, Dominus Johannes Polhemius, his Calivinist Dutch congregation, and twenty three Jews. All the passengers wanted to leave Recife and go to

Martinique or to wait there for another ship bound elsewhere. But adverse winds brought the Valck to Spanish Jamaica in April of 1654. Once the Spanish authorities established the religious affiliations of the passengers, they informed the Santo Oficio. However, news of the Valck's arrival had already reached Europe through the Dutch consul in Jamaica. Madrid sent word to the Spanish colony to avoid conflict with Holland on account of the Dutch Calvinists and the Valck's passengers were released. The Jews left Jamaica on the next available ship, bound for nearby Cabo San Antonio in Cuba, then a large, well known port. There the Jews lived comfortably under the Spanish government's protection until August, when they finally succeeded in getting passage to New Amsterdam on the small French freighter Sainte Catherine. But this brief example of beneficence by Spain did little to diminish the severity of the Santo Oficio's sentences. In succeeding years, Vicente Gómez Coello (1684), Jacobo Nuñez López (1712) and Friar José Díez Pimienta (1717), along with many others, were burned at the stake in Havana.[11]

Although Spain never attempted to develop Cuba's natural resources, Cuba became the keystone in Spain's colonial economic system.[12] Havana, a natural, safe harbor, was the main base for the flota system (regularly scheduled fleets between Spain and Spanish America). As Spain exploited the wealth of the American colonies, Havana's commercial

and strategic importance grew. Britain, recognizing Havana's value to Spain, invaded Cuba. When the British launched their first expedition against Cuba in 1741, Admiral Vernon employed the services of a Jewish interpreter, as Columbus had done two and a half centuries earlier.[13] This first campaign against Cuba began more than two decades of skirmishes, mostly at sea, that led to Havana's capture in 1762.

The British occupied Cuba for only ten months, but they provided the turning point for both Cuban economic life and for the Jews who were destined to live there.[14] The British brought free enterprise and agriculture to Cuba. Jacob Franks, the New York businessman, was supplier to the British troops in Jamaica. In 1762 members of his firm accompanied Admiral Pocock to Havana. Together with Jews from Martinique and Guadaloupe (including Hernando de Castro, father of the Cuban sugar industry), they helped abolish the Spanish monopolist system and established trade links with Jewish houses in Kingston, Curaçao, London, Amsterdam, Hamburg, and New York.

The Spaniards returned to Cuba after the Treaty of Paris (1763), but the Jews who came with the British remained.[15] Under reforms instituted by King Carlos III in 1764, the economic system imported by the British was retained. Although the Santo Oficio refused to legally permit Jews to reside in Cuba, twenty Jewish men lived in Havana.[16] Cuba's tiny new Jewish

colony led the island in developing its new-found natural resource, sugar.[17]

Spanish Cuba became more populous and prosperous; between 1763 and 1860, the island's population increased from fewer than 150,000 people, including the remnants of its native American population, to more than 1,300,000. The Cuban sugar industry, developed by Hernando de Castro, became the biggest and most mechanized in the world, utilizing steam-powered mills and narrow gauge railroads. Expanding ingenios (sugar mills) dominated the landscape from Havana to Puerto Principe, and by 1860, Cuba produced 500,000 tons of sugar annually - 83% of all its exports and nearly one-third of the world's production. The sugar revolution created a new wealthy class of plantation owners and a new middle class of merchants. Some of both groups were Jews.[18]

The demands of the sugar economy for increased capital, machinery, technical skills, and markets aggravated the political and economic differences between Havana and Spain.[19] The Spanish colonial administration was corrupt, inefficient, and inflexible. Spain failed to grant Cuba political autonomy and instead increased taxes, which led ultimately to the first war for independence, the Ten Years War (1868-78). This rebellion, led by Antonio Maceo and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, attracted little support from the island's wealthier inhabitants, including the Jews. But it did begin an association between Cuba and American Jewry that played a continuing role in the island's life.[20] August (Augusto) Bondi, a German Jewish immigrant who had fought alongside

John Brown in Kansas in 1855 and as a Union soldier in the War Between the States,[21] and Louis (Luís) Schlessinger, a colonel in the forces of the American freebooter Charles Walker,[22] fought with the Cubans against Spain. They, and other American Jews, became heroes in the Cuban struggle for independence that was to continue after their abortive attempt.

An early Cuban historian affirmed that before the Cuban War for Independence at the end of the century, the country contained

> ...scarcely five hundred people of Spanish origin, dedicated to commerce... [among them] five or six Cuban Jewish families that were considered very wealthy and very respected, but that kept themselves completely apart.[23]

These included the families Brandon, Marchena, Machado, and Dovalle who had come from Panama, Curaçao, and Surinam.[24] Some of these maintained the Jewish traditions, as did the poet and actress Dolores de Díos Porta, an observant Jew, who toured Europe during the middle of the nineteenth century and died in Paris in 1869.[25] Yet a contemporary observer contended that

> ...the Island of Cuba was dominated by the Catholic Church and no other religon was tolerated... [The result was] ...quite a few conversions and intermarriages. In many cases, the children of such unions have been brought up as Roman Catholics.[26]

The booming Cuban economy, devised and implemented in part by Jews, brought an end to the Spanish domination of Cuba and the beginning of a new relationship between Cuba and the United States.[27] By 1895, Cuba's political and economic conflict with Spain grew more severe. The interest

of the United States in Cuba had increased since the middle of the century. As more and more Americans invested in their neighbor to the south, United States investments in Cuba reached $50,000,000 and annual trade with Cuba averaged about $100,000,000.

Cuban political movements were organized by exiles in the United States and were coordinated by the poet, propagandist, and later Cuban national hero, José Martí in New York. Martí called human liberty the "guiding principle of Cuban liberation"[28] and equated Cuban suffering under Spanish rule with Jewish suffering at the hands of the Santo Oficio. An inspiring speaker, he attracted many American Jews to his cause. War between Cuba and Spain broke out on February 24, 1895. That war marks the beginning of the history of the current Cuban Jewish colony.

C H A P T E R T W O

Cuba's American Jewish Community

Cuba's American Jews always constituted an influential community. They were the first immigrants to settle in the new Cuban Republic and the vast majority of them were well-to-do. Most had been leaders and soldiers in Cuba's fight for independence and had access to the upper echelons of Cuban society. As Americans, they represented a culture that Cubans respected and sought to emulate. As Jews, their successes influenced Cuba to welcome future waves of Jewish immigrants. As a community, they were dominant in the communal life of the Cuban Jewish colony.

American Jews were at the forefront of the Cuban Revolution as early as 1892, although the United States was not destined to become involved in that war until later.[1] At that time, the Cuban Republic's founder, José Martí, was in exile in the United States planning his nation's freedom. Marti's earliest advisor was Joseph Steinberg. On Martí's insistence, Steinberg and his brothers Max and Edward organized the Patriots Club of Cuba to raise funds for the revolt. This organization gave Martí his first financing, while Steinberg's advice and intuition made Cuban independence a popular cause in the United States. Tomás Estrada Palma (then delegate plenipotentiary of the Cuban Revolution and later Cuba's first president) appointed Steinberg "Captain of the Army of Liberation," authorizing him to solicit and collect revenue in Cuba and abroad.[2]

Steinberg led many Jews to the cause of Cuban liberty. Members of the ruling Revolutionary Junta included romantic

American Jewish figures like General Roloff, also known as Akiba Roland, a Jew originally from Poland; Captain Kaminsky of the Liberating Army, formerly a peddler in Florida; a Sr. Schwartz, aide-de-camp of General Calixto García; and Horace (Horacio) Rubens, a Jewish attorney from New York.[3]

The United States government carefully monitored the war in Cuba. Spain deployed more than 200,000 troops and the fighting spread quickly throughout the island. Both sides killed civilians and burned estates and towns, until by 1898 commercial activity had reached a standstill. Sugar production declined from more than 1,500,000 tons in 1894 to less than 200,000 tons. The United States' economic interests intensified concern and attracted intervention. Excited by the "yellow press" and a mysterious explosion aboard the USS Maine in Havana Harbor, the United States declared war against Spain on April 15, 1898. In August, Spain signed a peace protocol in Washington ending the hostilities. The Cubans were to gain their independence according to the Treaty of Paris (December 10, 1898), which marked the end of the Spanish American empire.[4]

More than four thousand Jews served with the American forces during their brief participation in Cuba's War of Independence. Jews in the United States proposed to provide chaplaincy and a Jewish hospital. But their efforts bore minimal results: 1) Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf of Philadelphia briefly visited Cuba; 2) the Union of American Hebrew Congregations donated one thousand copies of the Union Prayer Book; and 3) the United States Army established the

first Jewish cemetery in Cuba following demands by Jews in the United States that the soldiers who died in what they termed the Spanish-American War receive separate internment according to Jewish law. Many American soldiers, as well as the Jews who preceded them, remained in Cuba as founders of the Cuban Republic and a new Jewish colony in the Western Hemisphere.[5]

Cuba officially became independent on January 1, 1899, while still under United States occupation. Although Tomás Estrada Palma had been elected Cuba's first president, the United States military ruled. Americans built schools, roads and bridges; they deepened Havana's harbor; and they created telephone, telegraph, and electric systems. American economic, cultural, and educational systems prevailed. The Platt Amendment (1901) gave the United States the right to oversee Cuban international commitments, dominate the economy, intervene in internal affairs, and establish a naval station on the island. Americans influenced Cuban affairs until the Cuban Revolution of 1959, but total American domination ended January 21, 1909 when the American administrator, Charles Magoon, handed over the government to President José Miguel Gómez.[6] During these years of American imperialism, the modern Jewish colony was founded.

On August 5, 1904, eleven English-speaking Jews met at the home of Manuel Hadida. They proposed to establish a congregation for the island's one hundred ten English-speaking

Jews and to purchase land for a new Jewish cemetery. The United States Army had opposed the continued use by the fledgling Jewish colony of the Jewish cemetery it had established in the Havana suburb of Guanabacoa and the quasi-government was unwilling to supply additional land. At the urging of Rabbi Dr. Harry Pereira Mendes of New York, President Theodore Roosevelt interceded. In 1906, he instructed United States Minister in Cuba, Frank Morgan, to help the newly formed United Hebrew Congregation purchase the cemetery. Manuel Hadida, first vice president of the congregation, solicited subscriptions and the land was immediately purchased.[7]

The founders of the United Hebrew Congregation intended that it serve the religious needs of all the Jews of Havana, including the small number of Sephardim and Jews from Europe in Havana at that time. But the religious convictions and social position of Cuba's American Jews thwarted these good intentions. The congregation prayed from the Union Prayer Book in English, a style of worship and a language unfamiliar to Havana's other Jews. Their wealth, too, set them apart from Cuba's other Jewish immigrants, the majority of whom needed material assistance. During the second decade of the congregation's existence. George Weinberger wrote:

> The membership of this organization is made up of men of means, who in most cases have their own businesses. In Havana they are proprietors of some of the largest department stores, dry goods stores, etc... [They live] for themselves - only meeting one another at High Holy Day services, when business is forgotten for the moment.[8]

Most of Havana's other Jews were of lesser means and sought more comfortable, frequent, and traditional forms of worship. The United Hebrew Congregation served only briefly as the sole Jewish organization in Cuba, but it remained the Jewish colony's most prestigious and powerful group.

Sephardim from European Turkey and the Middle East began arriving in Cuba in 1902, although Sephardi immigration did not begin on a large scale until 1907. Many of the Sephardim were Young Turks who had participated in abortive revolts against the Ottoman Sultan before the successful Young Turk Revolt in 1908. By 1910, their numbers reached several hundred, augmented by a few families escaping that year's Mexican Revolution. Others came from Syria, North Africa, and other areas of the Mediterranean, some escaping the onset of World War One. Most were peddlers and many were in dire financial straits. Although only a few became members of the United Hebrew Congregation, many turned to Cuba's American Jewish community for assistance. Contact between the two communities was limited. While the United Hebrew Congregation intended to embrace a wide circle of Jews, they never truly welcomed the Sephardim. Needing mutual assistance in a foreign land and a mode for expressing their religious convictions and traditions, the Sephardim established the Unión Hebrea Shevet Ajim in November 1914. During the next few years, the two groups had little or no contact.[9]

November 1914 marked another significant event in the history of the Cuban Jewish colony: the arrival of David Blis,

later dubbed the grandfather of Jewish immigration in Cuba. Blis, a native of Grodno, Poland, studied for the rabbinate at the Jewish Theological Seminary at Breslau and at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. But before completing his studies, he set out for Latin America to make his fortune. He lived in Argentina, Venezuela, and México, making and losing several fortunes, before arriving almost penniless in Havana. Shortly after his arrival in Cuba, Blis impressed the Board of the United Hebrew Congregation with his knowledge and dominant personality and they immediately selected him as their lay leader. He performed all the functions of a rabbi.[10]

Blis rapidly became a popular, respected figure in Cuba's American Jewish community. But he did not confine his activities to the United Hebrew Congregation. Blis also became active in the Unión Hebrea Shevet Ajim and soon began to seek a way to unite the two communities. He found his vehicle in the fall of 1916.[11]

At the conclusion of Rosh Hashanah services that year at the Havana Plaza Hotel, David Blis suggested to his Reform congregation that the young men of the group form a social club. On the following Sunday, October 1, 1916, ten men met at the home of the United Hebrew Congregation's President, Charles Berkowitz, to organize el Asociación de Jovenes Hebreos de Cuba (the Young Men's Hebrew Association of Cuba, cited hereafter as Y.M.H.A.). Ostensibly this organization was designed to help the many single Jewish men "satisfy their social striving."[12] But from its inception, Blis attempted to

use the group to bridge the gap between the Reform congregation and Shevet Ajim. The gap was not easily bridged: at the group's first meeting, attended by members of both communities, a violent argument broke out over the question of whether or not a sign in Hebrew characters should be affixed to the Association's premises at 97 Obispo Street. The American Jews opposed the sign and it was never erected.[13]

At the end of 1917, the Y.M.H.A. had sixty-five members, half of its Board of Directors coming from the Sephardi community.[14] Although the Havana Jews by no means constituted a unified community, David Blis had brought the Sephardim and the American Jews together and had forced both Jews and non-Jews to view them as one, rather than two communities. Together, under the auspices of the Y.M.H.A., they raised funds for the relief of homecoming soldiers in 1918 and sent a Jewish column to march in the Armistice Day parade, the first public display of Jews as a group in Cuba.[15]

But the Y.M.H.A. never fully achieved its original purpose. Its members were divided over every issue along lines of origin. On June 26, 1919, Y.M.H.A. members held a conference to dissolve the organization. Ironically, this was one of the group's few activities that received wide support on both sides. El Asociación de Jovenes Hebreos de Cuba disbanded mid-1919.[16]

The Y.M.H.A.'s demise, however, did not mark the end of David Blis's activities on behalf of the Cuban Jewish colony. An ardent Zionist,[17] Blis began to campaign among Jews and

non-Jews for Cuba's support of Britain's Balfour Declaration.[18] He gained wide support in the Sephardi community and even the aid of several of the members of the United Hebrew Congregation, among them Joseph Steinberg, a close friend of Cuban Senate President Dr. Ricardo Dolz.[19] In November 1918 Blis attempted to organize a demonstration supporting a Jewish homeland in Palestine. But both Cuba's American Jewish community and the Syrian Arab colony opposed him. The Syrians in Cuba objected to further Jewish migration to the Middle East. Many of the American Jews were anti-Zionists. Blis never won popular support in Cuba for establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. But he met with Dr. Dolz and Dr. Cosme de la Torriente, Chairman of the Cuban Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee. They encouraged him to address the Cuban Senate, and he did so on January 20, 1919.[20]

After Blis's speech, the Cuban Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee drafted a resolution, that read in part:

> The Senate of the Republic of Cuba follows with keen interest and sympathy the efforts of the Jewish people in favor of its liberty and national independence and trusts the promises made and the doctrines of self-determination proclaimed by prominent statesmen who at present lead the destinies of the great nations in Europe and America.[21]

The Senate debated the resolution and passed it unanimously. On May 12, 1919, the Cuban Senate heard a letter from Blis, in which he thanked the senators in the name of the Cuban Jewish colony and "in anticipation of the feelings of the Zionist Federation of America,"[22] which later opened

a branch in Havana. Thus ended David Blis's greatest political triumph, but not his life-long service to Cuba's Jews.

The Jewish colony in Cuba concluded the second decade of the twentieth century secure both externally and internally, well led but diverse. Jewish migration to Cuba had slowed to a trickle and members of both the American and Sephardi Jewish communities were reaping the benefits of post-war prosperity. A new Jewish immigrant group was about to change Cuba's Jewish colony: to increase its population by ten thousand and to organize the colony into a well-structured mechanism. But even when Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe began to arrive en masse, Cuba's American Jewish community continued to dominate the communal life of Cuba's Jews.

C H A P T E R T H R E E

Eastern European Jews Arrive in Cuba

Since 1921 the Cuban Jewish colony has been comprised of three sectors: Americans, Sephardim, and Eastern European immigrants (known in Cuba as Ashkenazim). Each organized its own communal center and offered religious, cultural, and social services. The communities remained diverse and distinct, with few ties between them. The Ashkenazi community was a house divided; its left wing and moderates rarely spoke to each other. The American Jews' United Hebrew Congregation with its Reform orientation, continued to dominate the Jewish colony's communal life.

Jews left Eastern Europe because both the governments and the peoples of the region severely limited their political, economic, religious, and personal freedom. Between 1880 and 1925, the United States became the home of 2,378,000 Eastern European Jews.[1] In the United States they practiced their religion in security, improved their economic status, and prospered from the personal freedom enjoyed by all Americans.

However, many native Americans objected to the influx of Eastern Europeans.[2] The United States had never limited the number of healthy, white immigrants that entered the country. But in early 1921 the United States Congress began to severely restrict emigration from Eastern Europe. Most Eastern Europeans could no longer migrate directly to the United States.[3]

Steamship companies anxious to maintain large bookings in their highly profitable steerage class, found an alternate

route for Eastern European Jews eager to come to America. Cuba had no immigration laws and accepted without protest any passenger who disembarked from a ship in any Cuban port.[4] Since the new United States immigration laws permitted a large number of immigrants from Western Hemisphere countries,[5] those ordinarily denied permission to land secured easy access to the United States after a year's stay in any American country.

Cuba, because of its proximity to the United States and pleasant climate, seemed an attractive rest stop on the now more difficult trek to the "golden medina." Several steamship companies advertised that fact in the Eastern European Jewish press.[6] Large numbers of Eastern European Jews began arriving in Cuba in March, 1921.[7] None of them intended to settle permanently in Cuba, but rather planned to move to the United States as soon as possible. Most landed in Havana, but almost ten percent disembarked at Cuba's smaller ports. They served as the nucleus for Jewish communities in Matanzas, Camagüey, Guantánamo, and Santiago.[8] Some moved to Cuba's inland towns and villages and thus established a Jewish presence throughout the island.

Most of the Eastern European Jewish immigrants who arrived in Havana were in dire financial straits and found employment opportunities in Cuba almost non-existent.[9] An agrarian country with no large-scale industries, Cuba could only absorb a few of these newcomers into its economy.

Many unemployed Jews could not afford housing and camped in Havana's Parque Central. Some went without food. The Cuban government offered few social services and provided no aid to the indigent. The immigrants appealed for help to Cuba's Jews.[10] Among the resident Jews, only the circles around the United Hebrew Congregation were in a position to lend assistance.

The differences between Cuba's American Jews and the Eastern European immigrants complicated the situation. Most of the new immigrants came from small towns in Poland (60%).[11] They lacked certain outward manners; their way of dressing, eating, and behaving in public made them stand out. The American Jews were genteel, successful people. The newcomers had gone through the experience of war, German occupation, and Russian Revolution; the American Jews were unaffected by the war and post-war developments in Europe. Many of the Eastern Europeans possessed a revolutionary outlook, inspired by plans for the transformation of the world, while American Jews were generally conservative and complacent. The former, noisy and dissatisfied were eager to solve the world's problems; the latter were preoccupied with their flourishing businesses and preferred reasonableness and respectability.[12]

Cuba's American Jews regarded the immigrants as poor relations to whom the door is left open, but with whom one does not like to appear in public. The United Hebrew Congregation's members did not invite the newcomers to worship with

them, but offered limited aid for the purchase of food[13] through their benevolent Ezra Society.[14] The appearance and manner of the newcomers may have aroused in Cuba's American Jews painful recollections of their own past. They may have feared that Cuban public opinion would class them with the "alemanos."[15] The immigrants, for their part, indulged in no illusions about the attitude of Cuba's American Jewish community and developed a corresponding feeling of disdain for those who patronized them. This relationship governed the interactions of the two communities for the duration of Cuban Jewish history.

Members of the United Hebrew Congregation raised funds, supported the neediest, and helped the newcomers with their negotiations with the Cuban authorities and the United States Consulate. By May 1921, $7,500 had been raised by the members of the congregation and spent for the relief of the Eastern Europeans.[16] But the increasing number of indigent immigrants presented too heavy a load for the twenty-eight families affiliated with the congregation. In June United Hebrew Congregation President Maurice Schechter appealed to the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (H.I.A.S.) in New York for help.[17]

Later that month, Louis Friedlein, a representative of H.I.A.S., came to Cuba and studied the situation of the Jewish immigrants on the island.[18] He returned to New York after several weeks and reported that immediate, short-term aid to the immigrants was imperative. On August 10 he was

once again in Havana, this time to set up the Cuban branch of H.I.A.S.

H.I.A.S. came to Cuba only after it had been assured the cooperation and support of Cuba's American Jews.[19] It extracted an agreement from the United Hebrew Congregation Board that the Cuban branch of H.I.A.S. be selected from among the congregation's members and that the congregation provide one-half of the budget for the Cuban office. Joseph Steinberg, elder statesman of Cuba's American Jewish community and a Cuban Revolutionary War hero, became chairman. Under Steinberg's direction, the United Hebrew Congregation raised thousands of additional dollars for immigrant aid.[20]

The requirements of the growing number of immigrants were, however, far greater than the means that could be provided by the local and H.I.A.S. resources. In October 1921 H.I.A.S. sought assistance from the Joint Distribution Committee (J.D.C.), which immediately appropriated funds for Cuban Jewish relief.[21] With both H.I.A.S. and J.D.C. aiding the immigrants, many United Hebrew Congregation members felt their help was no longer necessary. Contributions from Cuba's American Jews fell drastically by the end of the year. Alarmed by the attitude of the United Hebrew Congregations members, J.D.C. sent trouble-shooter, David Bressler, to Cuba in January 1922.[22]

Shortly after his arrival in Cuba, Bressler addressed the United Hebrew Congregation Board.[23] He chastised the Board for its declining support for the needy immigrants. He explained that J.D.C. was only willing to work in Cuba as the United Hebrew Congregation's partner, matching their relief

funds. He advised the Board members to give their charity work a solid financial basis and to draft long range plans. Bressler seemed to inspire a new confidence in Cuba's American Jewish colony.

The Board of Directors called a general meeting of the members of the United Hebrew Congregation on February 8, 1922.[24] The United Hebrew Congregation was a religious society with a statute prohibiting prolonged welfare activity. To circumvent this statute, the members of the United Hebrew Congregation formed two new organizations, each of which comprised all of the congregation's members and officers: Temple Beth Israel served the congregation's religious needs; the Centro Macabeo[25] took charge of the relief and rehabilitation work while serving as the Cuban Jewish colony's first communal organization.

The Centro Macabeo, with funds from its members, H.I.A.S., and J.D.C., offered the Jewish immigrants several services.[26] In February, an office was opened on Empedrado Street. The Centro Macabeo created a legal aid office and began both Spanish and English language courses. An Immigrant's Home was founded at 14 Ignacio Street, and several weeks later another home opened at 484 Cerro Street. In April a canteen began to provide immigrants with cheap or free meals. The Centro Macabeo started a loan fund with a capital of $6,000, half contributed by J.D.C. and half by Havana's American Jews.

The Joint Distribution Committee continued to support the Centro Macabeo throughout the year 1922 and during the first

two months of 1923.[27] It regarded its activity in Cuba as provisional, based on an agreement with the United Hebrew Congregation valid for only two years. The Centro Macabeo had made no provisions for supplementary income, and once J.D.C. withdrew with the approval of the United Hebrew Congregation Board, it was forced to drastically curtail its services.[28] In March 1923 the first Immigrants' Home closed, and by July the Centro Macabeo could no longer provide shelter to needy Jews; in October the Immigrants' Canteen was shuttered. Inidividual United Hebrew Congregation members continued to give food to indigent immigrants, but by the end of 1923 the relief efforts of the Centro Macabeo ceased. The situation of the Eastern European Jewish immigrants in Cuba grew more severe.

The plight of the immigrants in Cuba worsened yet more when the United States Congress adopted the Johnson Act of 1924.[29] Under the act's provisions, the United States permitted only Cuban nationals to emigrate from Cuba to the United States. Jewish emigrants from Eastern Europe could no longer continue their journey. Of more than five thousand Jews who had come to Cuba from Eastern Europe since 1921, almost one thousand were forced to remain in Cuba when the United States closed its door to them. Yet in spite of the new United States laws, more immigrants arrived each day.[30]

A meeting of the Centro Macabeo's Board members was held at the H.I.A.S. Cuban branch in February 1924. Instead

of provisional measures to meet a temporary state of emergency, they sought to devise the means to facilitate the transition of the newcomers from the status of temporary immigrants to Cuban citizens.[31] They proposed that the United States Jewish community, of which they considered themselves a part, take charge of the immigrants in a systematic and purposeful way. The Havana H.I.A.S. representative, Morris Asofsky, left for New York and on his arrival informed his organization of the Centro Macabeo proposal.[32]

In March, H.I.A.S. and the National Council of Jewish Women founded in New York the "Jewish Committee for Cuba to Help Jewish Arrivals".[33] The Committee worked under the auspices and with the funds of H.I.A.S., the National Council of Jewish Women, and the United Hebrew Congregation-Centro Macabeo. H.I.A.S. invited other American Jewish organizations to assist the Committee. In April the Emergency Refugee Committee of J.D.C., the only other participant, joined.[34]

The Committee opened its Havana office at 131 Cuba Street on July 6, 1924. It was headed by Walter Monteser and Maurice Lewis, both from the United States. They were assisted by an American nurse and office personnel hired in Havana. The Committee's Board as well as its policy-making office, was in New York. The Board consisted of an equal number of representatives of the Department of Immigration Aid of the National Council of Jewish Women, the Emergency Refugee Committee of J.D.C., and H.I.A.S.. The Centro Macabeo chose to play

only a financial supportive role in the Committee.[35]

The Jewish Committee for Cuba provided a wide range of services to the Jewish immigrants in Cuba.[36] It established contact with Cuban government agencies and consulates, particularly with those of the United States, and provided thousands of patients with medical aid. A financial supporter of Congregación Adas Isroel, the Eastern European Jewish immigrant religious society organized in 1921, the Committee also founded the sporting club "Macabeo" and provided an evening school for adults with courses in both English and Spanish, as well as a library. It subsidized the Jewish school Talmud Torah Teodor Herzl, founded by the Sephardim in January 1924,[37] and organized an employment agency, a loan fund, and a department of immigration and repatriation.

The Jewish Committee for Cuba explicitly avoided being transformed into a charity. The Committee saw its task as the "organization of the local community into a functioning administrative committee."[38] The extention of direct relief, aid in the form of food, clothing, and shelter, was carried out by the United Hebrew Congregation-Centro Macabeo's Ezra Society.[39] Thus Cuba's American Jews solidified their position as benefactors, and not comrades, of the immigrant Jews.

From their arrival in Cuba, Eastern European Jews created their own organizations. The religiously observant,

unwelcome at the United Hebrew Congregation's Temple Beth Israel and unfamiliar with the Sephardi ritual of Unión Hebrea Shevet Ajim, founded Congregación Adas Isroel in early 1921.[40] But Cuba's first Orthodox Jewish congregation attracted only twenty percent of the newcomers. The majority of the immigrants satisfied their cultural, social, and communal needs through other means.

The immigrants who gathered daily in Havana's Parque Central founded the Yidishe Kulturgrupe in June 1921.[41] Its membership roll changed daily with the influx and outpouring of Eastern European Jews. The Kulturgrupe sponsored debates, lectures, and literary trials in the park, usually in Russian rather than Yiddish. It organized an amateur dramatic group under the direction of A. Wallenstein. Wallenstein's troupe was short-lived, but staged several performances of four Yiddish plays before disbanding in mid-1924.

Immigrant Jews seeking a more permanent organization established the Yiddisher Kultur Tsenter in May 1924.[42] The Tsenter opened an office at 85 Cuba Street which featured an evening school with Spanish and English courses, literary trials, lectures, debates, and an amateur theater. The Dramatishe Sektzie, headed by Elias Geltman, performed seven Yiddish plays during 1924-25. When it moved to larger quarters at 37 Zulueta Street in March 1925, the Yiddisher Kultur Tsenter changed its name to the Centro Hebreo.[43]

The Centro Hebreo was a politically left-wing organization.[44] Its evening educational system was based on the Workmen's Circle curriculum. The Centro subscribed to Warsaw's Folkszeitung and posted it daily. It established strong ties with the Cuban labor movement and refused to lend its rooms for religious services. The Centro Hebreo consciously set itself apart from what it considered to be the bourgeois Jewish Committee for Cuba.

Cuba's American Jews did not view the Centro Hebreo favorably. They resented the Centro's refusal to join the Committee and opposed its left-wing tendencies. The United Hebrew Congregation Board sought a means to disband it. When five Board members met at President Maurice Schechter's home on March 10, 1925,[45] David Blis, "the grandfather of Jewish immigration in Cuba," was not invited. He was thought to be too committed to the Centro Hebreo's continued existence.

The closing of the Havana Y.M.H.A. in 1919 had not ended David Blis's quest for a unified Cuban Jewish community. Blis frequented the meetings of every Cuban Jewish group and always argued in favor of merging into a single Jewish community.[46] In early 1924 he proposed that the Centro Hebreo become Cuba's new Jewish communal organization. Although he won little support for his cause, Blis gained the admiration and respect of many Cuban Jews.

However, he had planted an idea. Eventually, the United Hebrew Congregation Board decided to back Blis's

efforts, provided he isolated and eliminated the Centro's leftist elements.[47] Since Blis was opposed to stamping the Centro Hebreo with any political creed, he readily accepted the Board's terms. Blis and Fiodor Valbe narrowly defeated Naum Marmorsten and Josef Grinberg, two communists,[48] and Blis was named Centro Hebreo's president on April 18, 1925.

The Centro Hebreo's services expanded under David Blis's presidency.[49] Blis proposed that the Centro sponsor a Jewish school and in early May the Centro's Board voted to open such a school the following fall. In June he instituted the Cuban Jewish colony's first publication, Dos Fraie Wort. The periodical appeared in two issues that year of about ten pages each.

Blis opposed every move of the Centro's left wing. He refused to post the Folkszeitung and altered the evening school curriculum.[50] Yet the Centro still maintained close ties with the tiny Cuban Communist Party. This troubled many members of the United Hebrew Congregation. In July, its president, Maurice Schechter, threatened to withdraw financial support from the Centro Hebreo unless its communist activities ceased. Blis promised Schechter that a Communist Party meeting scheduled for mid-August at the Centro would not take place.

David Blis found no legal way to prevent the communist meeting.[51] He asked the communists to meet elsewhere, but they refused. He failed to secure the Centro Board's approval to cancel the meeting. Apologies to the United Hebrew Congregation failed to assuage the wrath of the American Jews.

Left with little other choice, Blis padlocked the doors of the Centro Hebreo's headquarters on August 18, 1925. He prevented the communists from meeting and forced the Centro Hebreo out of existence.

The left wing of the former Centro Hebreo quickly formed a new organization: the Kultur Farain - Unión Cultural Hebreo.[52] The Farain continued to offer Centro Hebreo's evening Workmen's Circle curriculum and its headquarters housed a large Yiddish library. It posted the Folkszeitung daily and hosted a literary circle, political debates and lectures. The Centro Hebreo's Dramatishe Sektzie joined the Kultur Farain and as the "Dramatisher Kreis in Havana" produced seventeen Yiddish plays during the winter of 1925-26.[53] Even the Farain's most bitter political opponents considered the artistic standard of the Dramatisher Kreis the highest in Cuba.

Cuban communists found a home at the Kultur Farain, which opened its headquarters to them. Most Kultur Farain members belonged to both organizations. The Farain was the Soviet Union's chief unofficial spokesman in Cuba. It financed the publication and distribution of communist propaganda.[54]

Of course, the Kultur Farain was staunchly anti-religious. It refused its meeting rooms to religious groups, it scheduled meetings and parties on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays, and its members actively campaigned against organized religion in The Cuban Jewish colony. In 1925 the Farain held its first annual Yom Kippur Ball.[55] That gala event, and others like it in succeeding years, totally alienated the Kultur Farain

from the rest of Cuba's Jews.

Another Jewish communal organization grew from the dissolution of the Centro Hebreo. The Centro Israelita opened its doors at 37 Zulueta Street on September 1, 1925.[56] It was no coincidence that the Centro Israelita occupied the offices of the Centro Hebreo. The new organization was the successor of the old. It was founded by David Blis, who set the same task for this new organization as its predecessor: to meet the financial, cultural and educational needs of Cuba's Jews, to organize the Jewish populace, and to represent it before the authorities.[57]

Blis quickly realized that the Centro Israelita could not become effective without the support of Cuba's American Jews. He sought assistance from the United Hebrew Congregation and in October met with its Board members.[58] He reminded them that he had eliminated the communists from his organization and requested their continued support. The board gave Blis enough money to operate the Centro's offices, but offered little else.

David Blis knew his plans would remain on paper unless he secured additional help. In early November of 1925 he approached the Jewish Committee for Cuba.[59] The Committee had become eager to suspend its activities and was seeking an organization which could carry out the functions it had initiated. In May 1925 the Committee had discussed merging with the Centro Hebreo, but its Board rejected that plan when it learned of the Centro Hebreo's leftist leanings.[60] However, the

Committee's Havana representative, Maurice Lewis, met with Blis and recommended to his New York office that the Committee collaborate with the Centro Israelita.

The leaders of the United Hebrew Congregation, the Jewish Committee for Cuba, and the Centro Israelita met on November 25, 1925 to discuss the details of a merger.[61] The Jewish Committee for Cuba announced three conditions for its incorporation into the Centro Israelita: 1) that members of the United Hebrew Congregation make up one-half of the Centro's Board; 2) that other compatible Jewish organizations relocate in the Centro Israelita headquarters; and that 3) the Centro Israelita collect a membership fee of one peso from every Cuban Jew. All these conditions were accepted by the three parties. On March 16, 1926, the Jewish Committee for Cuba began to gradually merge with the Centro Israelita.[62]

The Centro Israelita offered many of the services of its predecessors.[63] It housed a department of immigration, a clinic, a reading room and a library. The Centro established a legal consultation service and an evening school for adults. An educational commission, a youth club, a football club and the Anti-Tuberculosis Committee relocated in the Centro Israelita headquarters. In early 1927, David Blis established a Cuban Jewish press there. The Centro's first printed periodical, Kubaner Yiddishe Yontefbleter-Pesach Blat: Cubana Hebreo, Periodico Festival, carried information about Jewish life in Cuba.[64] While the first issue was also its last, in June 1927 the Centro Israelita began to publish

a regular Yiddish periodical, Oifgang, which appeared 1927-30 and 1933-35.[65]

Oifgang was the Centro's official organ and expressed the opinion of the Centro's leaders. Fiodor Valbe, Blis's Vice President in the Centro Hebreo, edited the newspaper and carried Blis's message to Cuba's Jews. Though an ardent Zionist, Blis had certain differences with the Zionist Organization of Cuba. Accordingly, Oifgang published pro-Palestine statements along with sharp criticism of Cuban Zionists.[66] The newspaper criticized the communists and accused them of fomenting an economic struggle directed mainly against Jewish enterprise.[67] Oifgang insisted on the Cubanization of the Jewish immigrants and tried to influence them to love their adopted land.[68] The paper remained aloof from Cuban politics and confined itself to the Jewish colony's affairs.

Rather than open a children's school, the Centro Israelita acquired the Shevet Ajim's "Talmud Torah Teodor Herzl."[69] The Sephardi community had founded the school January 21, 1924 at 15 Inquisidor Street.[70] The first year thirty-four Sephardi children enrolled. The next year one hundred twenty-five pupils entered, ninety of them Eastern European immigrants. Most of the immigrants could not afford to pay tuition forcing the school to depend almost totally on the Jewish Committee for Cuba for support. When the Committee and the Centro Israelita merged in 1926, the renamed "Colegio Teodor Herzl" was completely under the Committee's control.

On January 8, 1927, the Jewish Committee for Cuba turned the school over to the administration of the Centro Israelita.[71]

Under the influence of the Centro Israelita, Colegio Teodor Herzl changed its curriculum. The school began to offer secular subjects in Spanish and Jewish subjects in Yiddish.[72] Previously it had been a heder and all subjects were taught in Hebrew. The report of March 4, 1927, submitted by Maurice Lewis, the Jewish Committee for Cuba's man in Havana, stated that

> in attempting to interest the Eastern European refugees it was found that there were very strong demands that the children receive some instruction in Yiddish. The children of the older grades will receive a thorough course in the social and economic development of the Jewish race, Yiddish being the medium of instruction. We have encountered much difference in opinion as regards the necessity for this institution to establish this Yiddish course, but inasmuch as it is necessary for this institution to secure all the aid it can from various elements in this community, it has been decided to make this concession to the elements commonly known as "Yiddishistic."[73]

Although their children continued to attend the Jewish school, the Sephardim remained outside the Centro Israelita. Their native language was Spanish, a language most Cuban Jews at that time could not speak. Few Sephardim understood Yiddish and therefore they could not fully participate in the Centro's activities. However their organization, Unión Hebrea Shevet Ajim, gave tacit approval to the work of the Centro Israelita.[74] Its president served on the Centro's Board and Oifgang published a Spanish supplement written by Cuban Sephardim.[75] But the members of the two communities had little contact and Shevet

Ajim continued to be the chief organization of Cuba's Sephardi community.

The United Hebrew Congregation stood at the cradle of the Centro Israelita's merger with the Jewish Committee for Cuba, but because they did not want to associate with their newly-arrived coreligionists, few American Jews joined the Centro. Several members of the congregation's Board, among them David Blis, Gustavo Kates, and Luís Jurick, played an outstanding role in the Centro's life.[76] Other Americans continued to sit on the Centro's Board, yet most of Cuba's American Jews remained completely aloof from their Eastern European coreligionists.

For the most part, Cuba's American Jews maintained a cautious, somewhat arrogant attitude toward Cuba's other Jews during the 1920s. Their Ezra Society aided indigent Sephardim, but otherwise the United Hebrew Congregation had no formal contact with the Sephardi community. Likewise, H.I.A.S., J.D.C., the Jewish Committee for Cuba, and the Centro Israelita allowed the American Jews to aid Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, but they offered little more than money. The United Hebrew Congregation Board patronized the Eastern European Jewish commmunity and the immigrants resented the American Jews. It would take more than a decade of antisemitism and discriminatory governmental policies before the disparate Cuban Jewish communities would see the importance of unity.

C H A P T E R F O U R

A Fragmented Community Deals with the Problems Created By The Discriminatory Economic and Social Policies of Antisemitic Cuban Regimes

Because it was unable to form a united front, the Cuban Jewish colony could not effectively meet the challenges of massive unemployment, the attacks of antisemites, and the discriminatory policies of unfavorable regimes. The vast economic and social differences between the American, Sephardi, and Ashkenazi communities kept the Jews a group apart, a potential target for discrimination.

Cuba faced an economic crisis the year Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe began. Extremely prosperous 1920, called the year of "the dance of the millions,"[1] was followed in 1921 by a disastrous slump in the price of sugar. Sugar's value fell from 20.93 cents to 8.33 cents per pound. Despite government attempts to bolster the economy, many banks and other businesses went bankrupt. Thousands were unemployed and many skilled laborers worked alongside unskilled migrant Haitian workers on the plantations and on railroad construction.[2] As a result, few Jewish immigrants found work.

Since the situation seemed so desperate from the very start, H.I.A.S. representatives in Europe began discouraging Jewish immigration to Cuba as early as July 1921.[3] The Joint Distribution Committee followed suit in January 1922 and later that year the Unión Hebrea Shevet Ajim sent notices to Jews in Turkey warning of the high unemployment rate in Cuba. In May 1924 the National Council of Jewish Women canvassed the newcomers and found that ninety percent of the Eastern European Jews in Cuba were still unemployed.

Walter Monteser, Director of the Jewish Committee for Cuba, notified the New York H.I.A.S. office that Jewish immigration to Cuba must cease.[4] Yet because a year's stay in Cuba allowed the Eastern European Jew easy access to the United States, more than seven thousand Jews landed in Cuba between 1921 and 1924.[5]

In the improved economy of 1924, most Eastern European Jews in Cuba found employment either as peddlers, craftsmen, or skilled laborers.[6] All three depended on Cuba's American Jews for their livlihoods. The peddlers were extended credit by, and purchased their wares from the large Jewish-owned stores on Muralla and Bernaza Streets. The craftsmen (barbers, carpenters, painters, watchmakers, locksmiths, and bakers) established their workshops on capital lent by Cuba's wealthy American Jews. The skilled laborers were employed in Jewish enterprises, primarily the shoe and garment industries.[7] The peddlers and craftsmen alligned themselves with the Centro Israelita de Cuba. Most of the skilled laborers were members of the Kultur Farain.[8]

According to Harry Viteles' report of February 1925,[9] there were five hundred Jewish peddlers in Havana and three hundred in the provinces. At that time they peddled cheap wares, such as "eskimo pies", neckties, and underwear. Operating with negligible overhead and expenses, they forced Cuban merchants to lower their margins of profit and brought prices down. This earned the immigrants the animosity of the Cuban

middle class and the enmity of the middle class' leader, General Machado.

Machado was elected to a second term in 1928.[10] Pledged to a program of reform, he instituted a rule of terror. Martial law was proclaimed and the Cuban Congress, before it was disbanded, allowed Machado to suspend the freedoms of speech, press, and assembly. Assassination of political opponents and bloody suppression of political opposition were daily occurrences.[11]

In early December 1928 the Havana Municipio (City Council) announced an ordinance prohibiting peddlers from congregating at street intersections.[12] Several weeks later, fifteen Jewish peddlers were arrested for infringing the rules regulating their trade. Through funds made available by the United Hebrew Congregation's Ezra Society, the Centro Israelita posted bond and the peddlers were released.[13] These peddlers formed the nucleus for the Shutzfarain far Peddler (Peddler's Defense Union) which met for the first time on January 9, 1929.

The union was located in the Centro Israelita headquarters and operated with the support of the Centro's Board of Directors. The Centro represented the peddlers in their negotiations with the Cuban government and in July 1931 succeeded in reducing the fee for a peddler's license, which the Municipio raised from $6.25 to $125 a year.[14] But as the peddlers prospered, they ceased to peddle and subsequently opened a host of small businesses. The union was, therefore, short-lived, ceasing to exist at the end of 1932.

During the late 1920's,[15] the Centro Israelita organized unions for other crafts. Painters and mechanics had their own organizations, as did barbers.[16] The Barber Farain far Geggenseitige hilf in Havana - Sociedad de Protección de Barberos y Peluqueros de la Habana (Barber's Union for Mutual Help in Havana) met for the first time at the Centro Israelita headquarters mid-1929. In 1930 the Municipio issued new regulations requiring that the majority of barbers in any given shop be Cuban nationals. As a result, sixty percent of the Jewish barbers in Havana lost their jobs. The Barber Farain, through the good offices of the Centro Israelita, succeeded in having the regulations revoked.[17]

Though the Centro Israelita was successful in organizing and representing these forms of Jewish labor, its unions were not true trade unions but rather associations of independent Jewish manufacturers and artisans. In the early 1930's they joined to form a Jewish Chamber of Commerce that was at first called Asociación de Contribuentes (Taxpayer's Association), later Camará de Comerciantes - Yiddishe Handelskamer (Jewish Chamber of Commerce) and finally Yiddisher Sochrimfarain (Association of Jewish Merchants). Skilled laborers organized outside the confines of the Centro Israelita.[18]

More than one thousand Eastern European Jewish immigrants worked as skilled laborers in 1925.[19] Eight per-cent worked in Jewish-owned enterprises, most as shoemakers or tailors. Taking advantage of their impoverished coreligionists,

Jewish businessmen introduced working standards for the immigrants greatly inferior to the ones that prevailed in Cuba at the time. The working day lasted twelve, sometimes fourteen hours. Wages, according to the Viteles report, were generally

> ...from $4.00 to $6.00 for the making of a coat lining (work was not sectionalized in Cuba) yet they got the same work done by Jewish immigrants, who were only too anxious to work for $1.40 to $2.25 a coat. The prices paid anywhere in Cuba for the making of one dozen men's underdrawers range from 0.80 to $1.10, while the immigrant men and women receive only from 32 to 50 cents per dozen. A woman at home from ten to twelve hours at the machine on underwear rarely earns more than $1.00 a day. Furthermore, employment is not regular. There is also considerable exploitation of the immigrants who desire to learn to operate a machine. It is not unusual for a man or a woman to pay $20.00 in addition to working for a month without pay as a fee for learning to operate a machine.[20]

The skilled Jewish laborers who arrived in Cuba during the 1920's brought along with them the tradition and the experience of the European labor movement. Anxious to improve their working conditions, they organized their lives around the economic struggle between the classes. Being among the most sorely exploited, they became the driving forces behind Cuba's fledgling labor movement.[21] Their communal organization, the Kultur Farain, became the hodbed of shoemaker and tailor union activity.

The Havana shoe industry was concentrated in the gentile suburb of Cerro, which had a shoemaker's union. Yet the Jewish-owned shoe factories were in the port section of Old Havana.[22] Under the direction of a man known only by the

aliases "Moishe der Roiter" (Moishe the Red), "Moishe der Grober" (Moishe the Fat), and "El Viajante" (The Traveler), a port branch of the shoemaker's union was formed.[23] Though only about half of the membership of the branch was Jewish, Jews quickly gained control of the port branch and the entire union. The Jewish tailors joined the pre-existing tailor's union and had a similar effect.

By mid-1926 members of the Kultur Farain led both the shoemakers' and tailors' unions. Later that year and throughout the next two, a series of strikes was coordinated by the Kultur Farain's Board of Directors.[24] The strikes were directed mainly against Cuba's American Jewish industrialists and lasted a total of 72 1/2 days. As a result, the working conditions of the Jewish skilled laborers improved considerably.[25] Yet the strikes severely strained the relationship between the Farain's members, the Machado government, and the rest of the Cuban Jewish colony.

The Machado government persecuted members of the independent trade unions, arrested and deported them.[26] During round-ups in 1929-30, the most radical and active elements of the unions were dispersed. The 1930 labor laws that required at least half the employees of any Cuban business be Cuban nationals compelled many Jewish skilled laborers to emigrate. Those who remained were forced to become "independent tradesmen"[27] As such, they formed single-room workshops staffed by family members and worked under contract to the large shoe and garment manufacturers. Accordingly, by mid-1931, the number of Jewish factory laborers in Cuba

decreased to less than three hundred. Almost all of them were affiliated with trade unions in which they exercised very little influence. There were no Jews among the union officials.[28]

Social rebellion alienated the Kultur Farain from the rest of Cuban Jewish society. Cuba's American Jews were economically threatened by the Farain's support of Cuban labor. It was usually Farain members that instigated labor unrest in their businesses. The other Eastern European Jews, who alligned themselves with the Centro Israelita, objected to the Farain's leftist ideology, irreligiosity, and anti-Zionism. Both the United Hebrew Congregation Board and the Board of the Centro Israelita, called for the dissolution of the Kultur Farain on several occasions. Yet neither group claimed responsibility for an anonymous tip about a Communist meeting the police received Erev Yom Kippur 1931.[29]

On that night the Kultur Farain held its sixth annual Yom Kippur Ball. In the midst of the festivities, the authorities burst in, closed the Farain headquarters, seized its library, and arrested fifty-seven members.[30] The entire Farain membership was charged with engaging in communistic activities[31] and all eight hundred members were threatened with deportation.[32] The precious Yiddish library was burned and the Kultur Farain was prohibited from engaging in any further activity.

Cuban Jewish reaction to the police action against the Farain was swift. Early on the morning after Yom Kippur, the

Centro Israelita Board met and voted to take no action. Later that day, a meeting of the United Hebrew Congregation Board was called by President Isaac Brandon.[33] Realizing that the deportation of a large number of Jews would unfavorably affect the entire Jewish colony, the Board voted to seek the assistance of the American Jewish Committee.

In November 1931 the American Jewish Committee "made representations to the Cuban authorities."[34] Subsequently, the Minister of the Interior announced that an investigation which was being made had convinced him that while a few of the Farain members were communists, the organization was not communistic.[35] Of those arrested, eight were set free, while forty-nine were tried, convicted and sentenced to fifteen days in prison and fined fifteen pesos each[36], a large sum. No Jews were deported, but the Kultur Farain did not re-open its doors.

The inaction of the Centro Israelita and the intervention of the American Jewish Committee highlighted the flagrant inadequacies inherent in Cuban Jewish communal organization. Private individuals set forth plans for a permanently functioning body uniting all the Jewish organizations and representing the entire colony. In November 1931 Fiodor Valbe proposed a "Comité Organizador de la Federacion Israelita de Cuba," a Jewish federation to include all Jewish groups.[37] Like a similar plan initiated later that month by Mordejai Lissovich, a leading member of Congregación Adas Isroel, it failed to gain the support of the Boards of the Centro Israelita and the United Hebrew Congregation. In early

1932 two large meetings were held to plan a Jewish federation. At a third meeting on December 1, 1932, delegates of all the Jewish organizations in Cuba finally decided to form a representative organ for the Jewish colony.[38] Thus the Comité Intersocial, a formless union of Jewish organizations in Havana, was born. The Committee had no specific agenda, but was expected to spring into action whenever Cuban Jewish life was threatened.[39]

Political opposition to Machado, thwarted by the rule of terror that began in 1928, revived as the global economic depression of the early 1930's hit Cuba.[40] An attempt to stabilize the price of sugar, always the mainstay of Cuba's economy, failed and the unemployment rate rose sharply. As opposition to his regime increased, Machado struck out at his political enemies. Since the Havana police action at the Kultur Farain headquarters in 1931, he had been suspicious of the Jews. He encouraged Dr. José Ignacio Rivero, the editor of the pro-Spanish Falangist newspaper Alerta, to publish Spanish translations of Julius Streicher's Jew-baiting propaganda.[41] In addition, that May the Machado government prohibited any sort of Jewish cultural, social, or religious activity.

The Comité Intersocial did not meet to consider the new government prohibitions. In fact, the Committee, unable to meet legally, simply went out of existence.[42] The Machado government forced the Cuban Jewish colony to scatter, sending

some of the Ashkenazi and Sephardi leaders into hiding and many of Cuba's American Jews into exile in the United States. It appeared as if organized Jewish life in Cuba had come to an end. Yet with the economic crisis deepening and political opposition increasing, the Cuban Army forced Machado to flee the country August 12, 1933.[43]

Cuba had many presidents following Machado, but they were usually made and unmade by Fulgencio Batista y Zalvidar, a sergeant who gained control of the army at the time of Machado's downfall. Batista installed Carlos Manuel de Céspedes y Quesada, son of the nineteenth century Cuban patriot, as provisional president. De Céspedes restored the Cuban Constitution and began to institute reforms. But he failed to gain the support of the Army rank and file and the Cuban Army overthrew his regime on September 4, 1933. Six days later Batista installed Ramón Grau San Martín, a known antisemite, in de Céspedes' stead.[44]

Grau San Martín's elevation to the presidency of the Cuban Republic was followed by a series of communist-led strikes and demonstrations. A large street demonstration on September 29, 1933 ended in a forty-minute gun battle between soldiers and demonstrators.[45] Several people were killed and the next day an editorial in Alerta accused Jews of firing at soldiers from rooftops. Taking full advantage of the fact that September 30th was Erev Yom Kippur, the editorial further stated that the Jews were about to close their businesses as a protest against the army's suppression of the

demonstration. That evening the Jews closed their businesses as predicted.

Early the next morning, on Yom Kippur, the Cuban Army attacked its Jewish colony.[46] Jewish homes were searched. Individual Jews were arrested. Soldiers forced many Jews to re-open their enterprises. No Cuban Jewish organization had met since May and consequently there was no voice ready to protest the Army's violence. Through their silence, Cuba's Jews invited further attack.

The October 5, 1933 edition of the newspaper Mañana carried a front-page interview with the Chief of Havana Police Department.[47] In the article, the Chief charged the Jewish colony with infringement of public morals. He further implied that restriction of Jewish immigration was forthcoming. That afternoon the presidents of the major Cuban Jewish organizations met at the United Hebrew Congregation's Temple Beth Israel.[48] There they formed the Comisión Jurídica to carry out the functions of a representative body of the Jewish colony. On October 9th the Commission members met with President Grau San Martín.[49] As a result, the Cuban President officially apologized to the Jewish colony for the incident, ordered that the Jews arrested on Yom Kippur be set free, and asked the Commission to appeal to him personally in case of need. Nevertheless, the following week Grau signed the Law of Fifty Percent, which required that at least half of the employees in every Cuban business be native-born.[50] This new law forced thousands of Jews out of

work: those who did not reemigrate elsewhere attempted to earn a living by opening small manufacturing shops in their homes.[51] When Grau San Martín was forced from office in January 1934, some measure of order returned to Cuba.[52]

Obtaining the release of falsely imprisoned Jews was the Comisión Jurídica's main objective. During its one year of existence, it gained the release of sixty-two people. The Commission negotiated with the Cuban governmental agencies in the name of the Jewish colony. It served as the official representative of Cuba's Jews: sending a telegram to the Cuban President on the death of the Cuban pedagogue José Varona in November 1933; congratulating newly selected President Mendieta and Havana Mayor Miguel Mariano Gómez in January 1934; intervening in March against anti-semitic articles published in Diario de la Marina, Popular, and Información; and in April officially welcoming to Cuba Samuel Untermeyer, the leader of the boycott against German merchandise.[53] The Commission hoped to organize its own boycott against German wares in Cuba, publish a report about the contribution made by Jews to the Cuban economy, and hold a "trial" of Adolf Hitler. But official acts of antisemitism declined and these plans never materialized. At its twenty-fourth meeting, October 21, 1934, the Commission disbanded.[54]

Indifference caused Cuba's American United Hebrew Congregation to be the only Cuban Jewish organization that failed to support the Comisión Jurídica. Though its president

signed the organizational statement on October 5, 1933, no official representative of the United Hebrew Congregation attended a meeting. In April 1934, the congregation's rabbi, Meir Lasker, joined the Commission and in July was elected chairman. However, Rabbi Lasker participated only as an individual and not with his congregation's support.[55]

With the restive years of revolt and tumult waning, the Cuban economy improved and Cuba's Jewish colony recovered its sense of security. Most of the American Jews returned to normal.[56] In late 1934 the Sephardi community dedicated a new synagogue[57] and the Ashkenazi Centro Israelita reasserted itself as a coordinating body of Cuban Jewish activity. Even the remaining former members of the Kultur Farain were able to restore their organization. They created the Yiddishe Geselschaft far Kunst un Kultur (the Jewish Association for Art and Culture), which estblished permanent quarters at 44 Zulueta Street.[58]

The lack of any central Jewish communal organization had left the Cuban Jewish colony essentially unprepared to meet the effects of massive unemployment, the attacks of antisemites, and the discriminatory policies and actions of unfavorable regimes during the 1920's and early 1930's. In fact the colony became so fragmented that any hope of creating a united community had faded by 1935. Yet the shadow of the Third Reich began to hang over Cuba. German Jewish refugees began arriving and National Socialism infiltrated the Cuban press. For the first time, popular antisemitism threatened Cuba's Jewish colony.

C H A P T E R F I V E

Cuban Jewry Faces Antisemitism and the Influx of Refugees From Nazi Europe

Adolf Hitler's rise to power in Germany directly affected the Cuban Jewish colony. German antisemitic activity forced thousands of German Jews to flee their homeland; more than 6,000 of them set out for Cuba.[1] German propaganda fanned the flames of Cuban antisemitism into a fire that engulfed the island. As in other times of peril, Cuba's divided Jewish colony was unable to respond effectively.

In February 1935 Adolph Kates, President of the United Hebrew Congregation, called a meeting of the leaders of all the Jewish organizations of Cuba. Once again they discussed the need for a "single, central Jewish communal organization."[2] At the conclusion of their meeting they formed the Jewish Committee of Cuba. The Committe consisted of eighteen members: six each from the American (United Hebrew Congregation), Ashkenazi (Centro Israelita), and Sephardi (Shevet Ajim) communities.[3] It intended to centralize all Jewish work in Cuba, assist German Jewish refugees, and secure a permanent source of income for those purposes. During its brief existence, the Committee attempted to collect a $15,000 fund for relief work, take a census of the Jewish population in Cuba, and represent the Jewish colony before the Cuban government.[4]

Many Cuban Jews suspected that the creation of the Jewish Committee of Cuba was an attempt by the United Hebrew Congregation to seize leadership and control of the colony. In May 1935 the Centro Israelita planned a public demonstration in favor of a boycott against the antisemitic Polish government.[5]

The United Hebrew Congregation Board, hoping to dispel the growing impression that Jews were fostering disorder in Cuban public and economic life, opposed the demonstration. Through the Jewish Committee of Cuba, the Board members attempted to confine the protest to the adoption of a resolution against Polish antisemitism.[6] The Committee's six Centro Israelita representatives saw the United Hebrew Congregation Board's position as a clear threat to the integrity of their communal organization. The Centro Israelita held its demonstration without the support of Cuba's American Jewish community and the fragmented Jewish colony's Jewish Committee of Cuba disbanded.

Cuban Jews had encountered little antisemitism, even though several Cuban regimes issued antisemitic decrees during the first three and one-half decades of Jewish life in Cuba. When a group of experts sent by the United States Foreign Policy Association reported on the island's racial and ethnic relations in 1934, it concluded that "so far, no racial feeling of any marked extent has arisen between the Jewish colony and the Cubans proper."[7] During the year 1936, this harmony began to change.

In 1936 the German Embassy in Havana mounted a campaign of antisemitic propaganda.[8] The embassy's attack, waged on the radio and in three Havana newspapers, was directed against German Jewish refugees and Jews long established in Cuba. Dr. José Ignacio Rivero, a well educated, shrewd fascist and editor of Havana's oldest daily newspaper Diario de

la Marina as well as two other widely circulating newpapers Alerta and Avance, galvanized the German antisemitic efforts into a concerted campaign to stop Jewish immigration to Cuba.[9] Day after day his papers echoed the sentiments of the Nazis.

Although the German population on the island was insignificant, the Nazis' Jew-baiting found a receptive audience among the thousands of fascist-minded Spaniards living in Cuba.[10] They supported Generalisimo Francisco Franco and associated Franco and Hitler with the Latin American personalities of Perón, Batista, and others. That association, neither claimed nor denied by Batista, helped foster antisemitism, a previously almost unknown phenomenon in Cuban life.

The small Cuban Jewish press was thwarted in its attempt to fight back. On March 30, 1936, Sender M. Kaplan, editor of Havaner Leben-Vida Habañera, Cuba's only Spanish-Yiddish newspaper, was arrested and charged with publishing a leftist newspaper.[11] The charge, leveled by José Rivero in an Alerta editorial, was false. Yet Kaplan was held in detention for four weeks, finally being released on April 26. Memories of the discriminatory policies of the Machado and Grau regimes weighed heavily in the minds of Cuban Jews. The United Hebrew Congregation Board sent a representative, Ben Segnior, to meet with Army Colonel Fulgencio Batista, the power behind then President Miguel Mariano Gómez.[12] Batista assured Segnior that all antisemitism in Cuba would be crushed. His promise, though, did little to calm the fears of the Jewish colony

which had been aroused "by a violent anti-Jewish campaign conducted over the radio by a group known as the Anti-Judea Society of Cuba."[13]

With no centralized Jewish organization in existence, the Centro Israelita took the initiative of finding a means of combating anti-semitism in Cuba.[14] On its invitation, representatives of every Cuban Jewish organization met at the Centro Israelita headquarters in late April 1936 to discuss Jew-baiting in the Cuban press and radio. Those present at the meeting elected the Legale Comisie beim Centro Israelita (the Legal Commission at the Centro Israelita) and agreed to consider the Commission a representative organ.[15] But after several weeks, the United Hebrew Congregation withdrew from the Commission, its members seeing no concrete benefits from the Commission's work. In July 1936, the Centro Israelita officially dissolved its Legale Comisie.

On the eighteenth of that same month, with neither the knowledge or approval of any Cuban Jewish group, United States Congressman Dr. William I. Sirovich met with Cuban President Gómez. Sirovich proposed that Cuba open its doors to at least 100,000 German Jews.[16] Four days later Sirovich announced that Louis B. Mayer, Chairman of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios, had agreed to become temporary chairman of this resettlement project. The announcement aroused bitter antisemitic comment in the Cuban press and radio; the proposal quickly became very unpopular among Cubans in general. On July 31, Cuban

Secretary of State Luís Machado Ortago called the plan "fantastic, there being no colonization possibilities," and Sirovich abandoned his project.[17]

Cuba's American Jews' Jewish Chamber of Commerce, founded early in 1936, made some attempt to combat antisemitism in the name of the entire Jewish colony.[18] Together with private individuals, it sought to use personal influence with government leaders and agencies to fight the attacks against the Jews made in the Cuban press. But over the next three years the Chamber of Commerce had no real effect on the intensifying antisemitism and totally ignored the plight of the new European Jewish refugees. Their relief was left in the hand of Jews in the United States. Early in 1937, the Joint Distribution Committee created in Havana the Jewish Relief Committee to aid the refugees coming to Cuba.[19]

From its inception, the Committee was overwhelmed by increasing numbers of refugees who sought safety in Cuba, a country with no immigration laws. The Havana office was directed by two career relief workers, Milton Goldsmith and Laura Margolis, as well as a small support staff. Each day more Jews arrived in Cuba and by mid-1938, Cuba had accepted more than three thousand refugees. Eighteen months later, that figure doubled.[20] Laura Margolis made repeated requests to New York that someone from the Joint Distribution Committee be sent to Havana to see the conditions under which they labored. Goldsmith asked many times for more money to hire

additional staff. None of their requests achieved results.[21] Every new day brought hundreds, sometimes as many as five hundred people to the small office at Aguiar 556. The refugees came in search of money to live on, for information on how to get out of Cuba and into the United States, or for a suggestion on how to get friends and relatives into Cuba.[22] The Jewish Relief Committee was too painfully understaffed to promptly meet any of these requests.

Of the several Jewish organizations then existing in Cuba, only the Jewish Relief Committee made an attempt to fight the continued and intensifying antisemitism. On October 20, 1938, Cuba legalized the National Fascist Party and the Cuban Nazi Party.[23] Both groups began virulent anti-Jewish campaigns and issued proclamations calling on the Cuban population to rise against the Jewish menace and boycott Jewish businesses. Milton Goldsmith was willing to try any scheme to stop the Jew-baiting, even suggesting that the Committee seek funds from New York "to persuade Cuban editors to modify their newspapers' positions."[24] His efforts were thwarted by the Committee's Advisory Board.

The overworked, demoralized, and harassed Goldsmith and Margolis were consistently opposed in their work by this Board. Composed of the same men who sat on the United Hebrew Congregation Board, it demanded that the Committee confine itself to charitable work among the refugees.[25] It further

maintained that all funds for this work should come from outside Cuba. Adolph Kates reflected the local feeling when he told Goldsmith:

> Over the years we have all sent our donations to the Joint. Let them use that money now. Of course we feel sorry for the refugees, but the whole world should be helping, not just us.[26]

During the next few months, Cuban antisemitism reached a crescendo, while the refugees continued to pour in.

By early 1939 the presence of German Jews was highly conspicuous in Cuba.[27] Labor and business groups opposed German Jewish immigration on the grounds that these refugees threatened the Cuban economy. Ironically, the leaders of the labor unions, which an earlier wave of Jewish immigration had created, now charged that these desperate people with no source of income would push native laborers out of their jobs. Local businessmen, trading on their employees' fears, saw the refugees as an unnecessary burden on an already depressed economy. The threat of Jewish penetration into the domestic economy was highly exaggerated, since the 1933 Law of Fifty Percent prohibited most of the refugees from working for Cubans.

Influential segments of the Cuban economy now demanded an end to the flood of Jewish immigrants. On January 13, 1939, Cuban President Laredo Brú met that demand. Brú, who had been appointed President by Batista in 1936, issued Decree 55.[28] That executive order for the first time made a clear distinction in Cuban law between tourists and immigrants. From

that date, it was mandatory for an immigrant to obtain a visa jointly approved by the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Labor and the Director General of the Department of Immigration. Furthermore, each immigrant had to post a $500 bond as a "guarantee of sustenance." Tourists were still welcomed in Cuba and could enter uninhibited by any visa regulations. Few legal visas were issued to immigrants because the Director of Immigration refused to collaborate with the Departments of State and Labor.[29]

As a reward for his son's service to Batista during the Sergeant's Revolt of 1933, Manuel Benitez González was named Director General of the Department of Immigration.[30] Cuba had few immigration laws before 1939 and the position was largely honorary. But the promulgation of Decree 55 placed Benitez in a powerful position, a position he used to his advantage.

Benitz opened a strictly unofficial, private, and illegal "Bureau of Immigration" in the Hotel Plaza in January 1939.[31] After discreetly letting it be known that his "Bureau" would not issue visas (and neither would his Department), he began to sell "landing permits" to anyone who paid $150. These "permits" were individually typed on Department of Immigration stationary which Benitez personally signed. Hoping to make these "permits" appear to fit in with Decree 55, Benitez firmly warned the holder not to work in Cuba and authorized a stay only "for such time as be necessary to obtain a visa

for the United States."[32] The "landing permits" in fact proved to be worthless.

More than four thousand permits were issued by Benitez's "Bureau" between January and May 1939.[33] Cuban Jews purchased them for friends and relatives in Europe. Enterprising travel agents bought them in job lots at $150 each and resold them in Europe at up to $500 apiece. The Hamburg-American Line, in particular, offered refugees a package deal: guaranteed passage on one of their ships and one of these Cuban "permits."[34] As a result, Benitez quickly amassed a fortune estimated at more than $500,000. Once other Cuban officials, including President Bru, realized how lucrative Benitez's racket was, they demanded a share. When he refused, they moved to close his "Bureau of Immigration."[35]

On May 4, 1939 Cuban newspapers carried a report, issued by the German Embassy[36], that later in the month a ship would arrive in Cuba with one thousand Jewish refugees. President Bru knew those refugees would arrive with "permits" purchased from Benitez. With the support of the Cuban masses, enraged by German propoganda, the President asked the Cuban Congress to issue a decree

> Prohibiting repeated immigrations of Hebrews who have been inundating the Republic and prohibiting permits that are being issued for the entrance of such Jews to Cuba, until the House can approve a proposed law imposing severe penalties upon fraudulent immigration that makes a joke of the laws of the Republic.[37]

The next day, May 5, the Cuban Congress issued Decree 937, curtailing the power of the Director General of Immigration to issue landing certificates.[38] All aliens, except United States citizens, were required to post a bond of $500 and receive a visa from the Secretaries of State and Labor before embarkation. The decree further stated that Benitez's "landing permits" would not be honored after the following day, May 6. No Cuban Jewish voice arose to protest the decree.

The newspaper reports of the approaching ship as well as the issuance of Decree 937 produced Cuba's largest anti-semitic demonstration. Deposed President Grau San Martín, leader of the strongest opposition party in the Cuban Senate, the National Fascist Party, called for a "Rally Against the Jews" in Havana on May 8.[39] More than 40,000 people attended, while tens of thousands more listened over national radio hook-up. In his speech, Grau's henchman, Primitivo Rodríguez, openly incited the people to "fight the Jews until the last one is driven out of the country."[40] That speech shattered Cuban Jewry's complacency.

The next day, May 9, the leaders of fourteen Jewish organizations conferred to find ways of countering Decree 937 and the National Fascist Party's antisemitic pronouncements.[41] This conference elected the Farainigten Komitet Zum Bakemfn dem Antisemitism in Kuba (United Committee to Combat

Antisemitism in Cuba). Cuban Jews were indeed frightened by the gloomy situation in which they found themselves, especially in consideration of the events in Germany that forced the refugees to flee. Even the United Hebrew Congregation Board agreed to support the Committee unilaterally, making no pre-conditions for its participation.[42] The Committee was destined to combat organized antisemitism in Cuba for many years. But its formation came too late to deal effectively with the events of the next few weeks.

On May 3 the captain of the Hamburg-America Line passenger ship St. Louis, Gustav Schroeder, had been called to Hapag House, the Line's headquarters.[43] One hundred seventy-eight days after Kristallnacht, he was told he would embark on a special voyage: the St. Louis would carry nearly one thousand Jewish refugees, each with a Cuban "landing permit", from Germany to Cuba. News of the forthcoming voyage, dispatched by Germany's Ministry of Propaganda, was received with satisfaction by Jews throughout the world. By May 6 the Joint Distribution Committee had announced that its Havana Jewish Relief Committee would aid in the settlement of the refugees and immediately made that fact known to a number of interested parties, including President Roosevelt's Advisory Commission of Refugees.[44] The Joint had paid little attention to the cable received from its Havana representatives announcing Decree 937.

The new Cuban law was carefully studied, however, by London's Intergovernmental Committee on Political Refugees

established at the Evian Conference in 1938.[45] The Intergovernmental Committee cabled Hapag House warning "that great difficulties are likely to arise in regard to their the Jews entry into Cuba."[46] But when on May 9 Berlin informed Hapag Director Claus Gottfried-Holthusen that the ship was to sail on any account, final preparations for the refugees' departure were made. The St. Louis left Germany on May 13.[47]

The departure of the St. Louis was the signal for action at the Ministry of Propaganda in Berlin. Within the hour, newspapers and radio stations throughout Germany carried stories accusing the St. Louis passengers of "fleeing with stolen hoards of money, and much else."[48] Dr. José Rivero's three Havana newspapers carried these attacks to Cuba and inflamed Cuban popular opinion against the refugees.[49] The Cuban Nazi Party published and widely distributed a pamphlet which linked the refugees with communism and Britain's White Paper on Palestine issued on May 17 was translated by the entire Cuban press into a justification for the rejection of the St. Louis passengers. In an editorial in Avance, Rivero wrote:

> Against this invasion we must react with the same energy as have other peoples of the globe. Otherwise we will be absorbed and the day will come when the blood of our martyrs and heroes shall have served solely to enable the Jews to enjoy a country conquered by our ancestors.[50]

The Cuban National Police did not begin strict enforcement of Decree 937 until May 26, 1939.[51] Early that morning, armed guards were stationed outside Immigration

Director General Benitez's office, barring him entry. Later police officers greeted both the British liner Ortuna and the French steamer Flanore, carefully checking visas.[52] Eighty Jewish refugees on the two ships had authentic Cuban visas and were allowed to disembark. The remaining two-hundred four German Jews had only Benitez's "permits" and were forced to seek refuge elsewhere. They were the first Jews to be turned away from Cuba. Then Cuban Secretary of State Remos wired the captain of the St. Louis, refusing landing permission.

At three o'clock a.m. on the morning of May 27, the St. Louis dropped anchor just outside Havana harbor.[53] Soon after seven o'clock, Milton Goldsmith and Laura Margolis arrived at the harbor's pier to welcome the refugees. After witnessing the arrival of the two ships the previous day, they anticipated problems. A police captain and a detachment of patrolmen denied them access to a Hapag launch, explaining that only the twenty-two passengers with proper Cuban visas would come ashore.[54] The pair returned to their office where Goldsmith telephoned Joseph C. Hyman, Executive Director of the Joint Distribution Committee in New York. He explained to Hyman that their "worst fears have come true." The passengers have not been allowed to disembark."[55]

Hyman promised that two experienced trouble-shooters, Lawrence Berenson and Cecilia Razovsky, would fly down. Berenson, prominent New York lawyer, former president of the Cuban Chamber of Commerce in the United States, and personal friend of Colonel Fulgencio Batista, would negotiate with

with Cuban officials for the landing of the St. Louis passengers.[56] Razovsky, a veteran social worker and the Joint Distribution Committee representative in Cuba during the Joint's work among the Eastern European Jewish immigrants during the early 1920's, would direct the processing and settlement of the German Jews.[57] They would arrive on Tuesday, May 30.

Later in the afternoon of May 27, Goldsmith called a meeting of the Advisory Board of the Jewish Relief Committee.[58] There he explained to the leaders of Cuba's American Jewish community the desperate straits of the St. Louis passengers, as well as the aid being sent from New York. The Board members objected to Goldsmith's plan. They demanded that he confine his activities to the refugees already in Cuba and insisted that Berenson meet with them as soon as he arrived.[59] In the meantime, the St. Louis remained anchored at the mouth of Havana harbor.

Lawrence Berenson and Cecilia Razovsky met with the Jewish Relief Committee Advisory Board shortly after their arrival on May 30. Berenson explained that the key to the problem was money and that he was prepared to spend $250,000 to free the St. Louis passengers.[60] The Board members were horrified and voted unanimously to forbid Berenson and Razovsky from representing them before the Cuban government. "Out of touch and with nothing to contribute" was Razovsky's verdict on the Board.[61] Berenson agreed that the Advisory

Board was to be shunted aside, a decision that led to the resignation of all the Board's members.

By Thursday, June 1, Berenson met with President Brú who had agreed to accept the refugees if the Joint Distribution Committee posted a bond of $453,000.[62] Berenson, authorized to spend $250,000, made a counter offer of only $50,000. But then withdrew his original offer on the grounds that the time limit set for meeting his demands had elapsed. On June 2 the St. Louis sailed out of Cuban waters to wander in the Caribbean for nearly a week while Berenson continued to negotiate with Cuban officials. On June 6 a tired, beaten, and humiliated Lawrence Berenson left Cuba and the St. Louis made way for Europe.

The St. Louis incident had an immediate effect on Cuba's Jewish colony. On June 7 the Cuban House Immigration Committee began an investigation of the status of all political refugees, the majority of whom were Jews. The antisemitic attacks in Congress continued unabated. Representative Tirso Domínguez Fumero introduced a bill in the House on July 3 that provided for a census of Jews who had entered Cuba since January 1, 1937, as preparation for their eventual expulsion. Later that month the Department of Labor recommended legislation prohibiting immigrants from establishing businesses or trades that would compete with native-owned businesses.[63]

The continued antisemitic rhetoric in Congress and in the press strongly influenced the new Cuban Constitution drafted in Congress during 1939-40. The Constitution

included clauses that prohibited the immigration of laborers, stipulated that only native or naturalized Cubans could practice medicine or law, and provided for the deportation of all aliens who entered the country illegally. In May 1940, a provision was added that excluded the immigration of all political and religious refugees.[64] All of these actions were protested to no avail by the Farainigten Komitet Zum Bakemfn dem Antisemitism in Kuba, the only functioning centralized Jewish organization.[65] The new Constitution was signed July 1, 1940. When it became effective on September 15, Fulgencio Batista was elected President of the Republic of Cuba.

Although Batista was a friend of Cuban Jewry, he avoided unpopular positions and had remained totally aloof from any opposition to Cuban antisemitism. Yet the consolidation of all power in Batista's hands had an immediate effect on Cuban Jewry; he prohibited the members of his government from enforcing the antisemitic articles of the new Constitution. Batista was an afficionado of the United Sates and considered Franklin Roosevelt, and not Adolf Hitler, his political mentor.[66] When the United States entered the Second World War in late 1941, the Nazi and Fascist parties were outlawed in Cuba. In April 1942 Cuba began to issue visas to large numbers of European Jewish refugees.[67] Among these were diamond cutters from Antwerp who organized the Cuban diamond industry. Twenty-

four plants employing more than one thousand people opened in the year 1942-43 alone.[68] Belgian Grand Rabbi Srul Sapira came to Cuba in 1942 and, though his English was poor, served the United Hebrew Congregation for the duration of the war.[69] Boris Goldenberg (sociology), Heinrich Friedlander (economics), and Desiderio Weiss (languages), all refugees, joined the faculty of the University of Havana.[70]

Batista's hand-picked successor lost the 1944 election to former President Ramón Grau San Martín, the father of Cuban antisemitism.[71] But Grau continued Havana's good relationship with Washington and picked no fights with Cuban Jews. Cuba and its Jewish colony emerged from the Second World War safe and prosperous. For the first time since 1920, Cuban Jewry faced no crisis. In that relative calm, the Jewish immigrants, who had come during forty years, began to "make their America in Cuba." [72]

C H A P T E R S I X

The Flowering of Cuban Jewry

Although the first incumbency of Ramón Grau San Martín (late 1933) had been a difficult period for Cuban Jewry, his policies in the long run proved - unintentionally - to be beneficient. At that time, immigrant labor laws had created a near monopoly of jobs for the native-born, forcing Jewish workers either to reemigrate or to work at home.[1] Specifically, the Law of Fifty Percent, requiring that half of every employer's work force be Cuban-born, hit Jews the hardest because they were almost all foreign-born and the employers who hired them tended also to hire other Jews. As a result, of the Jews who migrated to Cuba between 1921-1948, only half actually settled permanently.[2]

Some Jewish workers, however, capitalized on the limits set by Cuban labor laws and became manufacturers of the goods they had formerly produced in other people's factories. The Cuban market for shoes, for example, had been almost exclusively supplied by American firms before 1933. Only a relatively small quantity was produced on the island, largely by hand labor. Jewish shoemakers who had been forced out of the Cuban factories set up their own small shops. Within a few years of the passage of the Law of Fifty Percent, 150 shoe factories owned by Jews were employing six to eight thousand employees and producing two million pairs of shoes annually.[3] Cuban Jews laid the foundation for several other industries, including clothing manufacture and tricotage. Eventually Jewish firms accounted for sixty percent of all shoe, clothing, and fabric production

ending Cuban dependence of foreign suppliers. Jewish importers, some three hundred doing business exclusively with the United States, dominated the markets of those goods that still had to be brought from outside Cuba.[4] The Jewish proletariat, unable to survive in the social and legislative climate of the 1930's, became businessmen instead.

With little commerce or industry unrelated to sugar prior to 1933, Cuba stood in need of an entrepreneurial class. Those immigrants who accepted their fate and put their hands to the task prospered. Jews, "like Robinson Crusoe, felt Cuba had possibilities, though it was very primitive compared to any European land they had known," wrote Sender M. Kaplan.[5] As they improved their situation, Jews began to see Cuba not as a desert island but as a beautiful country in its own right. Cuba could be a desirable home, not just a way station on the route to the United States. When Kaplan became editor of the lively Yiddish-Spanish weekly Havaner Leben-Vida Habañera in 1935, he began to urge Cuban Jewry "to make their America in Cuba."[6]

Havaner Leben - Vida Habañera first appeared in November 1932, more than two years after the Centro Israelita's short-lived Oifgang (1927-1930) ceased publication. Founded by the Cuban Jewish poets Oscar Pinis, Carlos Schwarzapel, and Eliezer Aronowsky, it gave rise to Cuban Jewish patriotism.[7] Reinterpreting early Cuban history, Pinis published an epic poem portraying an Indian chief resisting the invading Spanish explorers. Cuban national hero Chief Hatüey

spurned the love of the Spanish priests in Pinis' poem, and met his end in their fiery aúto-de-fé.[8] Schwartzapel's Clara presented the imaginary role of the conversos in the Cuban War for Independence.[9] The Cuban hero Antonio Maceo was the subject of a poem by Aronowsky which won him national acclaim.[10]

When Pinis left for the United States in 1935, Sender M. Kaplan became Havaner Leben's editor.[11] Besides continuing the publication of locally produced literature, the newspaper reported on Jewish affairs in Cuba, usually presented an editorial comment, and delivered news extracted from the Anglo-Jewish and Cuban press. In 1937 Abraham J. Dubelman, whose articles had appeared in Havaner Leben since 1933, became an associate editor.[12]

Kaplan presented Cuba to his readers as a substitute America. Most characteristic is the Yiddish he employed. Careful not to allow any Spanish to creep into the language, he subtly adopted many Yiddish expressions used in the United States. His readers picked up his Americanized style, as is evidenced by the proprietress of the Havana restaurant "Moishe Pipik." Although she never set foot in the United States, she "put a 'Mrs.' in front of her name rather than the Spanish 'Sra.' and offered a 'shtikele boiled chicken' as her featured entree."[13]

As Kaplan's editorials urged Jews to "make their America in Cuba," Dubelman's stories conveyed the culture shock the

immigrants experienced as they struggled to adjust. An early story told of a wealthy Jewish businessman who was visited by a policeman who asked him to clear up a case he could not comprehend. In the port section an indignant throng had accused an old Jew of trying to lure a young boy into his apartment with illicit intentions. The police officer was summoned and he gathered from the Jew's gestures that he wanted the boy to turn on the light in his apartment. The officer was amazed that an old man would not know how to turn on a light, and attempted to show the Jew how to operate the switch. But the Jew flatly refused to touch it. The Jewish businessman in the end explained to the disbelieving officer that the old man did not use electricity on the Sabbath.[14]

Jewish life in the provinces was also reflected in the paper's columns. By the mid-1930's, more than one thousand Jews lived in the cities, towns, and villages outside Havana. Mostly Sephardim whose Spanish made communication with the natives easy, they organized small communal organizations and synagogues in Marinao, Artemisa, Matánzas, Santa Clara, Camagüey, San Fernando, Manzanillo, Guantánamo, and Santiago de Cuba.[15] In addition to new reports, Dubelman developed a rich Yiddish literature about small town Jewish life. His message was always the same: don't give up Judaism. His classic "Der Balans" explored the dilemma of a Jewish peddler who passed himself off as a German and married a Cuban Catholic.

He became successful and wealthy, yet when it came to the final balance, he bemoaned his lost faith and wished to be buried among Jews.[16] Dubelman's "Alter Geyt" portrayed the relationship between two Jewish competitors in a small Cuban village who spent their days avoiding each other. It was not until one man died that the other realized the value of Jewish fraternity.[17]

Kaplan's newspaper continually advocated the creation of a representative organ "generally recognized as such within the colony and qualified to speak in its name."[18] Especially in times of crisis, his editorials called for communal unity. All groups which attempted to serve as substitutes for the legally non-existent Jewish colony (see Chapter 4), except the Centro Israelita, enjoyed the hearty support of Havaner Leben.[19] The paper, conceived outside the Centro and born during a period of extreme Centro disorganization, served as the Centro Israelita's chief antagonist. Kaplan considered the Centro's Board autocratic. Each time the Centro attempted to assert itself as the Jewish colony's chief communal organization, Havaner Leben countered the move.

Steering away from the Centro Israelita, Kaplan sought to foster a new central group. On July 6, 1949 a conference of Jewish philanthropic organizations was called at the offices of Havaner Leben.[20] The directors of Havana's five largest Jewish organizations attended. Cuban Jewish philanthropy

had begun with the creation of the Protectora de los Tuberculosis y Enfermes Mentales in 1927 to aid Cuban tuberculosis and insane asylums. In 1935 the Asociación ORT, sponsored by the Cuban Jewish colony, opened a trade school in Havana. The Frauen Farain, established in 1938, raised money to support elderly Jews in Cuban nursing homes.[21] Zionists were represented by the Women's International Zionist Organization, founded in 1942. In addition, members of the B'nai Brith Maimonides Lodge, organized in 1943, attended the meeting.[22] When the directors of these organizations failed to achieve unification, Havaner Leben's editors then turned to the religious community.

Since some seventy-five percent of the Jewish colony's population was of Eastern European origin,[23] the Havaner Leben editor proposed that the Orthodox Comunidad Hebrea Ajdut Israel organize the Ashkenazi community into a religious kehilla. Ajdut Israel was the religious Ashkenazi communal council formed by the merger of Orthodox congregations Adas Isroel and Cnesses Isroel in 1945.[24] Cnesses Isroel opened its doors in 1929 when the older Adas Isroel (founded in 1925) split over the issue of burial procedure. The two congregations lived in animosity, side by side at 103 and 105 Jesús María Street, until dwindling membership forced their merger. On August 13, 1949 Havaner Leben began a campaign to enroll all the members of the Cuban Jewish colony either in the Kehilla Ajdut Israel or the Sephardi Unión Hebrea Shevet Ajim.[25] Despite the low membership fee and the

benefits offered of free synagogue services and free burials, few Jews joined. Yet the Orthodox Kehilla continued to play an active role in communal life.

On December 4, 1949 a meeting was called at the headquarters of the Centro Israelita de Cuba to reassert that organization's leaderhsip of the Jewish colony.[26] That meeting was the scene of a struggle between two political blocks: one representing the newly organized Kehilla Adjut Israel, the other representing the Centro's School Board. The Centro had assumed control of the Sephardi community's Talmud Torah Teodor Herzl when many Ashkenazi children enrolled in the early 1920's. After opening its own Colegio Autonomo in 1936, the Teodor Herzl school returned to the auspices of the Unión Hebrea Shevet Ajim.[27] By 1949, four hundred Orthodox children were enrolled in the Colegio Autonomo.[28] The issue at stake was the kind of Jewish education provided by the Centro. The Colegio Autonomo was a secular school and the Kehilla's orientation was Orthodox. When the Kehilla members resigned en masse in January 1940,[29] the Centro Israelita's quest for communal leadership came to an end.

The final move for a centralized communal organization came chiefly as a result of demography. Because of their financial successes, many Jews began leaving the Jewish quarter in the old port section of the city for the modern spacious suburbs of Miramar, Vedado, Santos Suárez, and Country Club. By 1950, more than half of Havana's Jews

lived in the suburbs,[30] yet the main Jewish organizations (the Centro Israelita, the Unión Hebrea Shevet Ajim, the Kehilla Ajdut Israel, and the Jewish schools) were all located downtown. The American Jews' United Hebrew Congregation, in Vedado, was the only suburban Jewish group.

Although some of the new suburbanites joined the United Hebrew Congregation, most either went downtown or let their affiliations in Jewish organizations lapse. The situation concerned Sender Kaplan and Abraham Dubelman, and their editorials in the late 1940s consistently called for more Jewish life in the suburbs.[31]

In February 1950; Kaplan proposed in a Havaner Leben editorial the establishment of a Jewish community center in Vedado.[32] This project was intended to serve all sections of the community and to care for its religious, social, cultural, charitable, and economic needs. It was hoped that this democratic institution would efficiently unify all of Cuban Jewry and provide a home for all its local organizations. Suburban Jews quickly formed the Patronato de la Casa de la Communidad Hebrea de Cuba, an organization determined to build a community center. On June 17, 1951, the cornerstone was laid at the Patronato building, a luxurious community center built at the extremely high cost of three-quarters of a million dollars.[33]

The Patronato Board completed its Jewish center building on October 27, 1955.[34] Resistance to the project continued

from the Centro Israelita and the Kehilla Ajdut Israel throughout the construction period.[35] The Centro still maintained the largest Jewish library in Cuba and operated the Colegio Autonomo, where only forty children then received a secular Jewish education. The Centro's membership had fallen to a low of 150 and its influence continued to diminish. The Ajdut Israel wished to control all religious activities in Cuba (the supervision of the Patronato's kosher kitchen was of particular concern to them), but they met the steadfast disapproval of the Patronato Board. In April 1956, Kehilla Ajdut Israel completely severed its ties with the Patronato when the cornerstone for its $100,000 Comunidad Hebrea building was set in place. But the Kehilla's influence was mainly felt by the Orthodox Jews who lived downtown.

The Patronato building "a spiritual message in stone for the Hebrews of Cuba to pass on to future generations,"[36] housed a synagogue, a social hall, a kosher restaurant and bar, numerous offices and smaller chambers for Jewish organizational meetings, a library, a gymnasium, and a solarium on the roof. A Jewish day school was not included as the existing schools proved to be insufficient in meeting the colony's needs. However, a "Sunday School" modeled on the United Hebrew Congregation's school drew more than six hundred students.[37] But even though many of the island's forty Jewish organizations affiliated with the Patronato, most did not.[38]

Most of the established Cuban Jewish organizations maintained their individual status or their prior affiliation. The Centro Israelita continued to operate its new headquarters at 504 Egido Street and most of the organizations created under the Centro's auspices maintained their offices there.[39] The Ajdut Israel continued to hold worship services downtown, but opened its school, Instituto Hebreo Tajkmony in suburban Vedado.[40] The United Hebrew Congregation, strengthened in numbers by non-American Jewish members, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1956. The banquet was one of the community's finest moments.[41] Continuing to operate its downtown synagogue, the Sephardi Unión Hebrea Shevet Ajim moved its Colegio Teodor Herzl to Santos Suárez and built a new synagogue in the Havana suburb.[42] But for the duration of Cuban Jewish life, the Patronato served as the colony's official central organization and community center.

The Patronato, as glorified through the pages of Havaner Leben-Vida Habañera and its own monthly bulletins Yedies and Unzer Vort-Nuestra Palabra, was the seat of Cuban Jewry. It hosted grandiose religious services, enormous Zionist banquets, and extravagant weddings. More than ten different youth and sport clubs made the Patronato their home, so there was never a dearth of young people.[43]

Although legally enpowered to represent the Jewish colony before the Cuban authorities, the friendly political atmosphere demanded only the Patronato's message of support.

This ebullience, though, was to last only a few years.

In 1952 democratically elected President Carlos Prío Socórras resigned and Fulgencio Batista returned to power in a bloodless coup.[44] Batista ruled the island for the next seven years with a strong arm. The yoke of his corrupt regime weighed heavily on the island nation; while the rich, including many Jews, grew richer under Batista, the poverty of the Cuban masses increased. On January 1, 1959 the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista came to an abrupt end with the dictator's flight and the capitulation of his forces to the revolutionary Twenty-Sixth of July Movement.[45]

A well led, yet still sharply divided Jewish colony applauded the guerillas' march into Havana. Many Jews, themselves recent victims of discrimination and oppression, sympathized with Cuba's downtrodden masses. Even so, Cuban Jewry's affection for the new regime was destined to be extremely short lived.

C H A P T E R S E V E N

Cuba's Jewish Colony After the 1959 Cuban Revolution

Fulgencio Batista's dictatorship officially came to an end on January 1, 1959 when his forces capitulated to Fidel Castro's Twenty-Sixth of July Movement.[1] The Movement had been conducting guerilla warfare against the Batista regime for more than two years. Yet the sudden surrender of Havana came as a surprise to both Batista's supporters and his opponents. Reports that his commanders could no longer depend on their own forces caused Batista and his generals to flee.[2]

During the years of guerilla warfare, the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement attracted many middle class students, including about one hundred Jews.[3] Most of these Jewish students worked clandestinely in the political arm of the Movement; few were involved in the fighting. Two Jews did fight alongside Fidel Castro in the Sierra Maestra Mountains: Havana engineer Enrique Oltuski Osachki and Dr. Carlos Mizrachi of Santa Clara. Mizrachi, a middle aged surgeon, was the first doctor to serve with Castro.[4] Oltuski was one of Castro's earliest advisors and led the Movement's troops triumphantly into Havana on January 6, 1959. In February, he became Minister of Agriculture.[5]

The first concern of the new government was to rid the country of the last vestiges of the Batista regime. Revolutionary tribunals were set up and many of Batista's officials and agents were tried and executed. Large plantations and businesses, most of them owned by American citizens, were seized. As a result of the government's measures, unemployment increased, tourism declined, and the United States

government was antagonized.[6]

Cuban Jewish life did not change during the first few months of the Castro regime. The Jewish colony suffered no special difficulties during the course of the Revolution: no antisemitic acts were committed by the new government.[7] In February the Patronato attempted to assert itself as the central representative organization of the Jewish community. But strong opposition in the Cuban Jewish press by the religious Jews of the Ajdut Israel and the Board of the Centro Israelita forced the Patronato leadership to concede that Cuban Jewry had several communal organizations.[8]

In July 1959 President Carlos Manuel Urrutia Lleo, a life-long opponent of communism, was forced from office by Premier Castro. During the next six months, communists were appointed to head each ministry in Castro's cabinet and by December they were in control of every Cuban trade union. On the first anniversary of the revolution, January 1, 1960, the communist party, known as the Popular Socialist Party, became the only political organization legally permitted to carry on any significant activity.[9]

The goal of the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement was to solve the problems created by land-lordism, foreign control of the economy, and wide gulf between the standard of living of the different classes.[10] During this period nationalization of major industry, most of it United States owned, began and on January 19, Fidel Castro made the first of his many televised

addresses denouncing United States foreign policy.[11] Originally, Castro blamed Cuba's problems on Batista, but once most of Batista's henchmen had been eliminated, the United States became Castro's chief foe. Cuban newspapers began to punctuate articles about the United States with anti-American editorial comment and one by one the independent newspapers were confiscated.[12]

Cuba sold all of its 1959 sugar crop to the United States at a two-cent-a-pound premium over the world market, but in early 1960 most sugar was shipped to the Soviet Union at a discount.[13] A good deal of this sugar was paid for in goods, rather than cash, with the largest Soviet export to Cuba being petroleum. In early June 1960 Castro attempted to force the American oil companies in Cuba to refine Soviet petroleum rather than the oil they produced themselves in Venezuela. When they refused, Castro confiscated the refineries and all the remaining United States owned businesses. On July 6, President Eisenhower retaliated by ordering a cut in the sugar import quota from Cuba of more than ninety-five percent. With these two actions, the conflict between the two countries entered a critical phase.[14]

Fidel Castro sought to preserve the relative independence and integrity of all Cuban religious organizations, while extending them state support.[15] Accordingly, the Cuban government assumed the maintenance of the Jewish religious and communal buildings in Havana, as well as Jewish cemeteries

throughout the island.[16] The authorities also promised each of the existing Jewish organizations the right to conduct its own affairs. Nevertheless, Cuban Jewish life quickly reached the brink of disintegration.

The failing Cuban economy and government confiscation of the middle class's businesses drove most Jews from Cuba. Most prosperous Jews abandoned their businesses and homes and left the country. Many of those who left had been the leaders and principal supporters of the various Cuban Jewish organizations.[17] By the High Holy Days of 1960, almost three thousand are estimated to have emigrated.[18] The American Jews' United Hebrew Congregation was all but abandoned and more than half the members of the Patronato were outside the country. Enrollment at the Centro Israelita's Jewish day school dropped from 470, at the beginning of the previous school year to 340 students.[19] Dwindling numbers forced the Sephardi community to reconsider the need for two Havana synagogues, although High Holy Day services were conducted at both.[20] Only the eight hundred members of the Orthodox Communidad Religiosa Hebrea Ajdut Israel had no apparent intention of moving.[21]

On December 31, 1960 Havaner Leben-Vida Habañera, the Yiddish-Spanish weekly newspaper that had existed for twenty-seven years, ceased publication.[22] The newspaper had been financially dependent on advertising revenue received from its High Holy Day almanac, published annually since 1942. Although the 1960 issue managed to appear

the advertising bills went unpaid because most of the businesses advertised had been confiscated by the Cuban government. Once the final issue had appeared, editors Sender M. Kaplan and Abraham J. Dubelman fled to the United States.

Although several Latin American governments attempted to mediate between Cuba and the United States, relations between the two countries continued to deteriorate. On January 1, 1961, the second anniversary of the Cuban Revolution, Castro gave the United States embassy in Havana forty-eight hours to reduce its staff from more than three hundred to eleven. President Eisenhower responded by completely severing diplomatic relations with Cuba.[23] An unsuccessful armed invasion of Cuba launched from the United States by President Kennedy in April, destroyed any chance of reconciliation.[24]

The Cuban government's policies did not directly hinder the activities of any Jewish institution. Religious activities continued at all five Cuban synagogues; even the United Hebrew Congregation hosted weekly services for its few remaining non-American congregants.[25] The Patronato was the scene of daily and Shabbat services, although the members barely managed to assemble a minyan. Between January and the High Holy Days of 1961, fifty couples were married in Jewish ceremonies and nineteen young Jewish boys became bar mitzvah.[26] Yet by the end of the year, an

additional 3,800 Jews had fled Cuba and another 1,000 or more seemed certain to do so.[27]

When the government assumed control of all schools in June 1961, Colegio Teodor Herzl was the only Jewish school still operating in Havana. Cuba had begun sending thousands of its brightest students to the Soviet Union earlier that year and many Cuban parents had sent their children to the United States. Jewish parents followed suit and sent their children to America. At the end of the 1960-1961 school year, Colegio Teodor Herzl had only 220 students. The Orthodox Takhmoni Academy, with an enrollment of less than 100, closed its doors because the Orthodox Ajdut Israel could no longer undertake to support it.[28] In September Colegio Teodor Herzl opened as the government-controlled Albert Einstein School. The Jewish community was allowed to operate an after-hours religious school in the building daily from 3:30 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. After a special campaign was conducted by the Patronato, fully ninety-five percent of Havana's Jewish elementary school students enrolled.[29]

On the third anniversary of the Revolution, January 1, 1962, thirty veteran Jewish communists and about one hundred Jewish students seized the Patronato building and took control of the Cuban Jewish colony.[30] The communists did become the active spokesmen for Jews in Cuba, presenting a weekly Sunday radio hour in Yiddish and publishing a monthly Spanish-language newspaper La Nueva Palabra Hebrea de Cuba.[31] Both of these served only as media for communist propaganda and made no attempt to reflect the needs of Cuban Jewry. The

communists quickly lost interest in the daily activities of Cuban Jewish life and in March relinquished the building to the Patronato Board.

Conditions in Cuba changed little during the next few years and Cuba's Jews continued to flee. By December 1965 only 1,900 Jews remained in Havana; another 400 lived in the provinces.[32] Cuban Jewry had become a community of "ex's." There were ex-manufacturers, ex-retailers, and ex-importers. The average age of Cuban Jewish males rose from thirty-eight to between sixty and sixty-five years of age.[33] The five synagogues that had served more than twelve thousand Jews several years earlier still operated: The Ajdut Israel for the Ashkenzim, and the Templo Shevet Ajim for the Sephardim downtown, the Patronato for the Ashkenazim and the Templo Sepharadita for the Sephardim in the suburbs, and the Reform United Hebrew Congregation, serving eight non-American Cuban Jewish families who worshipped in halting English. Afternoon classes continued at the Albert Einstein School for a handful of children. With the exception of the Patronato, which operated from an upstairs office in its Cuban government-confiscated building, all Jewish communal organizations ceased to exist. The only duty of the Patronato Board was to distribute Passover matzah sent annually by the Canadian Jewish Congress. All other communal activities were assumed by the Cuban government.[34] Between 1965 and 1978 almost nothing changed.

Eighty-five percent of the almost ten-thousand Jews who fled Cuba between 1959 and 1965 came to Miami, Florida; the remainder going to Israel, Latin American countries and Canada.[35] Of this group only 40.3 percent remained in Miami while 43.6 percent were resettled in New York City and 16.1 percent throughout the rest of the country.[36] Those in New York settled mainly in Brooklyn, which they dubbed "Santos Tzoris" (a pun on the name of the wealthy Havana suburb Santos Suárez from whence many of them came).[37] Many of the Cuban Jews found life in New York too foreign and began migrating south. By 1969, fully eighty percent of the Cuban Jews living in the United States had permanently settled in Miami.[38]

Although most Jews left Cuba with only the clothing they wore, many had money waiting for them in the United States. Since World War II, Miami Beach had become a popular summer resort for Cubans of all faiths.[39] Through the years, many Jews had purchased vacation homes in South Florida and had deposited much of their savings in United States banks. Even Cuban Jews who had no previous ties with the United States found that they were able to redeem the Israel Bonds they had purchased in Cuba, and thus begin their lives again.[40] As a result, only 808 resettled Cuban refugees required extensive financial assistance from Jewish communal organizations in the United States.[41]

Cuban Jews in South Florida maintained several of their former communal divisions, although other faded. The Cuban

American Jewish Community vanished, its members dispersed both in South Florida and throughout the United States.[42] The Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities remained separate and distinct and by 1965 each had split in two. While in Cuba rifts in the two communities erupted over communal affairs, in Miami the groups divided over religious affiliation.

The only established South Florida congregation to actively welcome Cuban Ashkenazi Jews was the Conservative Temple Menorah on Miami Beach's North Shore. It invited the newcomers to share, without charge, its services, including seats for the High Holy Days, and its Talmud Torah for the education of their children.[43] Consequently many Cuban Jews settled on the North Shore and by early 1964 Cubans dominated that congregation. Yet when Rabbi Dov Rosenzweig, the former officiant at the Patronato synagogue in Havana, arrived later that year, several Cuban Jews decided to form a distinctively Cuban congregation; the Circulo Cubano Hebreo.[44] Located in South Beach, a low-income area heavily populated by elderly Jews and known for its inexpensive housing, thousands of Cuban Jews joined. By late 1965, it was the largest religious and social center for exiled Cuban Jewry, with more than seven hundred family members.

Although they did not receive the warm welcome experienced by their Ashkenazi corelgionists, most Cuban Sephardim joined the Sephardi Jewish Center in Miami Beach.[45] Many of these

people were antagonized by the Sephardi Center's demand for full payment of membership dues, and in mid-1964 twenty families formed their own congregation, appropriately named Unión Hebreo Shevet Ajim.[46] When Havana Shevet Ajim Rabbi Nissim Mayer arrived in Miami later that year and joined his congregation in exile, the splinter group grew. By the end of 1965, one hundred fifty families belonged to Shevet Ajim although more than two hundred Cuban Jewish families continued to belong to the Sephardi Jewish Center.[47]

The adjustment of Cuban Jewry to American economic life was phenomenal.[48] Several Cubans built multi-million dollar import businesses on the ashes of their Havana enterprises. Cuban Jewish professionals quickly acquired American licenses and by the end of the decade more than three dozen physicians and attorneys practiced in Miami. Most of the retail stores in the Miami downtown business area became Cuban owned and operated, many of these by Cuban Jews. The Intercontinental Bank was organized by Cuban Jewish lawyer Bernardo Benes, and through his financial support several Cuban Jewish manufacturers were able to rebuild their businesses.[49] Very quickly Cuban Jews dominated the South Florida clothing and shoe industries.

Though Jews had not been prominent in Cuban political affairs, they became active in their city of exile. Max Lesnick, a disenchanted supporter of Fidel Castro, founded and became the first editor of the Miami Spanish-language

daily, Diario de las Americas in 1963.[50] Ousted for his socialist views in 1965, he created the weekly Réplica and a war of words between the two publications ensued.

Aside from personal contact between families and friends, the Cuban exile community - Jews and Gentiles alike - had no relations with their homeland. Beginning in the early 1970's these exiles, many of them prosperous, began to seek ways to aid and re-establish ties with those they left behind.[51] They were thwarted in their efforts by the United States government during the Nixon-Ford years, but in mid-1976 Bernardo Benes, by then a prominent South Florida Democrat, enlisted the aid of President Jimmy Carter. With the support of the Carter Administration, Benes began two years of secret negotiation with Fidel Castro. Those meetings resulted in the release of three thousand political prisoners from Cuban jails in November 1978 and the permission of the Cuban government for Cuban exiles to return home for ten day visits.[52]

Cuban Jews who returned to Havana in the years 1978-1979 found little remained of the community they left. The five pre-1959 Havana synagogues were still open, but none could assemble a minyan any time other than on High Holy Days. Ritual circumcision and Kashrut ceased to be easily observed when Havana's last rabbi, who served as shochet and mohel, died in 1975 at eighty-two years of age.[53] That same year the synagogue in Santiago, Cuba's second largest city, closed its doors.[54] Worship services had been suspended the previous year due to lack of attendance. The only

non-religious activity conducted in the one room the Jewish colony maintained in the Patronato Building was a daily dominoes match. When confronted by their wealthy coreligionists from Miami, many Jews in Cuba sought help in emigrating to the United States. Benes broached the subject with Fidel Castro in 1979 and several months later he received an indirect answer.[55]

In early 1980 Fidel Castro announced that all disenchanted Cubans were free to leave. Tens of thousands made their way to Florida by flotilla, including more than four hundred Jews.[56] Less than eight hundred, all of them either elderly or diehard supporters of the Cuban Revolution of 1959, remained.[57] For many of the Jews, abandoning Cuba was a second or third migration, but unlike their gentile fellow citizens who were placed in holding camps by the United States government the new Jewish exiles found a warm welcome in the now nine thousand strong Miami Cuban Jewish community.[58] By 1980 the Cuban Jewish colony had been virtually transferred to South Florida. The final symbolic act of that transferrence came during the High Holy Days of that year, when the Cuban Jews in Miami dedicated their Cuban Jewish Community House, the successor to the Patronato, on Michigan Avenue at Seventeenth Street on Miami Beach. That Yom Kippur more than eight hundred Cuban Jews worshipped there with the yarmulkes, taleisim, and Sifrei Torah that Bernardo Benes personally brought to Miami from the Patronato in Havana earlier that month.[59]

South Florida is now the home of most Cuban Jews, yet they have not assimilated into mainstream American Jewish life. Although an estimated eighty-five percent of them are American citizens,[60] they remain loyal to the relationships, culture, and minhagim they developed during the more than seventy-five years of modern Jewish life in Cuba. That loyalty allows the Cuban Jewry, even in exile, to endure. The Jewish colony in Cuba itself remains a skeleton of its former self, but a skeleton that may some day take on new flesh and blood. A recent survey taken at Miami's Cuban Hebrew Congregation reveals that almost sixty percent of its members hope to return to Cuba one day; more than seventy percent wish to be buried in Havana.[61] Although the future is unpredictable, can one be sure that the final chapter of Cuban Jewish history has been written?

APPENDICES

A P P E N D I X I

THE JEWISH POPULATION OF CUBA

1900	5-6 families[1]
1905	20-30 families[2]
1910	less than 500 people[3]
1915	2,500 people[4]
1920	2,800 people[5]
1925	8,200 people; approximately 5,500 of them Eastern European immigrants [6]
1930	9,600 people; approximately 7,000 of them Eastern European immigrants [7]
1935	11,000 people[8]
1940	13,000 people; approximately 3,000 refugees[9]
1945	15,000 people[10]
1950	12,000 people[11]
1955	11,000 people; 8,000 of them in Havana[12]
1960	8,000 people[13]
1965	2,338 people; 1,900 of them in Havana[14]
1970	1,500 people; 1,000 of them in Havana[15]
1975	1,500 people; 1,300 of them in Havana[16]
1980	800 people; nearly all of them in Havana[17]

A P P E N D I X II

KEY TO THE MAP OF JEWISH HAVANA

Asociación Beis Hajaim, Prado 557 (1).

Asociación Betar, Bernaza 216 (2).

Asociación Democrática de Refugiados Hebreos, San Lazaro 117 (3).

Asociación Etz Jayim, Prado 609 (5).

Asociación Femenina Hebrea de Cuba - Frauen Farain, Bernaza 216 (2).

Asociación Jesed shel Emes, Jesús María 103 (4).

Asociación Juvenil Judía de Cuba, Zulueta 550 (6).

Asociación ORT, Egido 504 (7).

Beneficiencia Bicur Holim, Inquisidor 557 (8).

Biblioteca del Bene Berith, Avenida de los presidentes 502, Vedado (9).

Biblioteca del Centro Israelita, Egido 504 (7).

Biblioteca del Hashomer Hatzair, Prado 260 (10).

Caja de Prestamos, Muralla 474 (11).

Cámara de Comerciantes E Industriales Hebreos, Muralla 474 (11).

Centro Hebreo, Cuba 85 (1924) (12); Zulueta 37 (1925) (13).

Centro Israelita de Cuba, Zulueta 37 (1925) (13); Egido 504 (1926 on) (7).

Centro Israelita Popular, Zulueta 660 (6).

Circulo Cultural Universitario Hebreo de Cuba, Avenida de los presidentes 502, Vedado (9)

Circulo de Escritores y Periodistas Hebreos de Cuba, Egido 504 (7).

Club B'nai Israel, Calle 13, núm. 259, Vedado (14).

Club Juvenil de Graduados del Colegio del Centro Israelita, Figueroa 224, Santos Suárez (15).

Club Juvenil Hatikva, Egido 504 (1948052); Calle "E" y 15, Vedado (1952 on)

Club Juvenil Israel, Carmen 421, Santos Suárez (18).

Club Juvenil Kadima, Calle 8, núm. 14, Miramar (17).

Club Juvenil del Keren Kayemet Leisrael, Prado 260 (10).

Club Juvenil de la Unión Sionista, Prado 609 (5).

Colegio Autonomo del Centro Israelita, Figueroa 224, Santos Suárez (15).

Comité Central Israelita de Cuba, Muralla 474 (11).

Comité Judío Antinazi, Zulueta 550 (6).

Comité Pro-Histadrut, Prado 260 (10).

Comité territorial del Keren Kayemet Leisrael, Prado 260 (10).

Congregación Adas Isroel, Jesús María 103 (4).

Congregación Cnesses Isroel, Jesús María 104 (4).

Comunidad Hebrea Religiosa Ajdut Israel, Jesús María 103-105 (4).

Consejo Pro-Israel de la Unión Hebrea Shevet Ajim, Prado 557 (1).

Escuela de Artes y oficios ORT, Egido 504 (7).

Havaner Leben-Vida Habañera, Sol 153 (19).

Hapoel Hamizrachi, Jesús María 103 (4).

Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, Empradrado 109 (1920s) (20); Egido 504 (1940s) (7).

Histadrut Hashomer Hatzair, Prado 609 (5).

Igud Jeirut, Bernaza 216 (2).

Immigrant's Homes (1920s), San Ignacio 14 (21) and Cerro 484 (22).

Instituto Hebreo Tajkemony, Calle 27, núm. 561, Vedado (23)

Jewish Committee for Cuba (mid-1920s), Cuba 131 (24).

Jewish Relief Committee (late 1930s), Aguiar 556 (25).

Joint Relief Committee, Egido 556 (26).

Kultur Farain - Unión Cultural Hebreo, Zulueta 44 (27).

Liga de Deportes Hebrea de Cuba, Egido 504 (7).

Liga de Deportes Hebrea de Cuba "Macabi," Prado 557 (1)

Logia Bene Berith Maimonides, Núm. 1516, Avenida de los presidentes 502, Vedado (9).

Majziké Torá, Calle "I", núm. 154 (28).

Menora Sisterhood of Cuba, Calle "G" y 21, Vedado (29).

Organización de Mujeres Sionistas WIZO, Prado 260 (10).

Patronato de la Casa de la Comunidad Hebrea de Cuba, Calle 13, núm. 259, Vedado (14).

Protectora de los Tuberculosos y Enfermos Mentales (A.K.A. Comité Israelita Antituberculosos), Luz 262 (30).

Restaurant Moshe Pipik, Acosta 211 (31).

Sociedad Amigos del I.W.O., Egido 504 (7).

Talmud Tora Teodor Herzl, Inquisidor 15 (1924-41) (32); Goicuría y Vista Alegre, Santos Suárez (1942 on) (33).

Templo Sepharadita, Inquisidor 407 (34).

Unión de Combatientes, Bernaza 215 (2).

Unión de Fabricantes de Calzado, Teniente Rey 461 (35).

Unión Hebrea Shevet Ajim, Prado 557 (1).

Unión de Industriales Diamanteros, Calle "E", núm. 15, Vedado (16).

Unión de Refugiados Hebreos, Calle "E", núm. 15, Vedado (16).

Unión de Residentes de Lituania, Acosta 404 (36).

Unión Sionista de Cuba, Prado 260 (10).

United Hebrew Congregation - Temple Beth Israel, Avenida de los presidentes 502, Vedado (9).

WIZO, Avenida de los presidentes 502, Vedado (9).

WIZO Sepharadita, Prado 557 (1).

Young Men's Hebrew Association, Obsipo 97 (37).

Young WIZO, Figueroa 224, Santos Suárez (15).

NOTES

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59. George Volsky, "A Torah," p. 18.

60. Phyllis B. Menduke, "Jews Lead," p. 4.

61. Ibid.

Appendix I

1. Boris Sapir, The Jewish Community of Cuba (New York: the Jewish Teachers Seminary and People's University, 1948), p.14.

2. Ibid.

3. Enciclopedia Judaica Castellana, s.v. "Cuba," by Eduardo Weinfeld, 3:254.

4. Ibid., 3:255.

5. Harry Viteles, "Report on the Status of Jewish Immigration in Cuba," mimeographed (New York: Joint Distribution Committee, February 1925), p. 4.

6. Ibid., p. 11.

7. José Schnaider, "Di Yidn in Cuba," Havaner Leben-Vida Habañera, October 19, 1934, pp. 2-3.

8. Boris Sapir, "Yidn in Cuba," Yivo Bleter - Journal of the Jewish Scientific Institute 25 (January-June 1945), p. 359.

9. American Jewish Yearbook, vol. 41 (1939-40), s.v. "Refugee Problem," p. 366.

10. Boris Sapir, The Jewish Community, p. 79.

11. Jacob Shatzky, Comunidades Judías en Latinoamerica (Buenos Aires: American Jewish Committee, 1952), p. 108.

12. American Jewish Yearbook, vol. 61 (1960), s.v. "Cuba," p. 194.

13. American Jewish Yearbook, vol. 62 (1961), s.v. "Cuba," p. 223.

14. Ben G. Kayfetz, "Cuban Jewry - a community in dissolution" Canadian Jewish Congress Bulletin, December 1965, p. 3.

15. Aviva Cantor, "With Cuba's Jews," Women's American ORT Reporter, January/February 1979, p. 10.

16. Ann Crittenden, "Jews in Cuba, Once Properous, See Community Shrink to 1,500," New York Times, December 12, 1977, p. 14.

17. George Volsky, "A Torah From Cuba Marks and End and a Beginning," New York Times, September 20, 1980, p. 18.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

American Jewish Yearbook, various dates, s.v. "Cuba," "Refugee Problem," and "Review of the Year."
Reported here are brief reviews of the political, social, religious, and economic life of Cuban Jewry during the years in question. Prominent trends discussed include the continual move toward a centralized communal organization, conflicts within the colony, the influx of refugees, as well as Cuban Jewry's relations with both the Cuban government and world Jewry.

Aronowsky, Eliezer, Kubaner Lider. Havana: Oifgang Presse, 1928.
An early collection by Cuba's most prolific poet. Contains "Tropisch Licht" and "Oif Zergliter Erd," which were later translated into Spanish and received popular acclaim. Aronowosky's poetry was widely published in the Cuban Jewish press before its demise. His post-1961 work has been distributed throughout the Cuban Jewish colony by typewritten carbon copies.

Aronowsky, Eliezer, Maceo-poema. Havana: Ediciónes Bene Berith. Maimonides. 1950.
A Spanish translation of the author's tribute to the Cuban patriot Antonio Maceo. Published on the one hundreth anniversary of Maceo's death, the poem, written twenty years earlier, was reprinted in the Havana daily newspaper El Día. Aronowsky's touching portryal of the cruelties the mulatto Maceo suffered won him the affection of many Cuban Negroes.

Asociación Femenina Hebrea de Cuba, Almanaque conmemorative de la caja de prestamos. Havana: 1952.
Published on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Frauen Farain's loan fund and devoted mainly to congratulatory advertisements and photographs of the association's activities. This almanac, written in Spanish, includes a brief history of the charitable activities of the organization. Though limited in scope and content, this article appears to be the only source of such information.

Becker, Larry M., "The Jewish Community of Cuba." Congress Bulletin May-June 1971.
In this article, the author briefly recounts Cuban Jewish history and attempts to reconcile the vast differences between Jewish life in the colony's heyday and the post 1959 era. Becker highlights these differences by comparing every aspect of current Jewish life with its pre-revolution counterpart. His first-hand account of growing needs and declining resources adequately describes the precarious Jewish situation in 1971 Cuba.

Blis, David, "Los Chutos Modernos," Bohemia 35 October 1, 1918.
The author criticizes Cuban Jewry, then composed entirely of immigrants from the United States and the Mediteranean countries, for denying their Jewish origins. Charging that with no compulsion whatsoever they live like Marannos, he urges Cuba's Jews to unite in one sovereign body. Blis had hoped that his article

could stir support for his fledgling Havana Y.M.H.A., Cuba's first Jewish social organization. However, many Cuban Jews objected to his accusations and the article did not produce the author's desired effect.

Blis, David, "Memoirs." Havaner Leben-Vida Habañera February 21, 1936.
Describes the highlights of David Blis's activity in and on behalf of Cuba s Jewish colony to date. Havaner Leben intended to honor Blis's service to the community and this issue was filled with accolades for this "grandfather of Cuban Jewish immigration." Blis was a controversial figure, well-liked by the hierarchy of the Jewish colony (including the newspaper's editors), but disliked by laborites and socialists. This article portrays Blis's work in an extremely positive light.

Buell, Ramond, Problems of New Cuba. New York: Foreign Policy Association. 1935.
Discusses trends in Cuban history to date, emphasizing the Sergeant's Revolt of 1933 and the reorganization of Cuban political life that followed. The author adequately discusses Cuban problems of the day: labor strife, political opression, and racism. The book's tone is positive and Buell predicts that Cuba will overcome these problems under Fulgencio Batista's guidance. This view, shared by Batista's supporters in the United States, was destined to be proven false when Fidel Castro captured Havana on January 1, 1959.

Cano, Sebastián, "Lomir machen a Diagnoz." Oifgang July 1934.
This article followed the arrest and threatened deportation of 800 members of Havana's Kultur Farain, and sharply criticizes that organization. The author accuses the group of suppressing freedom of expression and rehashing "purely negative hatred toward the bourgeous." Yet the Farain's total rejection of everything "religious" seems to be Cano's chief complaint. He further asserts that the organization brought about its own demise and its members ought not be pitied. The author's point is self-serving and reflects primarily the view of the Centro Israelita Board.

Cantor, Aviva, "With Cuba's Jews." Women's American ORT Reporter January/February 1979.
Included in this article is both a brief overview of Cuban Jewish history and a detailed report of Jewish life in Havana in 1979. While the author's historical presentation is accurate, her description of contemporary Havana Jewry is naive. Her first-hand account reveals the Havana Jewish community to be growing and she finds many Jewish children well-steeped in their heritage. Cantor's visit was sponsored by the Cuban government, a fact which may account for the somewhat biased picture she presents.

de las Casas, Bartolomé, Historia de las Indias, México, D.F.: Imprenta y litografia de I. Paz, 1877.
This early history of the Spanish explorations of the West Indies is one of the few first-hand accounts of the area's indigenous population, as well as the Spanish conquests and Inquisition. The author describes the trials and tribulations of Europeans thought to be Jews, including antisemitic comments. Although much of the information included cannot be verified, it is indeed a valuable source.

Chester, Edmund A., A Sergeant Named Batista. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1954.
The life of Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista provides the background for this analysis of more than two decades of Cuban history. Bathed in the light of his triumphant return to power in 1952, the book emphasizes the warmth and love that Batista and the Cuban people shared. Although Chester adequately depicts Cuba's relations with the United States to date, his portrayal of Batista is slanted and naive. The plight of the rural masses, who benefited little from Batista's rule, is totally ignored.

Cohen, Martin A., ed., The Jewish Experience in Latin America. 2 vols. Philadelphia: American Jewish Historical Society, 1971
Reviews the history of the Spanish Inquisition in Latin America and the lives of Jews, crypto-Jews, and conversos during those years. The authors focus on several examples of antisemitism and adequately depict the discrimination and oppression early Latin American Jewry suffered. Although no chapter deals with Cuba in particular, the incidents reported can be translated into generalizations that accurately portray the Cuban situation.

Crittenden, Ann "Jews in Cuba, Once Prosperous, See Community Shrink to 1,500." New York Times December 12, 1977.
Concerned here is the current status of the Cuban Jewish colony. Items discussed include Cuban Jewry's social and religious life, relations with the government, and economic situation. This article appears to be an accurate description of 1977 Havana Jewry. When considered in the context of other articles written about Cuban Jewry during the late 1970s, it is one of the few sources that documents the community's steady decline.

Davey, Richard, Cuba Past and Present. London: Chapman and Hall, 1898.
Described here is the history of the Spanish domination of Cuba. Written towards the end of Cuba's struggle for independence it shows Spain to be a plundering, sometimes ruthless colonizer. The author's description of the Cuban independence movement is hopeful and accurate.

Diamond, Jack J., "Jewish Immigration to the United States." American Jewish Yearbook 67 (1966)
Within the context of Jewish immigration to the United States during the four-year period ending June 30, 1965, this article considers the geographic distribution of H.I.A.S. - assisted refugees from Cuba. Although the information in the article is correct, the figures reflect only the thirty percent of Cuban Jews who sought help in resettlement. Furthermore, the figures only indicate the point of initial resettlement. Most Cuban refugees, Jews included, migrated to South Florida shortly after their arrival in the United States.

Dijour, Ilya, "Jewish Immigration to the United States." American Jewish Yearbook 63 (1962).
This article examines Jewish immigration to the United States for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1960. During that period the initial wave of exiles emigrated from Castro's Cuba, most of them arriving in Miami, Florida, The author, on pages 148-49, depicts the geographic dispersal of those Cuban Jews who sought assistance from H.I.A.S. The author treats neither the location of their final settlement nor the whereabouts of those Cuban Jews who did not seek Jewish communal assistance.

Dubelman, Abraham J., "Alter Geyt." Havaner Leben-Vida Habanera October 13 and 16, 1937.
Dubelman's classic portrayal of Jewish life in the Cuban provinces begins with the story of a young Jewish couple who leave the Havana Jewish community and open a store in a small Cuban village. Their enterprise rapidly became successful and in a few years another Jew built a competing shop next door. The two men quickly became bitter enemies. When the first man died, his widow was forced to ask the other man to say kaddish for her husband. At the story's end, the two surviving Jews realize their need for community, give up their thriving businesses and return to the security of Havana Jewry. This theme, life within the Jewish community, is oft-repeated in the author's fiction.

Dubelman, Abraham J., "Der Balans." Havaner Leben-Vida Habanera beginning November 6, 1937.
This story explores the dilemma of a Jewish peddler in the Cuban provinces who has passed himself off as a German and has married a Cuban Catholic. He devotes his life to avoiding and denying his Jewish heritage and becomes wealthy, successful, and a prominent member of his community. Yet on his deathbed, he bemoans his lost faith and asks his shocked wife to bury him amongst Jews. As in many of his other works, the author stresses that Jews should live among other Jews.

Dubelman, Abraham J., "Cuba." American Jewish Yearbook 51 (1950).
Reported here is a brief review of the political, social, religious and economic life of Cuban Jewry during the late 1940's.

The first of four such articles the author wrote for the American Jewish Yearbook, the author discusses prominent trends, including the continual move toward a centralized communal organization, conflicts within the Jewish community, as well as the colony's relations with the Cuban government and the State of Israel. The author, then editor of the weekly newspaper Havaner Leben, accurately depicts Cuban Jewish life during the period in review, though he offers no analysis of the information he reports.

Dubelman, Abraham J., "Cuba." American Jewish Yearbook 52 (1951). This article is an update of the information the author presented in volume 51. Its scope is the fiscal year 1950-51.

Dubelman, Abraham J., "Cuba." American Jewish Yearbook 58 (1957). Updating the events the author reported in volumes 51 and 52, this article shows Cuban Jewry at the height of its prosperity Again, Dubelman accurately relates information and problems, but does not evaluate them. The significance of the Twenty-Sixth of July Movement, then growing stronger in the Sierra Maestra mountains, is not discussed.

Dubelman, Abraham J., "Cuba." American Jewish Yearbook 63 (1962). Reported here are the rise of Fidel Castro to power, Cuba's disintegrating relations with the United States, and the effect of the Cuban Revolution on the nation's Jews. The author, no longer editor of Havaner Leben and himself in exile in Miami, correctly describes Jewish flight from Cuba as well as the steps taken by those who remained to preserve their communal institutions. In direct contrast to Dubelman's earlier reports in this publication, his tone is somber and pessimistic.

Dubelman, Abraham J., "Di Groise Hopenung." Havaner Leben-Vida Habañera May 11, 1934
The story conveys the culture shock Jewish immigrants experienced as they attempted to adjust to Cuban life. The author describes a wealthy Jewish businessman who was visited by a police officer who asked him to clear up a case he could not comprehend. In the port section of Havana an indignant throng had accused an elderly Jew of trying to lure a young boy into his apartment with illicit intentions. The police officer was summoned and he gathered from the Jew's gestures that he wanted the boy to turn on the light in his apartment. The officer was amazed that the old man did not know how to turn on the light, and attempted to show him how to operate the switch. But the man flatly refused to touch it. The Jewish businessman in the end explained to the disbelieving officer that the old man did not use electricity on the Sabbath. Again, Dubelman's message is clear: Jews need to live within the confines of a Jewish community.

Dubelman, Abraham J., Oif Kubaner Erd. Havana: 1953.
This anthology of the author's poetry was published as a tribute to Cuban national hero José Martí on the one hundredth anniversary of his birth. Although its contents had been previously published separately, the book serves as an excellent example of Cuban Jewish patriotism.

Elkin, Judith Laikin, Jews of the Latin American Republics. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980
A comprehensive study of Latin American Jewry in modern times. The author analyzes each country individually, placing special emphasis on the history and contemporary position of Jews as a social class with respect to communal life, income level, education, place of residence, and social integration. The discussion of the status of Cuban Jewry, though sketchy, is accurate and adequately captures the thrust of that colony's history.

Fitzgibbon, Russell H., Cuba and the United States, 1900-1935. Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing Company, 1935.
The author discusses the American role in Cuban independence and the relationship between the two nations during the first thirty-five years of this century. Highlighted are the estrangement of the two countries during President Gerardo Machado's dictatorship as well as Fulgencio Batista's positive view of American influence in the Caribbean. Cuba's Jewish colony is never mentioned, yet Fitzgibbon's accurate assessment of Cuban-American relations presents the milieu in which Cuban Jewry grew.

Frank, Ben, "Cuban Jews in America." The Jewish Digest June 1975.
The exodus of Cuban Jews and thier resettlement in the United States is briefly reviewed. A discussion of the current status of Cuban Jews in New York City, it does not adequately present the problems and patterns of Cuban Jewry in the United States. Many of the facts in this article do not correspond to information available in other sources.

Fosner, P.S., A History of Cuba and its Relation with the United States. 2 Volumes. New York: MacMillan and Company, 1962-63.
This two-volume history fully records the relationship between Cuba and the United States from the former's fight for independence to date. The author pays close attention to the second Batista regime (1952-59) and the Cuban Revolution that caused its downfall. Written in light of the 1962 Cuban Missle Crisis, this book suggests that deteriorating relations between the two countries might result in a massive world-wide armed struggle. Although Fosner does not mention Havana's American Jewish community, his description of American life in Cuba is excellent. A well documented resource, this book is an invaluable tool to the student of Cuban history.

Fraginals, Manuel Moreno, El Igenio. Havana: La Prensa Cubana, 1964.
This study attempts to evaluate the importance of the sugar economy to Cuba. Although the author's details of the evolution of the Cuban sugar industry, especially the significance of the sugar mill, are accurate, his analysis of their later implications is tainted by his preoccupation with Fidel Castro's economic policies.

Freidlander, Herman, Historia económica de Cuba. Havana: La Prensa de la Universidad de la Habana, 1944.
A review of Cuban economic history, from the Spanish colonial era to date, commenting on key finds and trends. The author, a Jewish refugee from Nazi Europe, discusses the various stages of the Cuban economy and attempts to draw patterns that might prove useful in determining future economic development. This book remains one of the few serious, factual studies of the Cuban economy.

Frye, Alton, Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere, 1933-41. New Haven, Connectivcut: Yale University Press, 1967.
The author provides a detailed account of German activity in the Americas during the pre-World War II Nazi years. Although Cuba is given little attention, Frye briefly describes the efforts the Havana German embassy undertook in fomenting anti-semitic activity on the island. A more detailed description of that activity would have proven helpful.

Gellman, Irwin F., "The St. Louis Tragedy." American Jewish Historical Society Quarterly 61 (December 1971).
The ill-fated voyage of approximately one thousand Jews is discussed. Although the author factually presents the efforts, or lack thereof, extended by the United States government on behalf of these people, he does not adequately explain either the position of the Cuban government or the role American Jewry played in this controversy. Much of the author's research stems from communications recorded between the United States embassy in Havana and Washington, D.C. Absent is any consideration of the position of Cuban Jewry.

Gendler, Everett, "Holy Days in Havana." Conservative Judaism 23 (Winter 1969).
Rabbi Gendler's 1969 mission to Havana was made to assess the situation in which Cuban Jewry found itself. In this article, reprinted in several publications, he briefly describes the rise and decline of Cuban Jewry, giving special emphasis to the reasons some Jews remained. A somewhat naive assessment, the author's assertion that the current Jewish community is a "desert generation" awaiting entrance into the Cuban promised land is ridiculous.

Goldbloom, Maurice J., "Latin America." American Jewish Yearbook 64 (1963).
The author traces the initiation and development of the Alliance for Progress, with special emphasis on the Cuban Missle Crisis and growing Cuban revolutionary activity in the Western Hemisphere. This article details the expulsion of Cuba from the Organization of American States, as well as United States priorities for the region. Although Goldbloom does not directly deal with Latin American Jewry, he accurately presents a picture of the perilous times in which that community lived.

Gruenberg, Robert,"Jews in Cuba Say They Live and Let Live." New York Post June 3, 1975.
The result of an interview with a Jewish Cuban government engineer, this article emphasizes the excellent relations between the Castro regime and Cuban Jewry. Havana's Jews are portrayed as free to practice their religion, receiving state support for their pre-1959 revolution organizations and institutions. Although the material presented here is for the most part true, the article leaves the erroneous impression that all is well with Cuban Jewry. A more thorough analysis would have revealed that in 1975 Cuba's Jewish colony was rapidly disintegrating.

The Havana Post (Havana Cuba), various dates.
A weekly English-language newspaper that reported both general news and the activities of Havana's large and influential American colony.

Havaner Leben-Vida Habañera. Weekly issues, 1932-60; and Almanakh, various dates.
Founded as a weekly Yiddish-Spanish newspaper in 1932, Havaner Leben was edited and published by Sender M. Kaplan and Abraham J. Dubelman from 1935 until 1960. During those two and a half decades, the newspaper and its annual Almanakh reported Jewish life in Cuba. Havaner Leben is the most valuable source of information available to the student of Cuban Jewish history.

Havaner Leben, Un cuarto de siglo vida habañera 1932-57.Havana 1958.
This book, published on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Yiddish-Spanish newspaper Havaner Leben, is a reprint of earlier articles that first appeared in the newspaper describing its birth and development.

Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society Committee on Work in Foreign Countries. New York, N.Y. Minutes of meeting July 14, 1921.
Reflected in these minutes is the first request for financial assistance to new Jewish immigrants in Cuba. The H.I.A.S. Committee approved the request and shortly thereafter began what was to be more than two decades of direct relief to indigent Cuban Jews.

Hochstein, Joshua, "La inmigracion judía de la post-guerra." America: Revista de la Asociación de escritores y artistas Americanos October 1939.
The author describes the problems faced by Eastern European Jews who migrated to Cuba following World War I. Heavy emphasis is placed on the rapid adjustment of these Jews to Cuba; no attention is paid to those who failed to adjust. Hochstein ignores the fact that most Jews who came during the period in review reeimgrated elsewhere.

Höhner, Leon, "Some Jewish Associates of John Brown." Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society 23 (1915). This article is a fascinating account of those Jews who joined in the bloody fight against slavery in the United States. The author's brief mention of August Bondi, who fought in the first Cuban Revolution, illustrates some of the Jews who fought injustice during that era.

Hyman, Joseph C., Twenty-five Years of American Aid to Jews Overseas. New York: American Joint Distribution Committee, 1939. A report on the work undertaken by American Jewry to financially aid their overseas coreligionists. Of particular interest is the joint effort made by the American Joint Distribution Committee and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society to assist Eastern European Jewish immigrants in Cuba. Although the author does not discuss this work in detail, his analysis of American Jewish relief activites provides an excellent reference through which activity in Cuba should be viewed.

Jones, Maldwyn Allen, American Immigration. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1960.
Considered here is the history of various waves of European immigrants to the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This book does not refer to immigration to Cuba, but the author's analysis of the restrictions placed on migration to America during the 1920's explains the reason for the influx of Eastern European Jews to Cuba during that period. A well documented study of American immigration patterns.

Kaplan, Sender M., "A Yor Yiddish Leben in Cuba." Havaner Leben-Vida Habañera Alamankh 8 (1950-51).
In his annual report, Havaner Leben editor Sender Kaplan describes the course of Cuban Jewish history during the year in review. Much of the article is dedicated to the need of a central Jewish communal organization and he calls for support for the Patronato Board in its efforts to build a community house in suburban Vedado. A life-long foe of the Centro Israelita, the author takes that organization to task for opposing the Patronato Board's plan. As in other years, the review captures the essence of the preceding twelve months of Havaner Leben editorials.

Kaplan, Sender M., "Yiddishe Robinson Crusoes." Havaner Leben-Vida Habañera October 12, 1934.
Published shortly before Kaplan became editor of the weekly newspaper, this article urges Cuban Jewry "to make their America in Cuba." The author believed that those immigrants who accepted their fate would see Cuba not as a desert island, but rather a beautiful country worthy in itself. Cuba need not be just a stop on the route to the United States. This theme became the thrust of Kaplan's editorials for the next fifteen years.

Kayfetz, Ben G., "Cuban Jewry - a community in dissolution." Canadian Jewish Congress Bulletin December 1965.
This excellent, albeit brief article accurately depicts the decline of Cuban Jewish life since the Cuban Revolution of 1959. The author pays close attention to the condition of Cuba's Jewish institutions, comparing them with their former glory. Acknowledging the fairness and objectivity of all those dealing with Jewish communal and religious affairs, Kayfetz correctly contends that "without any prior or deliberate intention, a Jewish community has been destroyed."

Koehler, Max S., "Los Judíos en Cuba." Revista Bimestre de la Sociedad Económica del Pais July-Augst 1920.
In this first written history of Cuban Jews, the author describes Jewish life in Cuba from the island's discovery to date. Heavy emphasis is placed on the severe oppression suffered by Jews at the hands of the Spanish colonizers. Koehler suggests that Jews were the first Cuban martyrs, a theory expressed earlier by Cuban national hero Jose Marti. This article was well received by the fledgling Cuban Jewish colony and was later translated into Yiddish and reprinted in the Yiddish-Spanish weekly Havaner Leben.

Kochanski, Mendel, "The Jewish Community in Cuba." The Jewish Frontier 18 (September 1951.)
Although this article supplies a colorful description of the Kosher Havana restaurant of Moshe Pipik, its suggestion that Cuban Jewry was obsessed with duplicating Jewish life in the United States is exaggerated. The author relies completely on his brief visit to Havana in early 1951 and makes no attempt to capture the problems and trends of Jewish life of that day.

Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Cuba." by Max J. Kohler.
The first encyclopedia article presenting the history of Cuban Jewry, the author devotes most of his space to the lives of the conversos and crypto-Jews who lived in Spanish colonial Cuba. The article is accurate, but the date of its publication precludes a discussion of twentieth century Cuban Jewish life.

Kron, Bertram W., "Jewish Welfare Activities for the Military during the Spanish-American War." Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society 41 (1951-52).
A detailed, well documented description of the attempts of the American Jewish community to provide Jewish chaplains for the Armed Forces serving in the Spanish-American War. Of special interest is the author's review of the struggle to establish a Jewish cemetery in Havana. Although Joseph Krauskopf, a Philadelphia rabbi, did visit Cuba only once during American occupation, his efforts paved the way for the U.S., Army chaplaincy.

Lande, Leo, "Chronik fun Yidisher Tsenter," Yuvel Buch fun Ydisher Tsenter. Havana Leben Verlag, 1943.
Devoted mostly to laudatory remarks, the photographs and ad-

vertisements, this book describes the activities of the Centro Israelita to date. Although certainly not a critical commentator the author details that organization's history, philosophy and problems and maps out its intended future program.

Lande, Leo, "Di Dimentn Industrie in Cuba." Havaner Leben Almanakh 2 (1943).
The successes of diamond cutters who emigrated from Antwerp to Cuba in 1940-1942 is the concern of this article. By the end of the fiscal year 1942-43, they had opened twenty-four plants employing more than one thousand people. This new industry quickly became an important part of the Cuban economy, and as Lande points out, Havana became one of the world's diamond centers. Most of these Jews remained in Cuba until shortly after the Fidelist revolution in 1959, when they migrated en masse to Israel. They were so well respected in Cuba that on their departure, their passports were stamped "repatriodo" (repatriated) rather than the customary "gusano" (maggot).

Liebman, Seymour B., "Cuban Jewish Community in South Florida." American Jewish Yearbook 70 (1969)
The only treatment written of Cuban Jewish life in South Florida, this article presents an accurate portrayal of reconstituted Cuban Jewry. The author begins with a study of Cuban Jewish history and ties Cuban Jewish organizations and institutions in Miami to their Havana predecessors. Unfortunately Liebman devotes only two sentences to the 1959 Cuban Revolution and totally ignores the relationship between the Miami community and Cuba's shrinking Jewish colony. Although he does not reveal his sources, the article appears to be factual.

Martín, Juan Luís, "Los judíos en la conquista española." Oifgang May 1934.
In a rare Spanish-language article in the briefly revived Centro Israelita organ Oifgang (1934-35), Jews are once again depicted as the enemies, rather than the victims, of colonial Spanish oppression. The author, a non-Jew, contends that Spain's enemies are Cuba's friends and as such should be treated with all the dignity afforded to national heroes. Appearing during a period in which Jews suffered from discriminatory social and economic legislation, the article was entirely self-serving and reached only a limited number of non-Jewish Cubans.

Matterin, Abraham M., Martí y las discriminaciones raciales. Havana: 1953.
In celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Cuban national hero José Martí, the author focuses on his fight against racial discrimination. Matterin accurately describes Martí's opposition to antisemitism and stresses his nineteenth century contacts with American Jews. Another self-serving book, it gives undue importance to the role of Jews in Cuban history.

Menduke, Phyllis B., "Jews Lead Newest Cuban Wave." Jewish Exponent June 27, 1980.

This article reports the flight of one Jewish family from Cuba in 1980. Although the author only briefly examines the mass emigration of Cubans during 1979-80, her presentation is accurate and heartwarming.

Minkowicz, Gerszon, Zifern un Factn vegn Idishen Yishuv in Cuba. Havana: Imprenta R. Bondar, 1952.
This small booklet reports Jewish births, marriages and deaths in Cuba during the years 1945-51. By including a list of all Cuban Jewish organizations and institutions operating during those years, the author provides the only such comprehensive source of this information.

Morse, Arthur D., While Six Million Died. N.Y.: Random House, 1967.
Morse documents the activities in which the United States government might have engaged to save European Jewry during the Holocaust. Although the author does not discuss Cuba per se, he provides the context through which the tragic sailing of the German passenger liner St. Louis must be viewed. When one considers the facts presented in this book, the limited activities of the United States government on behalf of the St. Louis's Jewish passengers is not surprising.

de Navarrete, Martín Fernandez, ed., Diario del primer viaje de Colón, by Christopher Columbus. Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1825-37.
The royal Spanish edition of Christopher Columbus' diary from his first expedition to the New World. A small portion of the first volume concerns Columbus' translator, a converso, and his decision to remain in Cuba after the island was discovered.

Oifgang. Weekly issues, 1927-30 and 1933-35, various dates.
The official publication of the Centro Israelita de Cuba, the newspaper reported the activities of that organization and the international Jewish scene. Both anti-Zionist and anti-labor in theory, Oifgang permitted its contributors a considerable range of freedom. The newspaper devoted significant space to a literary section, publishing the works of several local poets and essayists. Publication of the periodical was discontinued in early 1930 due to financial considerations. It was revived two years later, but competition from the popular Havaner Leben forced it to cease publications again in 1935.

Patronato de la Casa de la Comunidad Hebrea de Cuba, Boletín de la Escuela Dominical, monthly issues, 1956-59.
A monthly publication, this newsletter details the planned activities of the Patronato's Sunday School. Modeled on the American Jewish community's Temple Beth Israel Sunday school, the Patronato School endeavored to provide a Jewish education to Havana's religiously unaffiliated Jews.

Phillips, Ruby Hart, Cuba: Island of Paradox. New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1959.
Written on the heels of the Cuban Revolution of 1959, this book attempts to portray a society in the midst of revolutionary

Unfortunately, the author's optimistic view of an emerging egalitarian society did not come to pass.

Pinis, Oscar, Hatüey: Una Poema Epica. Havana: 1931.
A reinterpretation of early Cuban history, the author's epic poem portrays an Indian chief who resists the invading Spanish explorers. Pinis's Chief Hatüey spurns the love of Spanish priests and meets his end in their fiery aúto-de-fé. Although not a factual presentation of the Cuban national hero, the poem brought Hatüey to life for Cuban Jewry.

Pitchón, Marco, José Martí y la comprension humana, 1853-1953. Havana: Ediciónes Bene Berith Maimonides, 1957.
Devoted mainly to letters of praise for Cuban national hero José Martí from foreign governments and Jewish communities abroad, this book presents Marti's belief in the brotherhood of humanity. Pitchón, then President of the B'nai B'rith lodge, was a well respected figure in Cuban society. Unlike earlier attempts to link Martí with Jews, this book was well received in the general Cuban community and the author was invited to address several Cuban organizations on that subject.

Ran, Leizer, ed., Yiddisher Tsenter in Cuba 1950-51. Havana: Havaner Verlag, 1951.
An address book of prominent Cuban Jews and Jewish organizations of the day. Although the telephone numbers are of little use today, the addresses provide a unique view of the geographic patterns of settlement of Havana's Jews.

Ran, Leizer, ed., Comunidad hebrea en tierra Cubana: almanaque conmemorativo del 25 aniversario del Centro Israelita de Cuba: 1925-1950. Havana: Havaner Leben Verlag, 1951.
This almanac devoted mainly to advertisements and congratulatory messages, marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Centro Israelita de Cuba. The editor introduces the almanac with a fairly accurate review of the history of the Centro Israelita. The first publication of that organization since the demise of its official organ Oifgang in 1935, the almanac provides a unique view of the Centro Israelita's activities.

Ran, Leizer, s.v. "Cuba," Algemeine Ensiclopedia.
Here Leizer Ran presents a factual account of Cuban Jewish history through 1957. The author stresses the drive for communal organization and the fragmenation of Cuban Jewry. Written less than two years before the Cuban Revolution of 1959, the article is optimistic about the Jewish colony's continual growth and prosperity.

Razovsky, Cecilia, "Summary of the Report of the Survey of Conditions among the Jewish Immigrants in Cuba." New York: Joint Distribution Committee, May 31, 1924.
This summary discusses the Joint Distribution Committee's work in Cuba during the mass immigration of Eastern European Jews during the early 1920's. Included here are recommendations

for continued support, as well as plans to involve those Jews already settled on the island. The author's disdain for the lack of support by American Jews in Cuba is apparent in this summary.

Rice, James, "1960's Cuba Exodus Brought Jews to U.S." Intermountain Jewish News May 30, 1980.
A brief view of the exodus fo Cuban Jewry and their settlement in the United States. The author highlights the economic successes of Cuban Jews in Florida as well as the Jewish communal aid given to those less fortunate.

Le Riverend, Julio, Historia económico de Cuba. Havana: La Prensa Cubana, 1965.
The author reviews the economic history of Cuba in light of the Marxist policies of the present Cuban government. Although this is a distortion of the intent of the past Cuban economy, Le Riverend has attempted to accurately present the facts. When compared to pre-revolutionary economic histories, this material has proven to be factual.

Sapir, Boris, The Jewish Community of Cuba, New York: Jewish Teachers Seminary and People's University, 1948.
The only comprehensive study of Cuban Jewry to date, Sapir's book traces the history of the Jews in Cuba from the Spanish discovery of the island through the Second World War. The author discusses every aspect of Cuban Jewish life, paying close attention to the quest for a centralized communal organization. Although this book is an invaluable resource, containing much information that has not been published elsewhere, it was concluded too early to capture the major thrust of Cuban Jewish history.

Sapir, Boris, "Jewish Organizations in Cuba." Jewish Review 4 (January-March 1947).
A reprint of the second half of the author's book The Jewish Community in Cuba.

Sapir, Boris, "Jews in Cuba." Jewish Review 5 (July-September 1946). A reprint of the first half of the author's book, The Jewish Community in Cuba.

Sapir, Boris, "Yidn in Cuba." Yivo Bleter-Journal of the Yiddish Scientific Institute 25 (January-June 1945).
The original Yiddish text of the author's book, The Jewish Community in Cuba, this article is in some places more detailed and better documented. The English translation of this article first appeared in The Jewish Review before the book was published.

Schnaider, José, "Der erster antiyidisher oifruf un Cuba." Havaner Leben-Vida Habanera 21 September 1935.
The author discusses the events that he believed led to the Cuban government's arrest and threatened deportation of the members of the Kultur Farain. Although he attributes the

government's actions to the purported communist activities of that organization, in fact other communist groups did not suffer such severe restrictions. The title of the article might give credence to the view, held by some, that the action was antisemitic. Yet Schnaider discounts this, and therefore his article is more a reflection of popular Cuban Jewish opinion than a presentation of facts.

Schnaider, José, "Di Yidn in Cuba." Havaner Leben-Vida Habañera October 19, 1934.
The author's brief history of Cuban Jewish life. Concentrating on the influx of Eastern European Jewish immigrants in the 1920's, Schnaider details the difficulties those people encountered adjusting to their new home. Apparently accurate, the article is one of the few early reflections of the period written by an Eastern European immigrant.

Schwarzapel, Carlos, "Clara: Un Romance," Serialized in Havaner Leben-Vida Habañera beginning November 18, 1932.
The role of crypto-Jews and conversos in early Cuba fascinated the modern Cuban Jewish colony. In this romantic novel, Schwarzapel presents a fictionalized account of the conversos' activities during the Cuban struggle for independence. Although the story the author presents did not occur, it helped strengthen the Jewish colony's ties with its new homeland.

Shatzky, Jacob, Comunidades Judías in Latinoamerico. Buenos Aires: American Jewish Committee, 1952.
A study of Jewish life in Latin America to date, the author presents a very abbreviated version of Cuban Jewish history. Although much of the information included is accurate, the book is fraught with errors. No distinction is made between the various communal organizations that struggled through the years for supremacy; they are labeled Centro Judía (a title never used in Cuba).

Simchovich, Avremi, "Memoirs." Havaner Leben-Vida Habañera October 2, 1940.
The memoirs of a leader in the Kultur Farain, this article is an almost unique source of information about the organization and its demise. Simchovich is the only Cuban to present the work of the Kultur Farain positively. This article, as evidenced by the letters to the editor that followed its publication, created a new understanding of the arrest and threatened deportation of the Kultur Farain's members.

Sinclair, Ward, "Cuba Negotiator, Man of Two Worlds." Los Angeles Times December 10, 1978.
A report on the efforts of Miami banker Bernardo Benes, a Jewish Cuban exile, to secure the release of political prisioners in Cuba. Although the article does not directly deal with Cuban Jewry, the author presents many of the achievements of the exile community's leader.

Skeist, Robbie, "Yidn in Cuba." Morning Freiheit, June 14, 1970.

much more than statistical. Unfortunately, his plan for continued American Jewish aid in Cuba was rejected by the Committee.

Volsky, George, "A Torah From Cuba Marks an End and a Beginning." New York Times September 20, 1980.
A brief summary of current Cuban Jewish life both in that country and in exile introduces this story of the transference of religious article from Havana to Miami. The author's information is accurate and adequately explains the removal of Cuban Jewry to South Florida.

Weinberger, George, "The Jews in Cuba." The American Hebrew and Jewish Messenger 8 February 1918.
Appearing before the influx of Eastern European Jewish immigrants, this is one of the earliest English-language articles concerning Jews in Cuba. The author presents a very bizarre view of Cuban Jewry, dismissing the American Jews as callous businessmen and the Sephardim as impoverished peddlers. Although Weinberger's account is purported to be first-hand, his exaggerations are gross.

Weinfeld, Eduardo, s.v. "Cuba," Enciclopedia Judaica Castellana.
An overview of Cuban Jewish history to date, most of the article is a Spanish translation of one that appears in English in the Jewish Encyclopedia. Even so, the author has expanded on that information and provides a valuable analysis of Cuban Jewry before, during, and immediately after the Second World War.

Weinfeld, Eduardo, "Cuba," Judaismo Contemporaneo. México, D.F.: Enciclopedia Judaica Castellana, 1961.
This article appears in a volume intended to update the Enciclopedia Judaica Castellano and portrays Jewish life both before and immediately after the Cuban Revolution of 1959. Because the author wrote in late 1960, most of the effects of the Revolution on Cuban Jewry are absent.

Weissberg, Milton, "Cuba." American Jewish Yearbook 53 (1952).
Presented here is a brief review of the political, social, religious and economic life of Cuban Jewry during the years 1951-52. This article updates the information provided by A.J. Dubelman in American Jewish Yearbook Volume 52 (1951) Although the article accurately depicts Jewish life during the year in review, the author offers no analysis of the situation.

Wischnitzer, Mark, To Dwell in Safety. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1948.
The story of the flight of Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe, this book only briefly mentions Jewish migration to Cuba. Nevertheless, the author accurately describes Cuba as merely a first destination for the refugees and relates the Jews' efforts to re-emigrate elsewhere.

Wiznitzer, Arnold, "Exodus from Brazil" Arrival in New Amsterdam, 1654," Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society 44 (1954-55).
A fascinating account of the voyages that brought the first Jews to North America. Wiznitzer pays special attention to the brief stay of these people in Cuba. The role the Spanish authorities played in helping the Jews reach New Amsterdam is highlighted. Although not directly related to the continued Jewish presence in Cuba, this article reveals an interesting episode in the history of the island.