

S. An-Sky's *The Dybbuk* and the Process of Jewish American Identity in 1920s San Francisco

ABSTRACT In October 1928, an amateur troupe at San Francisco's Temple Emanu-El performed the most famous play of Yiddish theater, *The Dybbuk* by S. An-sky (or Ansky). This production, only the third English-language staging of the play in the United States, was a signal event in the evolution of Jewish American identity in California and across the West. The players were a mix of elite San Francisco Jews of Western European descent and recent immigrants from Eastern Europe steeped in *Yiddishkeit*, an approach to Jewish life that sought to transform and fortify the commonplace language and culture of Eastern European Jewry into a growing range of artistic, literary, intellectual, and social movements. The director, Nachum Zemach, had worldwide renown as an artist in Yiddish theater. The backers of the production had intended to bring about a revitalization of Jewish life in the city and the unification of a Jewish community splintered along lines of class, regional origin, and religious practice. Instead, the performance of the play became a catalyst for legitimizing the ongoing process of creating and recreating American Jewish identity out of a variety of cultural, social, and religious practices. **KEYWORDS:** *The Dybbuk*, S. An-sky, S. Ansky, S. Anski, Louis I. Newman, Emanu-El, San Francisco, Jews, Jewish identity, Nachum Zemach, immigration, 1920s, 1928

Why, from the highest height,
To the deepest depth below,
Has the soul fallen?
Within itself, the Fall
Contains the Resurrection.
—*The Dybbuk*, Act I

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IN A JEWISH village in the Russian Pale of Settlement—muddy streets, tired buildings, small and shrouded by poverty, superstition, and ignorance—where all eyes scanned the world for God, the spirit of a dead man (or dybbuk) possessed the body of Leah on the eve of her wedding. Sender, Leah’s father, begged a renowned Jewish sage (or tzaddik), known to have worked wonders, to free his only child of this spirit.¹ What the tzaddik learned as he prepared for Leah’s exorcism tore at his heart: Leah was pledged to marry another. Sender and a friend had once vowed that their children would marry, but, years later, Sender forgot his vow and pledged Leah to marry a rich man. Meanwhile, unbeknownst to Sender, the friend’s orphaned son Khonon was a guest in Sender’s house. Khonon and Leah were instantly attracted to one another. A poor itinerant scholar, Khonon resolved to gain the wealth he would need to win Leah by submerging himself in the Jewish mystical arts of kaballah. Khonon’s study proved too much for him: he died, and in death he became the dybbuk who possessed Leah’s body. The mystic’s discovery that Khonon was the dybbuk troubled him. Feeling torn between honoring Sender’s pledge and Jewish laws that compelled the living to marry and to have children, he performed the harrowing ritual that drove the dybbuk from Leah’s body. In the end, the laws derived from holy texts could not prevail against two souls destined for one another. Leah died, releasing her soul to join Khonon’s for all eternity.²

On its surface, this story seems a piece of timeless Jewish folklore, far removed from modern California. But, by shifting the point of view, other stories unfold. No more is the tale timeless: it is happening in the fall of 1928. The locale was not a shtetl (village) in Eastern Europe, but rather the stage of the Martin Meyer Auditorium in San Francisco’s Temple Emanu-El. The tzaddik, Leah, and her father were not shtetl Jews, but part of a company of actors preparing to perform the most famous play of modern Jewish theater, S. An-sky’s *The Dybbuk, or Between Two Worlds* (Figure 1). Many of the players were descended from the city’s first generation of German Jewish pioneers who had founded Temple Emanu-El and made it the city’s preeminent congregation.³ Also among the actors and stagehands were recently immigrated Eastern European Jews, members of San Francisco’s Yiddish Literary and Dramatic Club. Their presence on the Temple Emanu-El stage was significant because it represented one of the few times in the history of Jewish San Francisco that elite Jews of Western European descent joined together on an equal footing with the middling, sometimes even impoverished, Jews of Eastern European descent. More significantly, the newcomers brought an infectious passion for Yiddish culture to the production. They saw *The Dybbuk* as an example of the highest and best of authentic Jewish culture known as *Yiddishkait*, a movement that grew out of a cornucopia of nineteenth-century liberation movements in Europe, transforming and fortifying the commonplace language and cultures of Eastern European Jewry into a wide range of sophisticated artistic, literary, intellectual, and social movements that practitioners hoped would reinvigorate Jewish life throughout its global diaspora. The impact of this cultural efflorescence touched people across Europe and the United States but had been slow to infiltrate Jewish San Francisco. The highly assimilated Jews of the Emanu-El theater group knew little about this cultural phenomenon, but they found the immigrants’ passion for the play irresistible. It lifted their endeavor above the banality of amateur theatrics, making



Figure 1. "Meyer, Third, Second, First Batlamin and Sender Act I" (Ralph Cahn, Paul Bissinger, Leon Waxman, Manuel Snyder, and Conrad P. Kahn). Waxman was a Russian immigrant and one of the leading players of the Yiddish Literary and Dramatic Club. The families of Kahn and Bissinger were members of the elite Emanu-El congregation and descendants of pioneer Jewish San Franciscans. Photograph by Roger Sturtevant.

Courtesy of Congregation Emanu-El



Figure 2. Emanu-El Synagogue, ca. 1868. Photographer unknown. The synagogue so dominated the San Francisco skyline that its unique round domes were used as navigational aids by pilots bringing ships into the harbor. Some have said that these domes represent *rimmonim*, or the decorative finials placed on the top handles of Torah scrolls, but the author has speculated that their unique shape owes as much to the Bavarian onion-domed churches that must have been familiar to the many Bavarian-born founders and benefactors of the synagogue.

it instead a transformative experience that connected players and audience alike to a wider world of modern Jewish culture and life.

From 1848, when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo marked the formal beginning of the city's American period, Jews in San Francisco carved out a vital role in developing America's most important western city.⁴ They wholeheartedly embraced the freedoms they found as new Americans in the American West, and so they were prepared to adopt the practical, democratic turn that American religion, society, and politics had taken in the first half of the nineteenth century. Most were also ready and willing to embrace the cutting edge of liberal reform in their Jewish practice and assimilation in their daily lives. They rejected Jewish orthodoxy, with its rabbinical dominance, legalistic boundaries, and superstitions—strictures they believed had stifled their fathers, oppressed their mothers, and marked them as a separate people in Europe. In San Francisco, the German Jewish elite and their descendants never ceased to identify themselves as both Jewish *and* American (Figure 2). As numerous scholars have shown, the story of Jews in the American West is the narrative of a people who went from being *between* two worlds, marked by their Jewish and their American identities, to being a people who dwelt *within* both worlds, and who therefore thought of themselves as the most American of Jewish Americans.⁵ Events surrounding the 1928 staging of *The Dybbuk* in San Francisco show that, for both the assimilated and the newcomers, embracing an American identity was a complex process. It was an endless negotiation between upholding Jewish history and culture and mediating the pressures to conform that accompanied American citizenship and social acceptance. The arrival in San Francisco of a significant number of Jewish immigrants from various

parts of Eastern Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century renewed this process for the community as a whole and, for most, ultimately transformed what it meant to be a Jewish American in San Francisco.

The subtitle of An-sky's original play translates as "Between Two Worlds." It refers to the condition of the dybbuk: because of his longing for Leah, Khonon fights to stay in between the world of the living and the world of the dead. The Jews in the play have a similar struggle. They struggle to resolve the conflicting demands of their law, religion, culture, and community with their individual desires and earthly longings. Starting with its first public performance in Warsaw in 1920, audiences all over Europe resonated with the human struggles dramatized in *The Dybbuk* as war, revolution, and modernizing economics caused old ways to fall and the new ways to remain uncertain.⁶

The theme of "between two worlds" was especially poignant to Eastern European immigrants in San Francisco as they adjusted to their new lives in the United States. A wave of anti-immigrant and anti-foreigner sentiment crested in the 1920s. Although expressions of prejudice against Jewish immigrants were less pronounced in San Francisco than elsewhere, Eastern European Jews still experienced marginalization, often at the hands of fellow Jews.⁷ A youthful group of these immigrants met this oppression in 1923 by forming the Yiddish Literary and Dramatic Club at San Francisco's Young Men's Hebrew Association. This diverse group from all corners of Eastern Europe came together with equally diverse experiences, but their devotion to *Yiddishkai* united them.⁸ In staged performances, lectures, readings, and discussions at their club, members expressed pride in their American journey, even as they affirmed their identities as Eastern European Jews.⁹

The young immigrants who formed San Francisco's Yiddish Literary and Dramatic Club took pride in the cultural heritage they brought with them. Youth stood at the forefront of this cultural revolution in which, as one scholar puts it, "no respectable young Jewish man or woman could expect to be perceived as modern unless they had mustered the cultural performance skills: dance, music, or theater."¹⁰ Their club was just one of numerous Jewish literary and dramatic societies that had sprung up like spring wildflowers all over Eastern Europe in the early twentieth century, a movement that spoke to a collective Jewish identity, drawn from the diverse experiences of Jews all over Central and Eastern Europe, as well as those of the Jewish immigrant population in the United States. *Yiddishkai* celebrated *between-ness* and *within-ness*, as concurrent expressions of Jewish tradition, liberty, and modernity.¹¹ To their way of thinking, they came not as pitiful immigrants, hats in hand, but as passionate cultural pioneers equipped with the knowledge of the old ways but seeking the new.

Ironically, the elite German Jews who marginalized immigrant newcomers had their own history of being "between two worlds." Legal proscriptions and anti-Jewish bigotry had suspended their ancestors in an alien status at the beginning of the nineteenth century in the European countries from which they immigrated. Arriving in the eastern United States in the first half of the century, they felt the new immigrant's outsider status. But in the tumultuous openness of the evolving American West, the presence and participation of Jews in the establishment of Euro-American dominance lessened the tendency of other westering Euro-Americans to regard them as alien. And yet most still identified as

Jews, even as they became insiders. They were, they thought, the most American of Jewish Americans.

Anthropologists, sociologists, social psychologists, and some historians view identity as a *process*, and social psychologists even embrace a theory called identity process theory.¹² The process of ethnic identity is based on a back-and-forth dynamic between internal and external meaning that erases what historian Frederick Barth calls “the distinction between social and personal identity.”¹³ Barth emphasizes the external manifestations of this process, analyzing how boundaries—like the boundary between the German Jewish elite and their descendants and the other Jews of San Francisco—shift between groups and individuals. Change comes through the “sociology of people living and acting around the boundary” resulting from “the connections that people spin by their actions and the consequences of those actions.” Collective behavior is a constantly creative process as people “grope for an understanding of the world, fallibly exchanging, adjusting and reconstructing their models as they harvest the experiences that ensue.”¹⁴

For San Franciscans of this era, *The Dybbuk* was a landmark in how individuals and the community as a whole processed their identities as Americans and as Jews. Inquiry into this 1928 production therefore makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the importance of the play as well as our understanding of Jewish American identity formation. Unlike the dybbuk, suspended between two worlds, the living and the dead, the Jewish San Franciscans who staged and attended these performances navigated simultaneously *within* two worlds. One was a Jewish world of their own conception: either the world formed from Eastern European Jewish roots or the world rooted in life among the city’s Jewish elite. And then there was the world of late 1920s San Francisco in which they all lived their day-to-day lives. From this emerged a new Jewish American identity process, characterized by a wider embrace of who might legitimately claim, “I am a Jewish American.”

ESTABLISHING A JEWISH COMMUNITY, 1849–1906

CHANNON: Talmud? The Laws?

Never had them in my hand?

The Talmud is cold and dry . . . so are
the Laws.

—*The Dybbuk*, Act I

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a variety of Jews from all over Europe and America coexisted in San Francisco, from Sephardic Jews, with long aristocratic American bloodlines, to immigrants fresh off the boat from *shtetlach* (the plural form of *shtetl*) in the Russian Pale of Settlement. Their practice of religion ranged from indifference to orthodoxy. Despite this diversity, to the Jews of San Francisco, there were only two types: German Jews and those considered not-German, primarily meaning Jews with Eastern European backgrounds. Both groups saw Germans as the city’s Jewish elite. In the eyes of this elite, Eastern Europeans were irrevocably stained by their origins in the superstitious, orthodox, nonindustrial villages of Europe. These divisions had originated in Europe, between Jews of the eastern hinterlands—whose lives centered on the *shtetl*, the

rabbinate, the synagogue, and Hasidism (a form of Jewish mysticism)—and the enlightened, emancipated, and increasingly assimilated Jews of Western Europe.¹⁵

This east-west pattern of Jewish division existed in other American cities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, although it had certain unique characteristics in San Francisco.¹⁶ There, German Jewish insistence upon the division intensified as members of the group ascended to positions of extraordinary financial and cultural influence, both within the Jewish community and in the secular world of San Francisco and the broader western spaces the city dominated. A confluence of national origins, class, degree of assimilation, and kinship via blood, marriage, and/or business ties determined the group to which Jewish San Franciscans belonged.¹⁷

Membership in the favored group never exceeded a thousand or more. Yet by the 1870s there were nearly sixteen thousand Jews in San Francisco, making up the largest concentration of Jews in America, behind only New York City.¹⁸ Many of those considered as belonging to the “non-German” side of the boundary were remarkably similar to the Germans. Many had been present from the earliest days of the gold rush. Many began as peddlers and worked their way up to store ownership, some establishing larger mercantile or commercial enterprises and amassing fortunes that easily matched their German peers. Yet, in the eyes of the elite group, they remained social subordinates.¹⁹

Poor Jewish immigrants made up yet another element in the divided city, a group even larger than what historians Fred and Harriet Rochlin called San Francisco’s “Gilded Circle.”²⁰ During his visit to San Francisco in 1877, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, the nation’s leading proponent of Reform Judaism, wrote, “I know to a certainty that also among the Hebrew [of San Francisco] the poor vastly outnumber the rich.”²¹ Their names appear only in city directories or in the advertisements of Jewish and secular newspapers.²² Most of the city’s Jewish poor came from Eastern Europe and lived south of Market Street among other working-class immigrants, the Irish, Italians, and Portuguese.²³

The city’s German Jews used matters of Jewish religious identity to sustain the boundary between themselves and the Eastern European Jews. The experience of Jews in the American West and the nationwide advent of Reform Judaism in the second half of the nineteenth century dovetailed and accelerated the process by which the Reform movement came to dominate American Judaism in the late nineteenth century. Jews in the American West, especially Jews like those who belonged to the Emanu-El congregation, wanted a Judaism that would celebrate their heritage as Jews but also celebrate the democratic ideals of the American West—ideals that had, they believed, given them more empowerment and emancipation than Jews enjoyed anywhere else in the world.²⁴ Wanting to be more “American” and modern, less foreign and old-fashioned, they demanded forms of worship that were more like that of their Christian neighbors: mixed-sex or “family pew” seating, organs and choirs, sermons, Sunday instead of Friday services, given in a language they could understand (i.e., not Hebrew, and certainly not Yiddish). Not least, they wanted to eat the same foods as their Christian neighbors.

These demands for change were controversial, even in the American West. In San Francisco as elsewhere, Jews divided on Reform Judaism along lines of national origin. Many Western European Jews pushed hard for Reform, while many from Eastern Europe resisted. Both of San Francisco’s first Jewish congregations, Sherith Israel and Emanu-El,

began their lives as traditional orthodox congregations, but many Emanu-El members soon agitated for reform.²⁵ Indeed, by the late 1880s, there was little to distinguish Emanu-El's style of Sabbath service from the Sunday Eucharist practiced around the corner at Trinity Episcopal Church.

Some observers saw this process of assimilation as a weakening of Jewish identity. In some cases, this was true. The slope of assimilation proved quite slippery for San Francisco's Jews, as it did for established Jewish communities across the nation. At the turn of the twentieth century, Jewish identity among San Francisco's elite seemed to be little more than a willingness to self-identify as Jews and to claim, if asked, that their Jewish heritage compelled them to do good works.²⁶ Advertisements for Christmas gifts and Easter suits appeared in *Emanu-El*, the newspaper chiefly supported by the Emanu-El congregation.²⁷ Prominent Jewish families stopped giving their children Jewish educations, ceased observing Jewish holidays, and began celebrating Christmas and Easter, albeit in a secular manner.²⁸ Increasingly, Jews turned away from Judaism completely and embraced other religious practices. Finally, in the early twentieth century came a wave of Jewish name changing. "Choynski" became "Coe," "Anspacher" became "Anson," to name only two examples.²⁹ Yet, even as they decorated their Christmas trees and savored their Easter hams, many of these pioneer families explicitly identified as Jews.

THE "GILDED CIRCLE" AND THE FERVOR TO BE AMERICAN

THE MESSENGER: Behold—in the window
there is glass and in the mirror there is glass.
But the glass of the mirror is covered with a
little silver, and no sooner is the silver added
than you cease see others but only see yourself.

—*The Dybbuk*, Act I

By the 1920s, most Jews in San Francisco—in particular, members of the elite—insisted that they, like their pioneering ancestors, were the most American of American Jews. Though they might have been inattentive to Jewish ritual and religious observance in their lives, social organizations, and civic involvements, they nonetheless thought of themselves as Jews. America's established Jewish communities would continue a process of hardening the religious, cultural, and social lines dividing the German and Eastern European Jews. Fear drove these changes. At the end of the nineteenth century, millions of immigrants poured into the United States, feeding into the country's burgeoning industrial economy. Many Americans scorned immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe as more foreign and less assimilable than previous waves of Western European immigrants. The newcomers quickly engendered a reaction, inciting bigotry, oppression, and, by the 1920s, a series of anti-immigration laws. Leaders of established Jewish communities likewise saw the millions of Jews from Eastern Europe among this wave of immigration as too foreign to absorb into American society. More alarming still, many established Jewish community leaders feared that the newcomers, with their beards, side

locks, and ritual fringes, their women with wigs and head scarves, stoked a rising tide of hate toward American Jews.³⁰

Although Jewish San Francisco missed the surge of Eastern European Jewish immigrants until the turn of the twentieth century, the city's Jewish elite—especially those of Emanu-El—reacted negatively to their growing numbers in the city. Local leaders distanced themselves from the newcomers and redoubled efforts to reassure their gentile neighbors of their 100 percent Americanism. Writing in 1898, Emanu-El's Rev. Dr. Jacob Voorsanger explained that “we want to be Jews and with the same degree of fervor we want to be Americans, in no other sense than the purely religious distinguishable from our fellow citizens.”³¹ About the new immigrants, he moaned, we “are confronted by an invasion from the East that threatens to undo the work of two generations of American Jews.” He claimed that Jewish immigrants from Russia created economic problems in San Francisco, as well as “problems of the spirit and culture which must be confronted, met, and if possible, solved.” Voorsanger excoriated the “Russian Jewish orthodoxy” as “retrogressive” for rejecting every concession to modernity.³² As Eastern European Jewish immigrants began to take up residence in the poorer neighborhoods of the city, Voorsanger poured vitriol on their journalists, lay leaders, and rabbis. He even called for limitations on immigration of Eastern European Jews; when many of his own congregants called this too severe, his resistance softened.³³

More than anything, Voorsanger, the people of his congregation, and the entire population of established San Francisco Jews wanted to see these immigrants turned into American Jews like themselves, with the American values, aspirations, and sensibilities—the white, bourgeois orientation—that characterized their own lives. They made sure their immigrant co-religionists had jobs and supported the city's two Jewish-led settlement houses, where the newcomers could take civics classes and receive religious education (in the Reform mode, of course).³⁴ In these ways, the treatment of Jewish immigrants in San Francisco by the elite and established branches of the Jewish community reflected the impulse to Americanize immigrants that motivated voluntary social service organizations all over the country in the 1910s and 1920s.³⁵ It was also a token of the extent to which San Francisco's elite, established Jews had themselves assimilated.

These local programs were extremely successful in helping newcomers adjust to life in San Francisco, but cultural exchange between established and immigrant Jews typically took only one direction: as far as the former were concerned, the latter had nothing to teach them.³⁶ The newcomers realized that the services their benefactors provided would not include invitations to dinner. Vivian Solomon, whose father came to San Francisco from Russia in 1916, put it this way: “I think that the people who were running [the settlement houses] wanted to give us the best opportunity to be able to make it in the American community. But I don't think they had any intention of having us mix with their children or grandchildren.”³⁷

RABBI NEWMAN AND THE IMMIGRANTS ARRIVE

RABBI AZRAEL: One day there came to Meshibach a troupe of German acrobats who gave their performance in the streets of the town. They stretched a rope

across the river and one of these walked along the rope to the opposite bank . . . [I]n the midst of the crowd of onlookers stood the holy Balshem³⁸ himself. His disciples were greatly astonished and asked him the meaning of his presence there. And the holy Balshem answered them thus: "I went to see how a man might cross the chasm between two heights as this man did, and as I watched him I reflected that if mankind would submit their souls to such discipline as that to which he submitted his body, what deep abysses might they not cross upon the tenuous cord of life.

—*The Dybbuk*, Act III

The picture painted so far gives the impression that the Eastern Europeans were only recipients in their relations with local elites. This may have been true in the beginning, but conditions soon changed.³⁹ The numbers of Eastern European Jews in San Francisco exerted a growing influence. The newcomers not only swelled Jewish numbers in the polyethnic working-class neighborhoods south of Market Street, but they soon launched new synagogues and social organizations near the intersection of Fillmore and McAllister, farther west in the city's Richmond district, and just south of San Francisco in San Bruno.⁴⁰ Jewish residents in these districts often held a dim view of the local elite. *San Francisco Chronicle* sportswriter Art Rosenbaum would later remark that, growing up south of Market Street, he and his friends learned to hate the elite Germans and to spit every time they passed a Reform synagogue.⁴¹

From the 1910s on, these neighborhoods grew into hotbeds of labor organization, radical politics, and Zionism (i.e., advocacy for a Jewish homeland in Palestine), with busy commercial enterprises and an all-around vibrant expression of *Yiddishkai*, which enjoyed lively support in San Francisco.⁴² Touring companies and local acting troupes regularly performed plays in Yiddish. Cinemas screened Yiddish-language films, local radio stations carried Yiddish-language programming, and once, in 1924, the world-famous Vilna Troupe of Yiddish players, the group that had premiered *The Dybbuk* in Poland in 1920, performed the play at a theater in San Francisco.⁴³

Another phenomenon that signaled an imminent shift in the meaning of Jewish American identity in San Francisco developed after a number of San Francisco's religious leaders hurled themselves into the breach on behalf of Jewish community unity. The first to do so was Emanu-El's Rabbi Martin A. Meyer, who succeeded Jacob Voorsanger in 1910. Meyer was determined to revive his congregants' commitment to Judaism. He was equally keen to heal the schisms in Jewish San Francisco, unifying immigrant and native-born Jews and reconciling differences between local Reform, orthodox, and conservative congregations.⁴⁴ Rabbi Meyer erected the most significant bridge between Temple Emanu-El stalwarts and the city's Eastern European community in 1913, when he secured Reuben Rinder to serve as cantor.⁴⁵ Reuben had grown up in a shtetl in Galicia; his wife, Rosie, came from a Hasidic village in Russia. Despite their Eastern European origins, the Rinders were immediately popular among San Francisco's "Golden Circle." Frequent dinner guests of the city's most prominent Jewish families, the Rinders became, as one local historian put it, "an integral part of the immigrant community as well."⁴⁶

Under Meyer's administration, Emanu-El began planning, in the early 1920s, a fabulous new synagogue and community center on Lake Street in San Francisco's Richmond



Figure 3. Emanu-El Synagogue on Lake Street in San Francisco, ca. 1929. Photograph by Gabriel Moulin.

district (Figure 3). The work would be finished under the leadership of Rabbi Louis I. Newman.

Rabbi Newman did not so much *arrive* in San Francisco from New York in 1924 as he set down there like a tornado (Figure 4). At thirty he was the youngest rabbi ever to lead Emanu-El. A personal protégé of America's most progressive Reform leader, Rabbi Stephen Wise, Newman was forceful, vigorous, ambitious, and cocksure. His boundless ambition for the unification of the Jewish people of San Francisco arose from his intense faith that all of Jewish American theology aimed at the overall unity of the Jewish people. In the 1920s, as anti-Semitism and nativism were on the rise, Newman insisted that his congregants not only take pride in their own Jewish identities, but embrace their Eastern European brethren.⁴⁷ As he explained, the faith of the Eastern European Hasidic Jews who so worried Emanu-El congregants was perfectly consonant with democratic, egalitarian American ideals. Their "preachment of humility, modesty, democracy and brotherhood," wrote Newman, was "a curative for unwarranted distinctions between the learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak." Their introduction into the deeply divided society of Jewish San Francisco could help to heal "the eternal and universal conflict between those in possession of the world's goods, and those lacking them," a division that remained "acute . . . in the twentieth century."⁴⁸ Speaking to those he called "assimilationists," including members of his own flock, Newman revealed his idea for demonstrating to one and all that Judaism was a modern, universalizing, and democratizing faith: Temple Emanu-El would stage a modern-day production of *The Dybbuk*.⁴⁹

The Dybbuk was not unknown in the Bay Area when Newman and others set about generating local interest. In addition to the Vilna Troupe's performance of the play in the



Figure 4. Rabbi Louis I Newman (1893–1972), ca. 1930. Photograph by Ansel Adams.
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city in 1924, the lead theater critic of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, George C. Warren, announced the publication of the play in English in an article he wrote in June 1926. He noted that the play as staged in English at the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York was a huge hit.⁵⁰ Also in June 1926, Newman gave a lecture on the play at Emanu-El prior to a reading of it by noted actress Hedwiga Reicher.⁵¹ That July, Adeline B. Croyland, a local English teacher, gave a reading at Berkeley’s Sather Gate Bookshop.⁵² The following February, a young women’s group, Junior Hadassah, heard another reading of the play in San Francisco.⁵³ In June 1928, Newman announced that the Emanu-El production would be “a Jewish event of Coast-wide importance,” because he had secured a world-class director: Nachum Zemach.⁵⁴

At the time, Zemach was presenting a Hebrew-language version of *The Dybbuk* in New York.⁵⁵ The invitation was pure chutzpah (brazen audacity) on Newman’s part—asking Zemach, a giant of Yiddish theater, to San Francisco to direct his newly formed amateur theater troupe, the Temple Players, in only the third English-language production of the play in the United States—but it is an excellent example of Newman’s leadership style.⁵⁶ His self-confidence was well placed: in mid-July 1928, Newman crowed that he had “made the rounds . . . to have the project underwritten” among well-to-do Emanu-El congregants and not one refused him. “Even my supposed assimilationists,” he noted smugly, “are with us 100%.”⁵⁷

Subsequent events reveal that Newman did not fully understand *The Dybbuk*. This became clear after he invited members of the Yiddish Literary and Dramatic Club to participate in the Emanu-El production. Club and crew member Philip Bibel later laughed

that Emanu-El congregants “thought they were putting on some kind of Romeo and Juliet story.”⁵⁸ Indeed, Rabbi Newman said as much in an October 1928 article he wrote for the *San Francisco Examiner*.⁵⁹ But as Bibel and other club members knew, *The Dybbuk* was a great deal more than a love story.

Drawn from the rich base of Jewish folklore, the play was a very modern grappling with spiritual crisis. It invited audiences to reflect on the challenges that everyone faced, whether immigrant or native-born, in navigating identity, in balancing the teachings of tradition against the attractions of contemporary secular life. As literary scholar Seth Wolitz observes, performances tugged at the foundations of traditional Eastern European communities, suggesting the inevitability of such influences as individualism, rationalism, and social contract.⁶⁰ Indeed, argues Wolitz, the love story and its attendant melodrama were newly added elements that had no precedents in Yiddish theater.⁶¹ Neither Rabbi Newman nor the Jewish elite of Emanu-El realized that *The Dybbuk* was not an ancient story at all; rather, it flowed from the global forces that sundered Europe and made way for the efflorescence of *Yiddishkait*, a new, more modern view of a unified secular Jewish nation.

S. AN-SKY: THE PLAYWRIGHT OF TWO WORLDS

RABBI SAMSON: He also found that his son, growing older, had become a wanderer from province to province, and from country to country, and from city to city, for the soul to which his soul had been predestined was drawing him ever onward.

—*The Dybbuk*, Act IV

Playwright S. An-sky (also spelled Ansky) often described his life prior to writing the play as a time in which he “turned in all directions and went to labor for another people,” feeling “broken, severed, ruptured.” Born Shloyme Zanvl Rappoport in Russia in 1863, in Chashniki (now in Belarus), he recalled spending many years of his life “*on the border between two worlds*.”⁶² An-sky drifted between occupations—craftsman, teacher, writer, political activist, ethnographer—just as he drifted between his Russian and Jewish identities. But a contemporary, Victor Chernov, claimed that An-sky was effectively both Russian and Jewish, each nature “whole, individual, each one [a] separate self.”⁶³ Literary scholar Gabriella Safran agrees: although An-sky presented himself as a man between worlds, he was comfortable anywhere, from Russian intellectualism, to socialist activism, to Hasidism, and in the evolving cultural form of *Yiddishkait*.⁶⁴ “Only occasionally,” writes Safran, was An-sky troubled by the contradictions between his Russian and Jewish sympathies.⁶⁵ Like so many European Jews living through tumultuous times, An-sky longed for a way to reconcile his many identities, as either a place or a state of mind. He wrote this longing into *The Dybbuk*. Like a cabinetmaker who uses reclaimed wood to make something new, An-sky reimagined Jewish folklore to accommodate the longings of modern men and women. In a play that bridged past and present, An-sky encouraged his audiences to move beyond the boundaries of religious orthodoxy to live as Jews in the modern world.⁶⁶ *The Dybbuk* was really a connecting point more than a conduit, and not merely *between* two worlds but also *of* both worlds, a place where the old and new processed

toward something that was both. And this would be exactly the alchemical process that the production of *The Dybbuk* would work in San Francisco.

A man as American as Rabbi Newman might not have recognized the rich cultural friction roiling at the core of An-sky's play. Rather, he saw it as proof that the Jews of early nineteenth-century Eastern Europe were modern, democratic, and egalitarian—essentially American in spirit. Expecting his highly assimilated congregants to see *The Dybbuk* the same way, Newman was convinced that presenting the play would be a transformative experience for them: it would “Judaize” Emanu-El members, awaken their spirituality, and make them avid to celebrate their faith.⁶⁷ Instead the play proved that the Eastern European immigrants his congregants had so disdained were more sophisticated interpreters of the past and the modern than they.

MOUNTING, PERFORMING, AND REACTING TO *THE DYBBUK*

RABBI AZRAEL: I am filled with profound
pity for you, wandering soul! And I will use all
my power to save you from the evil spirits.
—*The Dybbuk*, Act III

The director that Newman lured from New York, Nachum Zemach, arrived at San Francisco's Ferry Building on August 21, 1928.⁶⁸ The person who stepped off the ferry was not, at first glance, an impressive figure. He was short, barrel-chested, and bald, with gapped teeth and a round face. Zemach, who once admitted that he didn't really like *The Dybbuk*, had come for the money. Newman sent him \$250 for travel expenses and promised to pay his living expenses while in San Francisco, plus another \$3,000 (a princely sum for a theater director in 1928).⁶⁹ Communication was challenging: Newman spoke no Yiddish or Russian, and Zemach spoke hardly any English. However, with help from Emanu-El German-speakers, they made themselves understood. That evening, Zemach met with the Temple Players and, as Newman's newsletter put it, began “putting them through their paces, and organizing a tentative cast” (Figure 5).⁷⁰

Soon Newman was penning articles for the local press and for the congregational newsletter, trumpeting Zemach's genius and enthusiasm, his meticulous directorial methods, his brilliance as a mimic and teacher, as well as the hard work and commitment of the cast.⁷¹ Newman's reports did not mention Zemach's frustrations with his cast, with whom he could not communicate directly. No mention appeared of Zemach's opinion that the assimilated Jews of Temple Emanu-El were culturally and intellectually ill-equipped to understand the meaning of the play or its roots in Eastern European Jewish folklore and culture. Zemach may have wondered if any San Franciscans spoke Yiddish, until he visited the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA), where Zemach discovered the Yiddish Literary and Dramatic Club.⁷²

The YMHA building on Haight Street had become a meeting place for Eastern European immigrant Jews soon after it opened in 1916. Coming to America from Russia, Poland, Hungary, Ukraine, and Rumania, many YMHA-goers had arrived as teenagers



Figure 5. The Martin Meyer Auditorium in the Emanu-El Synagogue, ca. 1928, where *The Dybbuk* was staged. Rabbi Newman made sure the new synagogue had an up-to-date theater/auditorium. Photographer unknown.

Courtesy of Congregation Emanu-El

and young adults who brought with them their love for *Yiddishkai*. In 1923, young YMHA men and women banded together as the Yiddish Literary and Dramatic Club, and soon were sponsoring lectures and poetry readings and mounting Yiddish-language plays.⁷³ Many years later, Jean LaPove, a daughter of Rumanian immigrants, remembered the YMHA fondly, especially the “Yiddish group that gave plays and readings and so forth.” LaPove reminisced: “I was always interested in these boys, these Russian boys,” who “all carried poetry in their pockets” and were “very studious and very romantic and poetic.”⁷⁴ Zemach found in the club exactly what he needed to fill *The Dybbuk*’s forty-six roles. It was here as well that Zemach found Betty (Bassya) Friedman, a twenty-year-old immigrant from Ukraine and one of the club’s most accomplished actors. He found her perfect for the role of Leah (Figure 6).⁷⁵

But Emanu-El stalwarts—the play’s funders—had plans of their own. They rejected Zemach’s choice for the critical role of Leah, insisting that Zemach cast Carolyn Anspacher, descended from a prominent German Jewish pioneer family (Figure 7).⁷⁶ Zemach acquiesced, contenting himself with casting Yiddish Literary and Dramatic Club performers in at least six other roles, including two key supporting characters.⁷⁷ Club members also worked behind the scenes.⁷⁸

Zemach and the members of the Yiddish Literary and Dramatic Club galvanized Emanu-El’s amateur troupe, the Temple Players, raising the performance of the play to



Figure 6. “Hasid and two boy Hasidim.” Photograph by Gabriel Moulin. Joseph Davidson plays the elder Hasid. Betty Friedman (aka Bassya Bibel) is on the right. They were recent immigrants from Eastern Europe and members of the Literary and Dramatic Club. The other “boy” is Rosalie Allenberg, descendant of German Jews and member of the Congregation Emanu-El.

Courtesy of Congregation Emanu-El and the Bancroft Library

greater heights than anyone at Emanu-El would have thought possible. Philip Bibel, a young Polish immigrant who claimed to have been Zernach’s translator during the production, described an atmosphere in rehearsal in which the immigrants literally taught the Temple Players how to walk, talk, and behave like Eastern European shtetl Jews.⁷⁹ For both groups, *The Dybbuk* proved a transformative experience, due in large part to Zernach’s directorial style, which demanded the deepest possible emotional realism of performers. The greatest surprise of all: Germans and Eastern Europeans reached across the city’s historical divide to form new and long-lasting friendships (Figure 7).⁸⁰

As the players rehearsed, Rabbi Newman tirelessly pursued his campaign to use *The Dybbuk* to “Judaize our American Jewish communities.”⁸¹ He wrote interpretive pieces for



Figure 7. The cast and crew of the 1928 Temple Players production of *The Dybbuk*. Nachum Zemach is in the middle of the back row with arms crossed. Betty Friedman (aka Bassya Bibel) is front row center, holding hands with Carolyn Anspacher (wearing pearls), who played Leah. Photograph by Gabriel Moulin. Courtesy of Congregation Emanu-El and the Bancroft Library

the *Temple Emanu-El Chronicle* and the secular press, discussed the play on at least two local radio programs, and, the week the show opened, delivered a sermon at Emanu-El entitled “*The Dybbuk: Its Inner Meaning and Universal Appeal*.”⁸² Throughout, Newman underscored the play’s universal, democratic, and egalitarian aspects. YMHA and Yiddish Literary and Dramatic Club members also publicized the play. They produced a Yiddish-language flyer and distributed it widely (Figure 8). The flyer assured San Franciscans that the play was “not to be missed,” stressed Zemach’s professional pedigree, and noted that the production included “the strongest players from the dramatic club” along with the Temple Players.⁸³ Koblík’s Bookstore, a business popular in the immigrant Jewish community, sold tickets to the play.⁸⁴

The Dybbuk was a highlight of San Francisco’s 1928 theater season, playing to full houses at every performance. Almost eight thousand people saw it.⁸⁵ If only half of these were Jews, then more than 10 percent of all Jewish San Franciscans attended a performance.⁸⁶ Reviewers from Jewish and secular presses throughout the broader San Francisco Bay Area raved about the play.⁸⁷ The *San Francisco Chronicle*’s chief theater critic called it a “privilege, and a great one” to experience this production.⁸⁸ A second *Chronicle* review appeared a few days later and praised the performers: “Truth to tell it was a triumph as much for the least member of the cast as well as the principals. That facility with which the *Batlanim*, the beggars, the Chassidim, and the wedding guests . . . followed their parts

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סטען אויפן געשפיעלט פון דער קונסטלער גרופע

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מיט דער מיטוורקונג פון די בעסטע קרעפטען פון

Figure 8. Yiddish-language announcement of *The Dybbuk* at the Emanu-El Synagogue. From the Congregation Emanu-El scrapbook for 1928. Excerpts translated from the flyer: “Not to be missed THE DYBBUK.... The full-length drama from Jewish life... [featuring] the strongest players from the Dramatic Club under the direction of N. Zemach director from the Moscow Habima Theater” (translation courtesy of Judi Meisel). It also announces that tickets could be purchased at H. Koblik’s bookstore, a prominent business in the Eastern European Jewish community.

Courtesy of Congregation Emanu-El

with a mingling of individual fervor and group action . . . adds very materially to the warmth and reality of the drama.”⁸⁹ *Examiner* critic Edgar Waite likewise complimented the Emanu-El production, writing that it was “impossible to give credit to all those who deserve it.”⁹⁰

Rabbi Newman was ecstatic with the result. “Zemach has achieved a miracle!” he wrote in a letter to Rabbi Stephen Wise. “He has the community at his feet!” In the temple newsletter, Newman rhapsodized that “rarely in the history of cultural life in California has there been such an outpouring of appreciative observers” as those who hailed *The Dybbuk*. Insisting that the play had achieved his underlying goal of “Judaizing” his American Jewish followers, Newman theorized that “the chief factor of interest to the audiences” was, “without doubt,” the play’s “spiritual purport.”⁹¹

Newman might be forgiven for expressing his fondest hopes as fact, but others testified that the play was more than a fine night at the theater: the experience had affected them profoundly. Edgar Waite, the *Examiner* reviewer mentioned above, admitted that the play was so moving, it left him in something of a dream state, feeling that “his soul ha[d] been operated upon.”⁹² Rabbi Benjamin Goldstein reported that he and other audience members were transported, forgetting “that the players are amateurs or professionals.” Instead, they became “persons—Chassidim, *Batlanim*, men and women whose lives are for this moment *inseparably* involved in the legend” behind the play.⁹³ Emanu-El’s Cantor Rinder later remembered that the play “profoundly impressed the large audiences who came to witness the performances.”⁹⁴ Performers fell under An-sky’s spell as well. After playing the character Khonon, Wendell Phillips decided to become a rabbi.⁹⁵ Fifty years after her turn as the possessed bride Leah, Carolyn Anspacher recalled performing in the play as a “holy” experience.⁹⁶

The play had an impact on San Francisco’s Jewish community as a whole. As the club’s Philip Bibel put it, the play “brought together the assimilated Jews with the Yiddish speaking Jews—in other words, the German Jews with the European Jews. This made a great impact” on the assimilated group. “These people that were isolated around the reform temples began to see” that the Eastern European newcomers were “a pretty vibrant people” who had “something to contribute.”⁹⁷ The immigrant group likewise realized that Emanu-El congregants had something to offer as well. “We began to learn from each other,” Bibel reminisced. The experience “opened up all avenues for both of us” (Figure 9).⁹⁸ In other words, *The Dybbuk* played a multidirectional role in the processes of Jewish American identity formation in San Francisco: as Newman had hoped, it prompted both immigrants and the native-born to think more deeply about who they were, who they wanted to be, and what connected them to the larger Jewish community of the city that was their home.

THE ALCHEMY OF *THE DYBBUK* ON JEWISH IDENTITY IN SAN FRANCISCO

RABBI AZRAEL: Every human being created by God in His own image and likeness is a High Priest. Each day of a man’s life is the Day of Atonement, and every word he speaks from his heart is the name of the Lord.

—*The Dybbuk*, Act III

Cast of Characters

(IN ORDER OF THEIR SPEAKING)

FIRST BATLAN (Professional Prayer Man)..... Manuel Snyder
 SECOND BATLAN (Professional Prayer Man)..... *Y. Waxman* Leon Waxman
 THIRD BATLAN (Professional Prayer Man)..... Paul Bissinger
 MESHULACH (the Messenger)..... *Martin Cory* Martin Cory
 MEYER, THE SHAMAS (Warden)..... *Ralph Cahn* Ralph Cahn
 ELDERLY WOMAN..... Henriette Lichtenstein
 CHANNON (a student)..... *Eva Adler* Eva Adler
 CHENNOCH (a student)..... *Wendell A. Phillips* Wendell A. Phillips
 LEAH (Sender's daughter)..... *Charles Levison* Charles Levison
 FRIEDE (Leah's nurse)..... *Alice Renebome* Alice Renebome
 GITTEL (Leah's companion)..... *Ruth Vivienne Shapiro* Ruth Vivienne Shapiro
 ASHER (a young student)..... *Edward Bransten* Edward Bransten
 SENDER (a wealthy man of Brainitz)..... Conrad P. Kahn
 BEGGARS:
 ZUNDEL..... *Conrad P. Kahn*
 BLIND SOLDIER..... *Philip Perser* Philip Perser
 GYPSY..... *Bernice Cohn* Bernice Cohn
 DRAESEL..... *Rosalie Allenberg* Rosalie Allenberg
 YACHNA..... *Madeline Goldsmith* Madeline Goldsmith
 GENENDEL..... *Beatrice Ruth Willard* Beatrice Ruth Willard
 RIVKELEH, THE ONE-HANDED..... Emma Herscher Friendly
 SHOLOM, THE DEAF..... *Eugene Himmelstern* Eugene Himmelstern
 ELKE..... *Ruth L. Lecker* Ruth L. Lecker
 THE TALL, PALE ONE..... *Linda May* Linda May
 GEDALIAH..... *Adolph L. Rosenberg* Adolph L. Rosenberg
 FIRST WEDDING GUEST..... *Florence Kaufman* Florence Kaufman
 SECOND WEDDING GUEST..... *Robinson* Robinson
 THIRD WEDDING GUEST..... *Barbara J. Goldstone* Barbara J. Goldstone
 BATHIA (Leah's friend)..... Betty Friedman
 NACHMAN (the bridegroom's father)..... Paul Bissinger
 MENASHE (the bridegroom)..... *Edward Wolden* Edward Wolden
 REB MENDEL (Menashe's tutor)..... *J. Davidson* J. Davidson
 CHASSIDIM:
 MOISHA..... *Boris Goodman* Boris Goodman
 SECOND CHASSID..... John Walton Dinkelspiel
 THIRD CHASSID..... David Friederich
 FOURTH CHASSID..... *Morton Lippitt* Morton Lippitt
 FIFTH CHASSID..... *Edward Bransten* Edward Bransten
 SIXTH CHASSID..... Rudolph Novik
 SEVENTH CHASSID..... *A. L. Bleckman* A. L. Bleckman
 EIGHTH CHASSID..... *Julius Zederman* Julius Zederman
 FIRST BOY CHASSID..... *Rosalie Allenberg* Rosalie Allenberg
 SECOND BOY CHASSID..... Betty Friedman
 RABBI AZRAEL, THE TZADDIK
 (the Chief Dignitary of Chassidism)..... Irving Pichel
 MICHAEL..... *Charles Levison* Charles Levison
 RABBI SHAMSHON..... Manuel Snyder
 FIRST DAYAN (Judge)..... *Leon Waxman* Leon Waxman
 SECOND DAYAN (Judge)..... Sol Friedman
Ninth Chassid - Morris Adler

Figure 9. Betty Friedman's (aka Bassya Bibel) signed cast list from her copy of the program for *The Dybbuk*. Note some of the warm greetings offered by other cast members, including Carolyn Anspacher's "To my good friend."

Courtesy of Jan Bibel, the Bassya and Philip Bibel Papers, and the Bancroft Library

Historian James F. Brooks once noted that the inhabitants and the imaginers of cultures along geographic borders collaborate, creating a “peculiar alchemy that binds ‘history as social process’ to ‘history as knowledge.’”⁹⁹ By “history as knowledge,” Brooks alludes to the scholar’s practice of attaching fixed meanings to given moments in history. “History as social process,” on the other hand, forces the historian to reject that practice, and instead to see history as a collaborative, ongoing process. Historian Frederick Barth likewise sees identity formation as a process. In Barth’s view, inhabitants of borderlands engage in a constantly creative process of exchanging and adjusting, harvesting fresh experiences to continuously reconstruct their understanding of the world they live in. Seeing the past as this process, historians may more closely approximate the true meaning of life in the past. Looking at things in this way, we can see that the performances of *The Dybbuk* in 1928 San Francisco drew audiences and actors irresistibly into An-sky’s imagined world, where that shared experience produced an alchemy that erased—at least momentarily—the distinctions that divided Jewish San Francisco. These effects passed, of course, but they also lingered, as performers and viewers left the theater and the processes of self-identification continued to unfold.

The elite’s prominence and wealth, and their insistence that they manifested the most American of Jewish Americans, would continue to flavor the process of Jewish American identity in San Francisco, but so, too, would the contributions of the Eastern European immigrants. As the alchemy of border interactions such as the performance of *The Dybbuk* hybridized these two factions into one, the old ethnic and class divisions that characterized Jewish identity in San Francisco faded by fits and starts and gave rise to a new identity process unique to San Francisco by the 1950s. The writer Earl Raab, one of the most discerning observers of San Francisco’s mid-twentieth-century Jewish community, would call this “the San Francisco ‘X’ Factor.”¹⁰⁰

In Raab’s conception, what he called “The Old Guard”—the Emanu-El elite—gained acceptance for Jews through their role in building San Francisco’s American foundations. Their work—and their works—made space for the new immigrants to make a home, though even the elite Jews would see the newcomers as aliens. But unlike the process in the East, where the wave of Eastern European Jews arriving between 1890 and 1920 brought customs and cultures that would come to dominate the process of Jewish American identity, in San Francisco the flavors contributed by the elite and the immigrants would blend into a process that was uniquely San Franciscan.¹⁰¹ It grew out of the secular impulse of San Francisco’s Jews and their particular bent toward an assimilation process that grew to accept all that claimed to be Jewish. It was the product of “the insistent Jew—the Jew who insists on being a San Francisco Jew despite the historical distance (and geographical distance) from his ethnic origins, the thorough Americanization, the complete lack of ghettoization, the social mobility, the freedom of wealth, the mutations in religious thought, and the relative isolation and absence of pressures.”¹⁰² The San Francisco X factor that Raab discerned in 1950 was born in the late 1920s, catalyzed by the production of *The Dybbuk*.

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NOTES

I wish to thank the many people who supported the development of this article over the past two decades. First, there were my colleagues in the borderlands seminar taught by James F. Brooks and Luke Roberts at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where this article was born: Josh Birk, Yuriy Malikov, Nancy McLaughlin, Tom Sizgorich, David Torres-Rouff, Isaiah Walker, and Corinne Wieben. Patricia Cline Cohen's comments on various drafts were, as ever, priceless. I also must acknowledge the hardworking staffs at the Bancroft Library and the San Francisco Public Library's Special Collections, as well as Aaron Kornblum, the former archivist at the Western History Center of the Judah L. Magnes Museum. Finally, two anonymous reviewers helped bring the manuscript to a higher level of development.

1. This article is based on S. An-sky, *The Dybbuk: A Play in Four Acts*, trans. Henry G. Alsberg and Winifred Katzin (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1926) (hereafter cited as 1926 *Dybbuk*), the version that was used in the play's first English-language performance in the United States at New York's Neighborhood Playhouse; this was also probably the script used in San Francisco's 1928 production. The epigraphs that precede each section of this article come from this version of the play. On S. An-sky, see Gabriella Safran, *Wandering Soul: The Dybbuk's Creator, S. An-sky* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); S. An-sky, *The Dybbuk and Other Writings*, ed. David G. Roskies, trans. Golda Werman (New York: Schocken Books, 1992).
2. 1926 *Dybbuk*.
3. Some scholars disagree with identifying the Jews who founded Emanu-El in 1850 as "Germans," since the 1871 founding of the nation of Germany was still in the future. Recent scholarship argues that the so-called "Second Wave" of Jewish migration to the United States was more heterogeneous than previously thought. See, e.g., Hasia Diner, *A Time for Gathering: The Second Migration, 1820–1880* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 42–43. Most early Emanu-El members came as German-language speakers from Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg, and Prussia, regions that today are called Germany. This aligns with most immigrants' self-identification: in the 1852 California State Census for San Francisco, about 140 recorded their place of birth as Prussia or Bavaria, while more than 1,800 said they were born in Germany. Although they could have been born in Saarpfalz, Hesse, Westphalia, Prussia, or Bavaria, they identified as "German."
4. Historian Haisa Diner claims that economic opportunity drew German Jews like the Emanu-El elite to the United States. In the very next paragraph, she writes: "The vast majority left their homes for America because they could neither work nor marry." See Diner, *Time for Gathering*, 42, 43. Why could they not marry or work? Because they were oppressed by legal proscriptions like the Bavarian Edict of 1813 or the other notorious *Matrikel* laws that limited their opportunities in Germany. Moreover, there was the social oppression and bigotry that had blighted German attitudes toward Jews from before the time of Luther. This tended to limit their political, social, and economic freedom, despite a trend toward liberalizing attitudes toward Jews in the nineteenth century. With regard to the situation in San Francisco, see Fred Rosenbaum, *Cosmopolitans: A Social and Cultural History of the Jews of the San Francisco Bay Area* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 36–47.
5. Gerald Sorin, *A Time for Building: The Third Migration, 1880–1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 165; Ava F. Kahn and Marc Dollinger, "The Other Side," in Ava F. Kahn and Marc Dollinger (eds.), *California Jews* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England and Brandeis University Press, 2003), 1; Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 3. Historian Fred Rosenbaum points out that the earliest synagogues in San Francisco started out as orthodox Jewish congregations, but Emanu-El ardently embraced reform, in contrast to the more steadfastly orthodox synagogues Sherith Israel and Beth Israel, founded in 1860 "along conservative lines," and Ohabai Shalom, founded in 1864 by a group of Emanu-El congregants who rejected the pace of reform taking place at Emanu-El. See Martin A. Meyer, "Western Jewry: An Account of the Achievements of Jews and Judaism in California," *Emanu-El* (San Francisco), 1916, 18; Rosenbaum, *Cosmopolitans*, 22; Fred Rosenbaum, *Visions of Reform: Congregation Emanu-El and the Jews of San Francisco, 1849–1999* (Berkeley, CA: Judah L. Magnes Museum, 2000), 42; Irena Narell, *Our City: The Jews of San Francisco* (San Diego, CA: Howell-North, 1981), 17–19; Ron Robin, *Signs of Change: Urban Iconographies in San Francisco, 1880–1915* (New York: Routledge, 2018; first published by Garland, 1990), 72–73. In spite of Emanu-El's push toward reform, Robin notes that Emanu-El's Sutter Street synagogue had a separate gallery for the seating of women (though separate seating was not required) until as late as 1906, a token of its orthodox roots and its *evolution* toward reform rather than its wholesale embrace of it;

- see Robin, *Signs of Change*, 77. There is also the fact that nearly all the Jews of gold-rush San Francisco started their lives as orthodox Jews; for example, the Gerstles, Heilbronnners, Bissingers, and Koshlands, prominent San Franciscans all, came from Ichenhausen in Bavaria. Although this German town was uncharacteristically liberal in its treatment of Jews, the families still practiced an orthodoxy so strict that a young member of the Gerstle family got his ears boxed for picking a grape leaf on the Jewish Sabbath. See Gerstle Mack, *Lewis and Hannah Gerstle* (San Francisco: published by author, 1953), chap. 1.
6. Michael C. Steilaufer, "'Fardibekt!' An-sky's Polish Legacy," 234–237, and Seth L. Wolitz, "Inscribing An-sky's *Dybbuk* in Russian and Jewish Letters," 201, both in Gabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein (eds.), *The Worlds of S. An-sky: A Russian Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).
 7. Philip Bibel, interviewed by Marcia Frank, March 14, 1978, April 7, 1978, and May 16, 1978, transcript, Western History Center of the Judah L. Magnes Museum, "San Francisco Jews of Eastern European Origin, 1880–1940," Oral History Project records, 1902–1979, BANC MSS 2010/773 (hereafter Oral History Project), Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California, 47–48, 82. See also Bernard D. Weinryb, "Eastern European Immigration to the United States," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 45, no. 4 (April 1955), 507; Rosenbaum, *Cosmopolitans*, 232–235.
 8. Historian Tony Michaels points out that *Yiddishkai* had its roots in the 1880s in Eastern Europe but really blossomed in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century. See Tony Michaels, *A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), chap. 3; Philip Bibel in "San Francisco Jews of Eastern European Origin, 1880–1940," 28.
 9. Philip Bibel in "San Francisco Jews of Eastern European Origin, 1880–1940," 29–30.
 10. Jeffrey Veidlinger, *Jewish Public Culture in the Late Russian Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 182, 196.
 11. *Ibid.*, 1.
 12. Rusi Jaspal and Marco Cinnirella, "The Construction of Ethnic Identity: Insights from Identity Process Theory," *Ethnicities* 12, no. 5 (2012), 504.
 13. *Ibid.*, 508.
 14. Fredrik Barth, "Boundaries and Connections," in Anthony P. Cohen (ed.), *Signifying Identities: Anthropological Perspectives on Boundaries and Contested Values* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 31–32.
 15. Recently, Hasia Diner and Ava Kahn have argued that this "split" in the Jewish community was not nearly as profound as it is often described. Although I think that Diner has it right for America in general, there is substantial evidence that the significant number of Jews who settled in San Francisco between 1850 and 1880 were in fact German Jews and that this geographic distinction folded into class distinctions to create an especially insular German Jewish elite. An excellent summary of the scholarship on the origins of the East-West Jewish split can be found in Diner, *Time for Gathering*, chap. 1. Also see Howard M. Sachar, *A History of the Jews in America* (New York: Knopf, 1992), 63–64; Sorin, *Time for Building*, 45–51; Moses Rischin, *The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870–1914* (New York: Corinth, 1964); William Toll, *The Making of an Ethnic Middle-Class: Portland Jewry over Four Generations* (Albany: State University of New York, 1982). For the situation in San Francisco, see Hasia R. Diner, "American West, New York Jewish," in Ava F. Kahn (ed.), *Jewish Life in the American West: Perspectives on Migration Settlement, and Community* (Los Angeles: Autry Museum of Western Heritage, 2002), 47; Peter R. Decker, "Jewish Merchants in San Francisco: Social Mobility on the Urban Frontier," in Moses Rischin (ed.), *The Jews of the West: The Metropolitan Years* (Waltham, MA: American Jewish Historical Society, 1979), 12–18. For the origins of the cultural divide between San Francisco's first Jews of German and Eastern European origin, see William M. Kramer and Norton B. Stern, "A Search for the First Synagogue in the Golden West," *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (October 1974), 6, 10, 20.
 16. For the nationwide friction between Jews of Western and Eastern European descent, see, for example, Moses Rischin, "Germans versus Russians," in Jonathan D. Sarna (ed.), *The American Jewish Experience*, 2nd ed. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1997). For the historically unique experiences of San Francisco's Jews, see, for example, Earl Raab, "There's No City Like San Francisco," *Commentary*, October 1950, <https://www.commentary.org/articles/reader-letters/who-shall-be-saved/>.
 17. Gabrielle S. Morris, Ruth Arnstein Hart, et al., *Concern for the Individual: The Community YWCA and Other Berkeley Organizations* (Berkeley: Regional Oral History Project, Bancroft Library, University of California, 1978), 33.
 18. Jacob Rader Marcus, *To Count a People: American Jewish Population Data, 1585–1984* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 28; Rosenbaum, *Cosmopolitans*, 50.
 19. Harriet Lane Levy, *920 O'Farrell Street*, illustrated by Mallette Dean (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1947), 245.
 20. Harriet and Fred Rochlin, *Pioneer Jews: A New Life in the Far West* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984), 130.
 21. Issac Mayer Wise, *The Western Journal of Issac Mayer Wise, 1877*, ed. William M. Kramer (Berkeley: Western Jewish History Center of the Judah L. Magnes Museum, 1974), 28.

22. For example, see Ava F. Kahn (ed.), *Jewish Voices of the California Gold Rush: A Documentary History, 1849–1880* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), 71, 163.
23. Rosenbaum, *Cosmopolitans*, 47–48.
24. Diner, *Time for Gathering*, 37.
25. Rosenbaum, *Visions of Reform*, 46–49. Sherith Israel would also evolve toward reform, but at a much slower pace than Emanu-El. See also Kahn, *Jewish Voices of the California Gold Rush*, 39; Kramer and Stern, “Search for the First Synagogue in the Golden West,” 6, 10, 20.
26. Rosenbaum, *Cosmopolitans*, 12, 35, 51, 115–117, 139–140, 146–147, 166.
27. An advertisement for the Jewish-owned Emporium department store notes: “The Special Displays of Holiday Merchandise and the savings to be made in California’s Grandest Christmas Store, are worth traveling many miles for.” “Xmas Gifts for All,” *Emanu-El*, November 20, 1903, 18. Also see “Easter Suits for Boys,” *Emanu-El*, March 29, 1912, 24.
28. Robert J. Koshland, “The Principle of Sharing,” interviews conducted by Elaine Dorfman with introductions by Maurice B. Hexter and Martin A. Paley, Oral History Project, University of California, Berkeley, and Judah L. Magnes Museum, 1983, 245, <https://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/rohoia/ucb/text/principlesharingookoshrich.pdf>; Frances Bransten Rothman, *The Haas Sisters of Franklin Street: A Look Back with Love* (Berkeley, CA: Judah L. Magnes Museum, 1979), 8–12.
29. “Brandenstein” became “Bransten,” “Sinsheimer” became “Sinton,” “Levison” became “Lane,” and “Abenheim” became “Abby.” Rosenbaum, *Visions of Reform*, 114.
30. Sorin, *Time for Building*, 9–10, 57–59.
31. Jacob Voorsanger, “The Characteristics of American Judaism,” *Pacific Jewish Annual* (San Francisco) 2 (1898), 19.
32. Jacob Voorsanger, “Editorial,” *Emanu-El*, June 24, 1904, 1.
33. Rosenbaum, *Visions of Reform*, 91, 93–94. Regarding opposition to Voorsanger’s stance on immigration, see numerous letters in *Emanu-El*, February 24, 1907, 6–9. A few months before his death in 1908, Voorsanger would visit New York, witness the rapid assimilation of Eastern European Jewish immigrants there, and have a subsequent change of heart concerning the immigration question.
34. The Emanu-El Sisterhood for Personal Service organized a South of Market settlement in 1894; a second settlement, the Esther Hellman Settlement House, was located south of the city in San Bruno. See Mary Ann Irwin, “Sex, War, and Community Service: The Battle for San Francisco’s Jewish Community Center,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies* 32, no. 1 (2011), 43; Rosenbaum, *Cosmopolitans*, 208.
35. Irwin, “Sex, War, and Community Service,” 43.
36. Beth Wenger, “Jewish Women and Voluntarism: Beyond the Myth of Enablers,” *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* (Autumn 1989), 17.
37. Vivian Dudue Solomon, interview conducted by Ruth Rafael, 1977, in “San Francisco Jews of Eastern European Origin, 1880–1940,” 29–30.
38. Referring to the Baal Shem Tov or Besht, the bynames of Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer (1698–1760), regarded as the founder the Jewish sect known as Hasidism.
39. Nearly all of what has been written about San Francisco’s Jews has concentrated on the elite Jews who first appeared in the city in the middle of the nineteenth century and whose families and descendants would form San Francisco’s “Golden Circle.” This is so, I am certain, because it was this group that conscientiously left a historical record. The list of publications is long, but the following is a representative sample. Non-academic histories such as Irena Narell’s *Our City: The Jews of San Francisco* (referenced above) and Edward Zerín’s *Jewish San Francisco* (San Francisco: Arcadia, 2006) have little to say about the twentieth-century Eastern European Jewish community (though Zerín does include a brief chapter devoted to them), nor does the 2014 documentary film *American Jerusalem: Jews and the Making of San Francisco*, which largely attributes San Francisco’s growth to the German Jewish elite. Personal memoirs of San Francisco’s Jewish community, like Harriet Lane Levy’s *920 O’Farrell Street* or Frances Bransten Rothman’s *The Haas Sisters of Franklin Street* (both referenced above), ignore the community completely. Academic histories have done little to relate the experiences of these Jewish immigrants. Fred Rosenbaum’s *Architects of Reform: Congregational and Community Leadership Emanu-El of San Francisco, 1849–1980* (Berkeley, CA: Judah L. Magnes Memorial Museum, 1980) and *Visions of Reform* (referenced above) pay little or no attention to twentieth-century immigrant communities. Rosenbaum’s more comprehensive history of San Francisco’s Jews, *Cosmopolitans: A Social and Cultural History of the Jews of the San Francisco Bay Area* (referenced above), features a chapter regarding the influence of the early twentieth-century Jewish immigrants. There is more, but in sum, the growth and influence of the Eastern European Jews who migrated to San Francisco at the beginning of the twentieth century have yet to be fully explored by historians.
40. According to the *Crocker-Langley San Francisco Directory* of 1928, there were fourteen “Hebrew” congregations in the city. Nine of them were in these neighborhoods with significant numbers of Eastern European Jews. See also Meyer, “Western Jewy,” 18; Rosenbaum, *Cosmopolitans*, 197–198, 204–215.

41. Rosenbaum, *Cosmopolitans*, 215.
42. *Ibid.*, 161; Jerry Flam, *Good Life in Hard Times: San Francisco in the '20s and '30s* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1978), chap. 5.
43. The weekly log of radio programming published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* between January and April 1938 includes repeated listings for Yiddish-language programming. "Jewish Actors Present Two Plays," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 8, 1924, 11; "Play Proceeds to Aid Relief Funds," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 28, 1926, 12; "Yiddish Club to Present Comedy," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 21, 1926, 13; "Dramatic Club to Give Alechem Play," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 4, 1927; "Clubs Will Present Program Saturay [sic]," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 1, 1927, 8; "Literary Society Gives Commemorative Program," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 12, 1929, 63; "Yiddish Plays to Be Given in San Francisco," *Santa Cruz Evening News*, July 13, 1929 (this article is of particular interest since it claims that the plays are popular among non-Yiddish speakers because the producers supply complete synopses in English at each performance); "Yiddish Play Will Be Seen at Columbia," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 8, 1930, 9; Rosenbaum, *Cosmopolitans*, 216–218.
44. Rosenbaum, *Visions of Reform*, 115, 117.
45. Rosenbaum, *Cosmopolitans*, 126.
46. Rosenbaum, *Visions of Reform*, 119–121.
47. Historian Robert W. Cherny notes that, in the first decades of the twentieth century, Jews in San Francisco would experience an increase in anti-Jewish exclusivity regarding clubs and the like. See Robert W. Cherny, "Patterns of Toleration and Discrimination in San Francisco: The Civil War to World War I," *California History* (Summer 1994), 138–139. On a personal note, my last name is a bequest of this era of heightened Jew-hating in San Francisco. My father, who had grown up during the high tide of Jew-hating in America, made the decision in 1953 that his children would not have his identifiably Jewish last name, but instead would bear my mother's maiden name of Anglo-Scottish origin, so that they would not be prejudicially identified as Jews. The straw that broke the camel's back for him (a man who likely never set foot in a synagogue after 1925) was the rejection of his application for membership in a San Francisco athletic club because the club excluded Jews from membership. It was not the Kishinev Pogrom, but it is a demonstration that anti-Jewish sentiments manifested themselves in many places in San Francisco in the first half of the twentieth century.
48. Louis I. Newman, *The Hasidic Anthology: Tales and Teachings of the Hasidim* (New York: Bloch, 1934), xxxv.
49. Rosenbaum, *Visions of Reform*, 137–140, 154–155.
50. George C. Warren, "Behind the Back Row: Yiddish Play Continues in Popularity," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 17, 1926; George C. Warren, "The Dybbuk Now at Hand for Readers," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 22, 1926, 9; George C. Warren, "Plays Leap from Stage to Printed Page While Rage for 'Em Persists," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 5, 1926, 53.
51. "Miss Reicher to Read 'Dybbuk' at Temple," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 29, 1926, 7.
52. "Younger Set Dominating Social Events," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 4, 1926, 74.
53. "Junior Hadassah Group Plans Busy Season," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 12, 1927.
54. Louis I. Newman to Rabbi Stephen Wise, June 19, 1928, "Louis I. Newman Papers," Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio. Nachum Zemach was an actor, director, and founder of the world-famous Habima Theater in Bialystok Russia.
55. J. Brooks Atkinson, "The Play," *New York Times*, December 14, 1926, 24.
56. Although the play had been produced in Yiddish or Hebrew by some Yiddish theater groups in the United States and had even been staged in Yiddish in San Francisco prior to the Emanu-El production, the first English-language version was staged at the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York in 1925–1926 and went on a tour produced by the Schuberts in April 1926. I can only find a record of the play going on the boards in Chicago in association with this tour. For references to non-English productions of *The Dybbuk* in the United States, see J. Brooks Atkinson's review on page 22 of the *New York Times*, December 16, 1925. See also *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 26, 1926, 31 (which also refers to the tour of the play to Chicago).
57. Louis I. Newman to Stephen S. Wise, July 16, 1928, Louis I. Newman Papers, Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
58. Philip Bibel, telephone interviews by the author, January 13 and 22, 2003.
59. Newman wrote, "It is without doubt one of the most beautiful love stories of the race, taking its place with the tale of Hero and Leander, Romeo and Juliet, Paolo and Francesca, and Pelleas and Melisande." Louis I. Newman, "Rabbi Newman Tells Meaning of 'The Dybbuk,'" *San Francisco Examiner*, October 21, 1928, 6E, 8E.
60. Wolitz, "Inscribing An-sky's *Dybbuk*," 167.
61. *Ibid.*, 183–184.
62. David G. Roskies, "Introduction," in S. Ansky, *The Dybbuk and Other Writings*, xix (emphasis added).
63. *Ibid.*, 102; quote of V. Chernov, *Yidische tuer*, 197, cited in Safran, *Wandering Soul*, 102.
64. Safran, *Wandering Soul*, 171–174.

65. Ibid., 3.
66. Wolitz, "Inscribing An-sky's *Dybbuk*," 202.
67. In a letter from Louis I. Newman to Stephen S. Wise dated September 6, 1928, Newman writes about *The Dybbuk* being "an admirable thing wherewith to Judaize our American Jewish communities." "Louis I. Newman Papers," Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
68. According to Seth L. Wolitz, Zemach didn't like *The Dybbuk* because it was "devoid of national elements," meaning that it was not expressly Jewishly nationalistic or Zionist. See Wolitz, "Inscribing An-sky's *Dybbuk*," 179; "Arrival of Mr. Zemach," *Temple Emanu-El Chronicle*, August 24, 1928.
69. Louis I. Newman to Stephen Wise, July 30, 1928. Bassya Bibel, interview conducted by Marcia Frank, 1978, in "San Francisco Jews of Eastern European Origin, 1880–1940," 34. In 2020 dollars, \$3,000 was over \$46,000. "Inflation Calculator," <https://westegg.com>.
70. It is interesting to note that this article says only that Zemach and the cast communicated in German. But Philip Bibel, with whom I spoke by telephone on January 22, 2003, and who claims to have been Zemach's interpreter during most rehearsals, said that Zemach spoke Yiddish, which he tried to Germanize to make it easier for the German speakers to understand. "Rehearsals of *The Dybbuk*," *Temple Emanu-El Chronicle*, August 24, 1928.
71. Between August 24 and October 29, 1928, the *Temple Emanu-El Chronicle*, the *San Francisco Examiner*, the *Jewish Journal*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle* published more than a dozen articles discussing various aspects of the production.
72. It seems logical to assume that Emanu-El's Cantor Reuben Rinder brought Zemach to the YMHA on the basis of his long association with the immigrant community and his own shtetl origins, but historian Fred Rosenbaum seems to think that it was Rabbi Newman who put Zemach together with the Yiddish Literary and Dramatic Society, though he offers no primary evidence for that belief. Philip Bibel in "San Francisco Jews of Eastern European Origin, 1880–1940," 49–51; Philip Bibel, interviews by the author; Rosenbaum, *Cosmopolitans*, 217.
73. Philip Bibel in "San Francisco Jews of Eastern European Origin, 1880–1940," 30.
74. "Jean Braverman LaPove," interview conducted by Susan Green, 1979, in "San Francisco Jews of Eastern European Origin, 1880–1940," 59.
75. Bassya Bibel in "San Francisco Jews of Eastern European Origin, 1880–1940," 34.
76. Ibid.
77. Betty Friedman (aka Bassiya Bibel) and Leon Waxman each played two small parts. Eva Adler and Sol Friedman each played a single bit part. See the program for *The Dybbuk*, Temple Emanu-El Scrapbook, 1928, Temple Emanu-El Archives, Temple Emanu-El, San Francisco, California.
78. Ibid., 37–38. An unattributed clipping testifies that "quite a number of the members of the Jewish Literary and Dramatic Club [which is interchangeably identified in sources as the Yiddish or Jewish Literary and Dramatic Club] are taking part in *The Dybbuk* with the Temple Players." Bassya Bibel scrapbook 1967.047; Philip Bibel, Bassya Bibel Box 1, Western Jewish Historical Archive of the Judah Magnes Museum.
79. Philip Bibel, interviews by the author.
80. Philip Bibel in "San Francisco Jews of Eastern European Origin, 1880–1940," 47–53; Bassiya Bibel in "San Francisco Jews of Eastern European Origin, 1880–1940," 37–38.
81. Louis I. Newman to Stephen S. Wise, September 6, 1928.
82. *Temple Emanu-El Chronicle*, November 2, 1928.
83. Temple Emanu-El Scrapbook, 1928. Translation of the flyer by the author and Judy Meisel. In the author's interview with him on January 22, 2003, Philip Bibel claimed that he produced the flyer (transcript in author's possession).
84. Zerlin, *Jewish San Francisco*, 62–63.
85. *The Dybbuk Exhibitions: "The Dybbuk—1928 Production at Temple Emanu-El, San Francisco (October 1968–April 1997)."* Western Jewish Historical Center 67/3, Exhibitions 31/10.
86. According to Jacob Rader Marcus, the Jewish population in San Francisco about this time was 35,000. See Marcus, *To Count a People*, 27.
87. "'The Dybbuk' Wins Unanimous Praise: Critics and Public Deeply Stirred," *Temple Emanu-El Chronicle*, November 2, 1928; "'The Dybbuk' an Unforgettable Experience: Production of the Temple Players Closes in a Blaze of Glory," *Temple Emanu-El Chronicle*, November 16, 1928; George C. Warren, "Tragic Spell Dominant in 'Dybbuk,' Opening Tonight," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 29, 1928, 8; K.M.H., "Cast Scores at Open of 'Dybbuk': Temple Players Welded into Mood of Mysticism for Jewish Sect Drama," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 30, 1928; Edgar Waite, "Review," *San Francisco Examiner*, October 30, 1928, 17.
88. Warren, "Tragic Spell."
89. K.M.H., "Cast Scores."

90. Waite, "Review." One must take the favorable reviews that appeared in the secular press with a grain of salt, as few would have dared to insult Temple Emanu-El or its congregants, all of whom were established members of the city's political, social, and commercial elite.
91. "The Dybbuk' an Unforgettable Experience."
92. It is unclear how many times the local troupe performed *The Dybbuk*, which ran for two weeks. Waite, "Review."
93. Rabbi Benjamin J. Goldstein, "The Dybbuk," *Emanu-El*, November 2, 1928, 15 (emphasis added). Rabbi Goldstein served the University of California Hillel, UC Berkeley's Jewish student center.
94. Reuben Rinder, "From Moscow to Kentfield" (ca. 1932), *Addresses and Essays 1890–1980*, 70/5 BIII file 20, Western Jewish Historical Archive of the Judah L. Magnes Museum.
95. Carolyn Anspacher interviewed by Norman Coliver (May 13, 1979), 79/11 folder 1, Western Jewish Historical Archive of the Judah L. Magnes Museum, 25.
96. Ibid.
97. Philip Bibel, "San Francisco Jews of Eastern European Origin, 1880–1940," 53–54. Janet Choynski, whose ancestors came from Poland in the nineteenth century, met Mortimer Fleishhacker, the scion of an elite Emanu-El family, during the staging of *The Dybbuk*. Despite the opposition of Fleishhacker's family to his marrying outside the "Golden Circle," he and Choynski defied the German/not-German social divide and married. See Mortimer Fleishhacker and Janet Choynski Fleishhacker, "Family, Business, and San Francisco Community," interviews conducted by Ruth Teiser and Catherine Harroun, introduction by Allan B. Jacobs; Rosenbaum, *Cosmopolitans*, 237.
98. Ibid., 107.
99. James F. Brooks, "Served Well by Plunder: La Gran Ladroneria and Producers of History Astride the Rio Grande," *American Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (March 2002): 27.
100. Raab, "There's No City Like San Francisco."
101. Regarding the influence of Eastern European Jewish immigrants on the formation of Jewish American identity, see Sarna, *American Jewish Experience*, 197. The special issue *Shofar* 25, no. 1 ("Beyond Klezmer: The Legacy of Eastern European Jewry," Fall 2006) is filled with articles that suggest that Jewish identity in the United States became anchored in Eastern European custom and culture even as it evolved in the twentieth century toward its more Americanized contemporary form. Editors Gary P. Zola and Marc Dollinger, moreover, write of the transformation that Eastern European Jewish immigrants brought to the process of Jewish American identity in their textbook *American Jewish History: A Primary Source Reader* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2014), 181–182.
102. Raab, "There's No City Like San Francisco."