

Sacred and Secular: The Place of Public Funerals in the Immigrant Life of American Jews

Arthur Aryeh Goren

Beginning in the early 1900s and continuing for some 40 years, massive funerals were held, particularly in New York City, to honor distinguished Jewish figures. The funerals of “Chief Rabbi” Jacob Joseph (1902), the Orthodox *Yiddishe Tageblatt*’s publisher Kasriel Sarasohn (1905), popular Yiddish playwright Jacob Gordin (1909), the beloved Yiddish writer Shalom Aleichem (1916), and the Jewish socialist leaders, Meyer London (1926), Morris Hillquit (1933), and Baruch Vladeck (1938), brought out crowds of mourners which numbered in the tens of thousands and sometimes in the hundreds of thousands. Then, in the 1940s, the character of the public funeral changed. When Bernard Revel, the president of the Rabbi Isaac Elhanan Theological Seminary and Yeshiva College, died in December 1940, several thousand – mostly faculty, students, and prominent rabbis – attended the funeral services which were held in the college auditorium. Louis Brandeis’ funeral service (October 1941) was private. About 50 assembled at the Brandeis home in Washington, D.C. where a quartet of violins played Beethoven and Dean Acheson, Assistant Secretary of State and former law clerk to the justice, and Felix Frankfurter, eulogized him. The family requested that no flowers be sent, and the body was cremated. No longer was the Jewish public exhorted to leave their shops or close their stores and take their place along the designated route of the funeral procession to pay homage to the revered leader, writer or rabbi.¹

On first sight, the rise and demise of the public funeral as a mass event can be understood as the inevitable course of acculturation. At Jacob Joseph’s and Kasriel Sarasohn’s funerals, police were required to control the nearly hysterical crowds eager to touch the coffin (“a plain unpainted pine box”) as the funeral

cortege moved through the streets of the lower East Side and paused for prayers and eulogies at various synagogues. Forty years later, only invited guests were allowed into Carnegie Hall for the funeral service for Stephen S. Wise (“a severely plain walnut coffin with bronze handles in the center of the stage”). The overflow audience stood in the nearby streets and listened in restrained grief to the proceedings over loudspeakers.² Understandably, time had wrought changes in dress, social convention, formal practice, and urban geography (most obviously, the demise of the old immigrant neighborhoods). However, acculturation and the different urban setting as explanatory devices gloss over cultural subtleties and adjustments which in fact served as bench marks for the immigrant generation. Public funerals, viewed as communal observances, were rituals of collective affirmation. They extended the boundaries of private grief and adoration – and often guilt – to embrace the kinship of community and nationality by celebrating the virtues of the fallen leader or mentor. Such celebrations were also ideological and political declarations. In paying tribute to the dead and to the past, the celebrants addressed the present by calling for rededication to the departed hero’s way of life and goals. But no less important than the rhetoric was the symbolism which was linked to every phase of the rites. Sacred custom was manipulated by the traditionalists, without violating religious law, to enhance their image among their own people and before the Gentiles. Secular radicals invented their own tradition in order to forge a group solidarity and willy-nilly define their identity. This essay is a preliminary foray into this little studied sphere of the public culture of American Jews. It seeks to sort out some of the elements of the public funeral as civic pageant played out in the streets of New York and in the press, for all to see.³

Jews memorialized their great men and women with public funerals and annual visits to their graves beginning in Talmudic times. This practice struck deep roots in the religious culture of East European Jewry. A funeral of an illustrious rabbi would be postponed to enable notables from afar to be present. The funeral procession of a saintly scholar, philanthropist, or important communal functionary would pause at the synagogue and other institutions with which the deceased was associated. At each station, and at the cemetery, distinguished members of the community eulogized the deceased and then interred him among the esteemed who had gone to their reward. All who possibly could paid homage to a person of such standing by accompanying the coffin to the cemetery. Many left their workplace, and children were excused from school in order to attend the funeral and gain religious merit. On the anniversary of the death of a famous and revered figure, disciples and admirers would visit the grave and call on the departed for divine intervention on behalf of the community or support for a personal petition. The pilgrimages of the Bratslaver Hasidim to Umsk to visit the grave of Nahman of Bratslav is a famous instance of this practice.⁴

These extraordinary occasions rested on a highly disciplined communal order which dealt with death whenever and for whomever it occurred. Religious law

and custom dictated the precise details of the rituals: the vigil maintained as death came, the preparation of the body for burial, the prayer services and eulogies, the order of the funeral procession, the choice of burial plot, the interment service, and the mourning arrangements. Responsibility for the preparations and their execution belonged to the *hevra kadisha* ("the holy burial society"), which also had exclusive control of the communal cemetery. Since attending the dying and burying the dead without personal gain, as Jewish law required, was considered the most exalted of *mitsvas*, only devout and established members of the community were eligible for membership in the society. By virtue of its members' social standing and its monopoly over burial, the *hevra kadisha* acted for the community in passing public judgment on the deceased through the details of the final rites of passage. The society also applied sanctions against those who had violated communal norms. It charged the heirs of a wealthy person who had been uncharitable in life exorbitant burial fees, and buried drifters, criminals or apostates "near the cemetery fence." In this manner, where traditional institutions still possessed some influence and control (in the nineteenth century there were breaches in the communal order and a spreading erosion of its authority), the community reaffirmed its common values.⁵

Although secularization increasingly challenged religious tradition, in matters of death the traditional establishment in Eastern Europe gave ground grudgingly. In what was no isolated instance, the *Forverts* reported on its front page on February 28, 1903 the clash that took place in the Polish town of Suwalki between the religious functionaries of the local burial society and the socialist revolutionaries who brought their dead comrade to the cemetery for burial. When the socialists began delivering speeches in praise of his revolutionary activities and interspersed them with revolutionary songs, the burial society officials threatened to leave the corpse unburied. "But the revolutionaries shouted them down," the *Forverts's* informant wrote, "and, singing the Marseillaise and other such songs, the comrades laid their friend to rest."⁶ On that occasion, the victory proved to be only a momentary one. However, in the case of Hirsch Lekert, the young Bundist who was hanged for attempting to assassinate the governor of Vilna in June, 1902, Jewish socialists speedily established a memorial day for their new folk hero beyond the reach of the traditionalists. Since the Czarist police buried Lekert in an unmarked grave, a funeral was impossible and with it the demonstrative effect of a revolutionary hero's burial. Instead, each year the Bund commemorated Lekert's martyrdom with mass meetings where popular songs, poems, and literary readings composed for the occasion were presented. Bund leaders reminded the assembled of Lekert's courage. On the gallows, when the noose became entangled, Lekert calmly slid it into place, and then adamantly refused the attending rabbi's entreaties to recite the traditional prayer of repentance.⁷

In America, affiliation by choice and the privatization of religious rituals further eroded the Orthodox institutions the immigrants brought with them. The

communal management of death as it was practiced in Eastern Europe quickly crumbled, and with it one of the sources of authority the Orthodox establishment might have retained. The 1912 murder of a notorious Jewish gang leader, Jack Zelig, illuminates the process. Zelig's underlings hired a well-known funeral director who arranged one of the most dignified and celebrated funerals the Jewish East Side had known. Talmud Torah children marched in the funeral procession, a prominent rabbi delivered the eulogy, and the gang-leader was laid to rest between the grave of playwright Jacob Gordin, one of the Jewish quarter's most illustrious figures, and an "eminent rabbi." In Europe, all three features of the Zelig funeral – religious school children leading the cortege, a rabbinical eulogy, and burial among the elect – were reserved for the most distinguished departed alone. In the "old home," the entire Yiddish press fulminated, a common criminal like Zelig would have been ignominiously buried "beyond the cemetery fence." Indeed, in an immigrant quarter fragmented by the parochialism of old-town loyalties and engulfed by conflicting ideologies, who awarded the "high honors," and to whom, and why?⁸

The advent of the mass funeral in the early 1900s addressed some of these issues. Ad hoc "arrangements committees" filled the absence – and impossibility – of judgment by conventional communal authority. Drawn from circles associated with the personage to be memorialized, committees summoned the public to take part in a demonstration of mourning and unity. How high the honors was measured by numbers and fervor.

The first mass funeral on the Jewish East Side – estimates ran from 50,000 to 100,000 – was in honor of Rabbi Jacob Joseph, the most eminent East European rabbi in America at the time of his death. In 1888, a number of East Side congregations had banded together and invited Jacob Joseph, the community preacher of Vilna, to serve as their "chief rabbi." The association's lay leaders hoped that Rabbi Joseph's renown as one of Vilna's leading rabbis – his Talmudic erudition, piety, celebrated preaching and communal experience – would enable him to rebuild the Orthodox communal life of New York's immigrants. The experiment was a dismal failure. Before long the congregations faulted on their financial commitment to the rabbi, he took ill, and on July 28, 1902, he died in poverty. Historians who have taken note of the funeral have presented it as the denouement of the one attempt to create in America an Orthodox authority as it existed in Eastern Europe; or, they have focused on the riot that erupted when Irish factory workers pelted the cortege as it passed their place of work. However, neither the denouement nor riot perceptions of the funeral should distract from the event itself as public drama in which thousands took part. The summons to pay one's last respects to the saintly rabbi by accompanying him to his grave, made more poignant and compelling by the years of indifference to his plight, was a call for spiritual awakening and communal solidarity.⁹

In many respects, as one would presume, the funeral resembled that of the burial of a great rabbi in Eastern Europe. The funeral of Rabbi Isaac Elhanan Spektor of Kovno, the most illustrious of the East European rabbis of his time, offers a basis for comparison.

News of the Kovno sage's death in the early hours of Friday, March 6, 1896 spread by word of mouth throughout the city and neighboring villages. In Vilna, mourning notices were posted in the courtyards of the synagogues early enough for a delegation of prominent rabbis and laymen to arrive in time for the interment. In Kovno, stores, workshops and schools closed as "men, women and children" streamed to the rabbi's home and crammed together waiting for the funeral to begin. (Meanwhile, the ritual washing of the body *tahara* took place in the home.) Students of the rabbi's academy, the *perushim*, carried the coffin on their shoulders from the home to the synagogue he frequented, and then, at the request of the head of the municipal council, along the main avenue to a more spacious synagogue for the eulogies. Following the eulogies, the thousands of mourners – newcomers adding to the congestion – followed the coffin by foot to the cemetery where more eulogies were delivered before the interment. Because of the onset of sabbath, the funeral was held the same day, and the leading rabbis and public figures of Russian Jewry who were informed by telegram were unable to attend. During the procession, police and "high officials" enforced order, mounted police opening a wedge for the procession while others protected those carrying the coffin from the crush of the crowd. The governor of the province, chief of police, and the mayor of the city joined the procession.¹⁰

In describing the demeanor of the thousands of mourners, the accounts in the Hebrew press stressed the unrepressed expressions of grief. The "tens of thousands following the coffin walked and wept, walked and mourned, and there was no end to the hot tears that were shed." And,

not only the Talmud Torah youngsters and the scholars from all the schools chanted aloud the verse 'Righteousness shall go before him and shall set his steps on the way,' but everyone joined in repeating the psalms and prayers as they accompanied the sage to his final resting place. And the voices of the mourners rose and were heard from afar and touched the hearts and innermost being of all.¹¹

The score of eulogies, fewer in number because of the approaching sabbath, dwelt on Isaac Elhanan's merits: his wisdom and compassion, the profundity and originality of his writings, his humanity in interpreting personal law, his public service as conciliator and diplomat, and his humility. Nearly all of the eulogies were delivered by eminent rabbis who interspersed their orations with learned expositions of Biblical and Talmudic texts. The didactic purposes were evident in the calls for religious rededication and piety.¹²

In some respects, the public funeral of Jacob Joseph could have taken place in Vilna or Kovno, but mingled with the traditional notes were also American ones.

Surely, the role of the press was the most innovative, both in its immediate and exhaustive coverage of the events and in its hortatory role. On July 29, 1902, the Yiddish dailies informed New York's Jews of Jacob Joseph's death. The *Tageblatt's* headline proclaimed: "The spiritual giant of our generation died yesterday at midnight; from a poor family grew a living encyclopedia who made a great name for himself in two worlds." The paper called on all New York Jews to close their stores and pay the great scholar the high honor in death which they had not rendered him in life by attending the funeral. Newspaper accounts described the rabbi's final hours, named the lay leaders and rabbis who came to the family home on Henry Street to bid farewell to the dying rabbi, and noted the arrival of the *hevra kadisha* to perform the ritual washing. The *New York Times* reported:

By daybreak, Henry Street, for several blocks in both directions, had become crowded to suffocation with the mourners. Men and women of all ages, long-bearded patriarchs, mothers with babies in their arms, young girls and boys jostled and pushed each other, all trying to get as near the house as possible. The wailing and chanting echoed from all sides.

Finally, the remains, in an "unpainted white pine box," were taken to the waiting carriage, a task that required police reinforcements to complete.¹³

As the funeral procession proceeded along the predetermined route "thousands of Jews," the *Tageblatt* wrote, "pressed forward, endangering their lives, hoping to touch the hearse, at least with a finger." The police officers marching in front and alongside the hearse were swept aside, *The Times* reported, by "enthusiastic" spectators. Ahead of the hearse, Talmud Torah children walked reciting psalms followed by Orthodox rabbis from New York and other cities. Behind the hearse came several thousand on foot; then came more than 200 carriages carrying representatives of synagogues and institutions, each carriage with the organization's name displayed on the window, and others occupied by the most prominent mourners. Tens of thousands packed the sidewalks, tenement-house roofs, stoops and fire-escapes. Frequently, the line of march was disrupted temporarily as the teeming crowds spilled onto the street. The procession paused in front of a number of synagogues where prayers and brief tributes were offered. At the Beth Hamidrash Hagadol on Norfolk Street, the original plan of bringing the coffin into the synagogue and delivering the main eulogies had to be abandoned. When the riot broke out at the Hoe and Company factory on Grand Street – the fracas lasted about an hour – the hearse and many of the mourners had reached the East River ferry house on the way to the Union Fields Cemetery in Brooklyn.¹⁴

At the cemetery, the mood of reverence, remorse, fervor and commotion continued. Horse cars brought nearly 15,000 persons to the cemetery well before the hearse and the carriages arrived. Five hours had elapsed since the funeral had begun, and the assembled were clearly impatient and under enormous emotional

stress. When the hearse approached “the pushing and shoving was terrible,” the *Tageblatt* wrote. “The crowd knocked over tombstones and climbed over fences in order to be close to the hearse.” An hour went by until a place was found where the eulogies could be delivered. The eulogists extolled the virtues of the late chief rabbi, “the star in the heaven which has been extinguished,” and chastized New York’s Jews who had “torn the leaves and branches from their greatest and most wonderful tree.” With tears of grief and contrition the assembled acknowledged their sins in failing to honor the saintly sage in his lifetime and to live up to his teachings. The waning day did not allow for all of the important rabbis present to deliver their eulogies. The time for the interment had arrived and with it a dispute as to where the grave should be dug. It was decided that the grave should be in the middle of an open area which would allow for burial plots to be sold to those who would pay for the privilege of being buried near the saintly rabbi.¹⁵

Arduous negotiating over the choice of the cemetery had preceded the wrangle over the location of the grave. The day of Jacob Joseph’s death, a committee representing some of the synagogues the chief rabbi had nominally served met to make the funeral arrangements. (At the same time the formation of a committee to raise funds for the support of the widow was announced.) The main issue the arrangements committee faced was which congregation would win the privilege of having the deceased interred in its cemetery land. Having the saintly rabbi buried in a congregation’s cemetery added to its sanctity and raised the value of the burial plots. Unseemly as the bidding between the congregations may appear (the Beth Hamidrash Hagadol on Norfolk Street won out), it was a means of raising pension funds for the rabbi’s widow whose consent was necessary for the choice of a burial site; and one must assume that the future cemetery profits were intended to support the synagogue. In the end, the episode with its competitive and commercial overtones, an impossibility in Europe, cast but a small shadow on the first massive display of old-country Orthodoxy in the great metropolis.¹⁶

Indeed the public display of Orthodox Judaism received laudatory and even reverential treatment in the mass-circulation press, an impossibility in Europe. In announcing Jacob Joseph’s death, the *New York Times* embellished its account by titling him “the highest official in the orthodox Jewish religion in the United States.” Reporting on the funeral the following day, the paper explained that “never had a man so well beloved by the Orthodox Jews died in this country, nor had there been another opportunity since those Jews came to number hundreds of thousands in this city for them to unite in a public observance that appealed so strongly to every one of them.” For the general public the description of the funeral and the interpretation of the ritual were both edifying and touching. Detailing the arrival at the rabbi’s home of the *hevra kadisha* bearing “an unpainted white pine box,” the report explained that “like others of his belief, he was to be buried in this unadorned box, an outward indication that death leveled all equally.” The entire Jewish quarter “from the wealthy storekeeper to the

pushcart man," *The Times* account noted, were in mourning for the dead leader "who, although he had a chance to accumulate a fortune, spent all his money for charity." The facts were embellished with the best of intentions.¹⁷

The didactic opportunity Jacob Joseph's funeral presented is especially evident in the English page of the *Tageblat*. For Kasriel Sarasohn, the Orthodox publisher of the *Tageblat*, the "English Department" of his daily was the medium for interpreting Orthodox Judaism to the non-Yiddish reader. The report of the funeral began with the words, "Never before has one been given so thrilling a conception of the austerity, the inspiring simplicity of Judaism." Scores of thousands accompanied "the righteous traveler on his last journey," the account continued, "huddled close to the plain black hearse, in which the plain pine box reposed, holding the remains of the plain man, garbed in plain white, shrouded in his talith and kittel, who wended his way to his simple grave in the same simple manner he lived." There were no "crashing bands," no "panoply of purple," and no flowers (possibly an illusion to Italian funerals and to the majestic funeral of the recently deceased Catholic Archbishop of New York). A simple informality marked the occasion.

New York's Jewry left the work bench, put down its tools, closed its shops and stores, and went out to accompany this simple man for at least part of the way on his final journey, went out in their workday costumes – without ornament, not even the formal black, to bid him farewell, with all the thrilling, awe-inspiring simplicity that is the sweetest charm of Judaism. ... The solemn procession passed through the ghetto without order and yet without confusion.¹⁸

Two years later the death of Sarasohn himself was the occasion for another public expression of bereavement for a leading figure of New York's Orthodox Jewish community and an opportunity to reaffirm the values of Orthodox Judaism and demonstrate its sentimental hold upon the Jewish masses. Scion of a line of rabbis and scholars, Sarasohn was best known as the founder and publisher of the first Yiddish daily newspaper. He was famed for his philanthropy and support of Orthodox institutions, most notably the Hebrew Sheltering Home (*Hachnoset Orchim*) and the Machzikei Talmud Torah. His contribution to the Beth Hamidrash Hagadol had enabled the congregation to gain the honor of burying Jacob Joseph in its cemetery. On Sarasohn's death, the congregation rewarded him with the plot closest to the chief rabbi.¹⁹

In its broad contours, the Sarasohn funeral was identical with the funeral of Jacob Joseph. Yet there were some significant differences. Most outstanding was the turnabout in the relations between the police and the Jewish public. The entire press commented that the police had learned much from the earlier funeral when they had failed to respond to the disorders in time and in adequate strength, and then had acted brutally, prompted in no so small measure by anti-Jewish feelings.²⁰ At the start of Sarasohn's funeral, when it became apparent that double the estimated 50,000 mourners would turn out, 200 additional policemen

under the personal command of the inspector of police were rushed to the scene. Although force was used at several points to prevent the hearse from being mobbed and later on to block frenzied mourners from storming the Beth Hamidrash Hagadol where the main eulogies were held, the *Tageblat* praised "Inspector Titus and Captain Shaw and everyone of the three hundred men under their command for excellent work." Both the Inspector and the Captain, the *Tageblat* emphasized, had taken particular pains "to instruct the policemen under their command that the crowds were to be handled with the utmost gentleness." The *New York Sun* explained that the police had been informed of "the orthodox Hebrew superstition which makes it an honor to touch the coffin of a rabbi or holy man. They were prepared for a rush, therefore, when the coffin was carried to the hearse and met it with drawn clubs and managed to hold the line."²¹

The arrangements committee's most sensitive task was choosing the eulogists. In this connection the committee orchestrated a precedent-making mix of Old World Orthodoxy, insipient New World Orthodoxy, and uptown establishment Jewry. At the Beth Hamidrash Hagadol, where the coffin had been placed in the center of the sanctuary, the rabbinical orators, in the Old World tradition, used the awesome presence of the body of a revered leader, to call for repentance and rededication. As the *Evening Post* expressed it, "Except for Dr. H. Pereira Mendes" – the one non-East European rabbi to speak – "the object of every rabbi was to excite the audience by his speech to tears and loud lamentations." Sarasohn was extolled for his piety, modesty, learning and generosity. Well before he became renowned for his philanthropy, the assembled were told, while still struggling to support his family, he shared the "food on his table" with the less fortunate. There were so many speakers, the *Evening Post* noted, that each was limited to five minutes. The eulogy by the English speaking Rabbi Mendes, the honored places in the synagogue assigned to Rabbi Bernard Drachman, Harry Fischel and Joseph H. Cohen – all representing modern Orthodox institutions – and the five-minute limit on eulogies were all signs of a modernizing Orthodox Judaism.²² More notable and more noticeable was the prominence given to representatives of the established Americanized Jewish community, and above all, to the banker and philanthropist Jacob H. Schiff. Schiff eulogized the publisher at the Hebrew Sheltering and Old Age Home, the first stop the cortege made. His remarks were the most widely quoted of all the eulogies. Schiff spoke of his long acquaintance with Sarasohn and of his magnanimity. "Although rigidly Orthodox, he was not narrow. He was the friend of all movements for the benefit of his brethren, and his sympathies were broad. He was the link connecting the two elements uptown and downtown."²³

To properly honor and highlight the participation of representatives of uptown Jewry, the arrangements committee named them "honorary pallbearers," a titular designation unknown in the Jewish burial rite. The list of honorary pallbearers was published in the English daily press when the arrangements for the funeral were announced but did not appear in the *Tageblat*. The list included, in addition

to Schiff, such other uptown notables as Louis Marshall, Nathan Bijur, Henry Rice, G.P. Solomon, Kaufman Mandell; communal functionaries Lee K. Frankel, Philip Cowan, and David Blaustein; and Orthodox lay leaders Joseph H. Cohen and Harry Fishel. The *Tageblat* did single them out by name as those who accompanied the body from Sarasohn's residence on East Broadway to the Hebrew Sheltering Home several buildings away, and from there to the Beth Hamidrash Hagadol. Their participation symbolized an extension of the commemoration beyond the downtown Orthodox. That act and the satisfactory handling of the funeral were, one may assume, the result of the experience and skills gained in the wake of the Jacob Joseph episode no less than the ambitions of the deceased publisher and his followers.²⁴

The funeral of Jacob Gordin, the celebrated Yiddish dramatist and political radical, which took place on Sunday, June 13, 1909, introduced a new cultural, indeed, political content to the solemn observance. The funeral was secular; thus it allowed paying homage – civic homage – to a playwright, whose vocation as artist and social critic and whose flamboyant public behavior hardly met the criteria for a traditional tribute. But the idiom of remembrance combined the worldly with the godly. “Hold this day sacred,” the *Forverts* wrote. “Gather together at his grave. Gather together in your meeting halls. Bring wreaths of flowers with you. Jacob Gordin is dead.”²⁵ Every Jew and every child of the Jewish people, the *Warheit* urged, “should accompany one of the great poets of all peoples... to his eternal rest, he who years on end ploughed the soil of his people and planted there the seeds of culture, civilization and progress.”²⁶ The summons to escort a revered figure to his grave was, of course, in keeping with age old practice. Bringing wreaths of flowers was not. It violated Orthodox custom which insisted on the austere and the avoidance of the pleasurable, and it was associated with funerals of Gentiles.

The *Forverts* and the *Warheit*, which previously had been at loggerheads in judging Gordon's artistic worth, now united in praise of him. The “people's tribune,” both agreed, had dedicated his life and work to the moral and cultural elevation of his fellow Jews. His plays, panned by important critics when they appeared, were now lauded for the depth and truth of their message. His strident polemics, particularly his long-standing feud with Abe Cahan, editor of the *Forverts*, were buried beneath the paper's adulations. And if the socialist camp quite properly claimed him for theirs, both papers emphasized Gordin's universal message and called on all Jews of all political and religious views to attend the funeral and honor the mentor and bard of the Jewish people. The day before the funeral the *Warheit* expressed its wish this way:

We hope the funeral will pass into American history as the funeral of General Grant had, and we hope that the funeral of Jacob Gordin will be even greater and nobler than Grant's, because Gordin's greatness was achieved not on the field of battle, war, ruin, and blood, but on the field of labor, culture, civilization and progress.²⁷

The intended non-partisan cast of the funeral was personified by Joseph Barondess who agreed to head the arrangements committee of 75. Barondess' fame as the popular leader of the Jewish labor movement in the 1890s still resonated a decade later. By then he had become the proverbial *klal tu'er* – the ubiquitous communal doer – and beloved master-of-ceremonies, parade marshal and eulogizer. Barondess also commanded incomparably greater organizational resources than had the sponsors of the Jacob Joseph and Sarasohn funerals. By Friday evening – Gordon died shortly after midnight on Friday – trade union locals, political party branches, and literary societies were meeting to issue memorial resolutions and announce their participation in the funeral procession and memorial meeting. The Friday and Saturday editions of the *Warheit* and *Forverts* carried reports of these meetings, lists of participating societies, and updated details of the funeral arrangements including the names of the memorial meeting speakers (in some cases with their political affiliation). The *Warheit* pointedly noted the consultations that were held between Barondess and the police and between the police and the *Warheit*. In fact, the paper informed organizations intending to march with flags and music that the police prohibited such demonstrations because of the Sunday blue laws.²⁸

The funeral procession left Gordin's home in Brooklyn along a designated route across the Williamsburgh Bridge to the Thalia Theater on the Bowery near Canal Street, the site of the memorial meeting. None of the religious rites were observed. In fact, soon after his death, Sigmund Schwartz, the funeral director, arrived at Gordin's home with "embalmers" who in the presence of Gordin's friends, carried out the procedure. (Nor was any part of the interment service recited at the cemetery, although he was buried in a Jewish cemetery in a plot close to the grave of a rabbi.)²⁹ The crowds lining the streets on the way to the Thalia and from the theater along a circuitous route through the lower East Side and back again to the bridge were as large as on the earlier occasions. (The *Warheit* claimed that 20,000 marched in the procession and 200,000 watched.) The poet, Morris Rosenfeld, who reported on the funeral for the *Forverts*, described "the earnest stillness" of the standing crowds. "People felt as though a friend had died, the herald of free thought, and fighter for a better society." The *Warheit* evoked "the wonderful sense of orderliness... and the aura of solemnity and sanctity" that prevailed. Rosenfeld's pathos and the hyperbole of the *Warheit's* reporting and editorials prior to the funeral contributed to the mood of collective bereavement. In a Rosenfeld vignette, which he appended to his account of the funeral, the poet-journalist cast some light on the commercial side of bereavement. "Thousands of vendors," he remarked, "sold black mourning bands, buttons bearing Gordin's picture, wreaths and a choice of photographs of the deceased – the healthy Gordon, the robust, the fire-eyed, the dying Gordon on his deathbed with a compress on his head, and the dead Gordon." Selling souvenirs at the funerals of the famous went back at least to the funeral of Archbishop Michael Corrigan of New York in 1902. The *Times* reported that

“vendors of photographs and memorial buttons of the dead Archbishop... had to keep constantly adding to their supply to meet the demand.”³⁰

Descriptions of Gordin’s memorial meeting stressed the perfect decorum that prevailed, in the eyes of the participant observers proof positive of the solemnity of the occasion and the reverence harbored for the deceased. Ushers assured that ticket-holders only were admitted and were seated in good order. At 9:45 a.m., representatives of several hundred organizations and institutions, bearing wreaths and garlands of flowers, filed through the theater and placed their tributes on the black and purple draped stage in front of a giant picture of Gordin. Promptly at 10:00 a.m. – as announced – eight of the leading figures of Yiddish cultural and radical life carried in the coffin. The audience rose, the theater choir sang the prologue from Gordin’s famous drama, *God, Man and Devil*, and a wave of sobbing swept the theater. Baroness, who was presiding, quieted the audience with the admonition that consideration for the presence of the bereaved family required self-restraint. When in the midst of his eulogy the actor Jacob Adler broke down “wailing like a child,” the audience wailed with him until Baroness signaled for silence. There were other outbursts of weeping which he swiftly quieted. At the conclusion of the speeches, Baroness with a sure hand orchestrated and supervised the recessional. All waited in their places until the coffin, borne by a second group of eight prominent artists and literary figures, and the family, left the theater; then Baroness dismissed the assembled row by row as though it were a school assembly.³¹

The program itself began with the Halevi Choral Society singing the “Pilgrim’s Chorus” from Wagner’s *Tannhauser*. (“People sobbed quietly,” Rosenfeld wrote, moved by the musical image of “the great pilgrim’s *oleh regel* pilgrimage to the temple of the immortals.”) Sixteen speakers – one account had the number as 30 – drawn from the East Side’s lecture platforms and theater world followed. From among the former, the majority – Morris Winchevsky, Louis Miller, Chaim Zhitlovsky, Hillel Zolotarov, Saul Yanovsky, and Abraham Goldberg – belonged to the national-radical intelligentsia. (Cahan’s absence from the list of eulogists should be noted; however, two of his *Forverts* co-workers, Rosenfeld and Avraham Liessen, delivered eulogies at the grave.) Boris Thomashevsky, David Kessler, and Adler spoke on behalf of the Yiddish actors. All spoke in Yiddish. During the more than two hours of eulogizing, the coffin’s lid was removed. The *Warheit* noted that “Gordin’s body was in full view not only of those on the stage, but of the entire theater. Anyone who stood-up could see his beautiful countenance.” The open coffin violated religious law.³²

Rosenfeld summed up the memorial meeting well:

When all the eulogies and lamentations were over, people didn’t want to leave the theater. An inner feeling drew them to the stage. One wanted to cheer and shout the familiar – ‘Gordin, bravo Gordin.’ Instinctively, one’s hands wanted to applaud for the author, calling him to the stage, at least for one brief moment...

but the 'funeral director' Barondess ordered the coffin removed. ... The curtain remained open, but the author failed to appear.³³

Indeed, public funerals made good theater, good parades and good press copy. For four days the festival went on. Scores of organizations met to discuss their part in the funeral, and the Yiddish dailies turned these meetings and the planning of the funeral into banner news for a million Yiddish readers. When the climactic day came probably a quarter of downtown's Jews took part in the procession and provided the stuff for the following day's papers. The funeral pageant was one sort of endeavor to sanctify the radical and secular view of Jewish life. The arrangements committee, the eulogists and the bearers of the coffin represented a spectrum of the secular left. They were able to rally around the death of a literary figure because, on the one hand, he was identified with Jewish radicalism, and, on the other hand, as a dramatist he was above political factionalism and sectarianism.³⁴ It was a rare moment of unity made possible by the massive, predictable response of the Jewish public to a hallowed rite. However, the secular celebration also made a provocative statement. Embalming (rather than the *tahara*), Tannhauser (rather than the "El mole rakhmim" prayer), hundreds of wreaths, and – most distressing because it ran counter not only to Jewish practice but to Jewish sensibility – exposure of the corpse (the centerpiece of the memorial meeting) were for many not only sacrilegious, but a vulgar aping of the gentiles. Interestingly, in reporting the funeral, the *Morgen Zhurnal*, the conservative Orthodox daily, showed remarkable restraint. Its front page account, although barely a column in length, was straightforward and respectful. However, the paper simply ignored those acts that ran against the Orthodox grain sanitizing the funeral for its readers. It showed no similar restraint in attacking "Gordinism." The day of the funeral the *Morgen Zhurnal* began its editorial by declaring that it had nothing against Gordin personally. He was the product of time and place. Growing up in Russia under the influence of "the intellectual and moral nihilism" of the 1870s and 1880s, he had become completely Russified, and by the time he came to America, he was too old to change his ways. He brought with him the Russian school of "fanaticism" and "class enmity" that was "corrupting" and "destructive," and this "fallacious radicalism" had to be opposed. "It was a matter of principle," the editors concluded.³⁵

"Matters of principle" were at the core of the dispute over honoring the dead of the calamitous Triangle Waist Company fire (March 25, 1911), in which 146 garment workers perished. The disaster, caused by flagrant violations of safety regulations including illegally locked exit doors, unleashed a wave of protest as intense as the mourning that enveloped the Jewish quarter.³⁶

A *Morgen Zhurnal* headline, "Grieving and wailing in all the streets," captured the depth of the calamity. Day after day the press provided the public with graphic accounts of the disaster and its aftermath. Photographs showed bodies of

those who had leapt in desperation from the windows of the ninth and tenth floor premises of the factory strewn on the sidewalk, and of the lines of corpses "set up head to head in two rows" in the temporary morgue waiting to be identified. The English as well as the Yiddish papers were filled with stories of the individual tragedies. The *New York Times* told of a young woman whose charred body was finally identified by a relative who recognized the signet ring and a gold cuff button he had given her.

She had taken an active part in the shirtwaist workers' strike last year in which the Triangle Company was the storm center... and was several times arrested and taken before the Magistrate... along with other girl victims of the fire. She was Yetta Goldstein."

Yetta was about to be married, the *Forverts* reported. The paper called on all Bialystock landslyt to attend the funeral. Fifteen-year old Esther Rosen was summoned by the police to identify her mother, a widow. She did so by the hair she had braided for her. Four days later she returned to the morgue and identified her 17 year old brother by a ring. About their funeral the *Forverts* wrote, "three orphans followed the coffins crying and screaming, the streets packed until the bridge."³⁷

Jewish organizations began functioning at once. Families belonging to fraternal orders, landsmanshaft societies, or synagogues could expect the necessary services. In fact, funerals were announced in the Yiddish press by the name of the order or organization arranging the funeral. For the considerable number of families or single people without such affiliations and without the means of paying the costs of a funeral and cemetery plot, communal agencies intervened. Several free burial societies and the Workmen's Circle fraternal order, which also handled referrals from the waistmakers union, arranged funerals and provided burial plots without cost. The undertaker Sigmund Schwartz announced his readiness to bury the Triangle fire victims free. A bare 18 hours after the fire, the executive committee of the New York Kehillah ("The Jewish Community of New York City") met with representatives of the agencies concerned, and with representatives of the Yiddish newspapers, to coordinate emergency aid and raise funds "in view of the loss to many families of their wage earners." The Kehillah, established in 1909 by prominent figures from the established and immigrant communities and led by Rabbi Judah L. Magnes, claimed to speak for the majority of the Jewish organizations of the city. In that capacity, it issued a public statement expressing "its horror and sorrow at the calamity that has befallen so many of its children and the children of other people in the terrible fire," and its readiness "to be of service to the city government in taking proper steps to remove conditions that could have permitted such a harrowing catastrophe."³⁸

Almost immediately, the question of prerogative was raised. Who were to be the chief mourners? To which community did the victims belong? The great

majority of the shirtwaistmakers who perished – mostly young women – were Jewish. However, a considerable number were of Italian origin. The Triangle workers were also closely identified with a trade union that considered itself guardian and chief plaintiff of its membership; and it claimed the privilege to bury, commemorate, and avenge its dead. In the fall of 1909, members of Local 25 of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), the “martyred” Yetta Goldstein among them, had led the walkout which triggered the general strike of the shirtwaist industry. During the four-month strike, the women of Local 25 had won fame and sympathy for manning the picket lines in the face of police brutality and attacks by hoodlums. More than any other strike, the “Uprising of the 20,000” dramatized the economic discrimination and sexual harassment working women faced. Now the union intended to mobilize the entire labor movement and turn the funerals and memorial meetings into giant demonstrations against the manufacturers, the capitalist system and lax municipal regulations and regulators. Feminists, particularly the Women’s Trade Union League (WTUL), who had collaborated so fully with the waistemakers’ union in 1909, protested the powerlessness of women, but they offered no woman’s way of commemorating the mass death of women workers. They gave skills, money and leadership to help organize the demonstrations, and also the protest movement’s most effective voice, Rose Schneiderman, the WTUL and union organizer.³⁹

The unions and their ally were challenged by a third authority asserting its prerogative: the mayor, William J. Gaynor, representing the diversity of New York’s citizenry. His commissioners of police, fire, and charities, declared the municipality responsible for honoring the victims, investigating criminal acts that may have occurred and encouraging the charitable initiatives of civic bodies.⁴⁰

Protest meetings, memorial meetings, and meetings to raise funds took place beginning the day after the fire and continued for more than a week. The first, on March 26th, met under the auspices of the WTUL at its headquarters and called for a citizens committee of inquiry. On the 28th, Local 25 of the ILGWU held its protest meeting at Grand Central Palace where the audience interrupted Abe Cahan’s address to hiss the mayor’s name, then sobbed – scores fainting – when Jacob Panken, the chairman, asked for a moment of silent tribute, and resumed listening attentively to the conventional political speeches that followed. At a Cooper Union memorial on the 31st, sponsored by the suffrage league, socialist leaders Meyer London and Morris Hillquit joined Dr. Anna Shaw, the noted suffragist, in addressing the meeting. Once again the political message dominated. Two meetings took place on April 2nd, one held by the cloakmakers at the Grand Central Palace, and a second one at the Metropolitan Opera which was opened by Jacob Schiff and addressed by the city’s leading civic and religious leaders. The climax of the second meeting, where a number of resolutions were passed and appeals for contributions made, was Rose

Schneiderman's slashing assault on the assembled. "We have tried you, citizens," she said.

We are trying you now, and you have a couple of dollars for the sorrowing mothers and daughters and sisters by way of a charity gift. ... I can't talk fellowship to you who are gathered here. Too much blood has been spilled. I know from experience it is up to the working people to save themselves. And the only way is through a strong working-class movement.⁴¹

But by far the most impressive and moving commemoration of the tragedy was the funeral of the seven unidentified victims. Bringing the unidentified dead to an honorable burial quickly claimed the public's attention. The press accounts of the scores of funerals with their focus on families grieving over their loved ones, contrasted sharply with the other dead, unknown by name and unmourned by kin. Civil sensibility and religious precept demanded that the community, the surrogate family, conduct these final rites with reverence and concern. However, in many circles the victims in their namelessness represented all who had perished, "murdered," in the *Forverts'* words, "by the profit fiend named 'capitalism.'"⁴²

On March 28th, the third day following the fire, Local 25 of the Waistmakers Union, the WTUL, and the Workmen's Circle, announced plans for "a great silent procession" that would follow the bodies of the unidentified from the morgue to Mount Zion Cemetery. Representatives of the main garment industry unions, building-trade unions, and Socialist Party branches pledged themselves to call upon their members to stop work and participate in the march. The date of the funeral demonstration depended upon the coroner's release of the bodies.⁴³

Negotiations with the mayor and coroner to finalize the date became entangled in a jurisdictional issue. The Hebrew Free Burial Society, which had buried 20 fire victims, was prepared to bury the unidentified dead (there were 29 at the time), on the condition that the proposed procession be cancelled. The society's director, H. E. Adelman, told *The Times* that "such a procession smacks of vainglory or advertisement (even if the advertising is of labor itself)... at a time of calamity and bereavement." Furthermore, during the Hebrew month of Nissan, which was about to begin, funeral orations and demonstrations were prohibited by Orthodox practice. In the *Morgen Zhurnal*, Adelman claimed that most of the victims were children of Orthodox parents "who should be buried in a strictly Orthodox cemetery without parades and marches." The officers of the waistmakers union argued that since most of the dead were union members "they had a right to bury them which ever way they thought best."⁴⁴

Two more days of negotiations were necessary before the problem was resolved. At one point, Charities Commissioner Michael Drummond, the city official most directly involved, consulted Archbishop John Murphy Farley on the proposal to bury the unidentified bodies in a Jewish cemetery. At another point, the union's

manager, Abraham Baroff, told Mayor Gaynor that "it was a point of union pride that decent burials had always been furnished every worker, whether in the union or not." Adelman of the Burial Society pressed his point that a political demonstration, even a "silent march," was an affront to observant Jews and a dishonor to the dead. Finally, the mayor accepted Commissioner Drummond's recommendation that the Charities Department bear the expenses of the funeral and bury the dead in city owned plots as a way of resolving the dispute. The burial ground was to be non-sectarian, to which the union agreed. The commissioner also recommended that the funeral be "private" preventing the "hysteria" that a "labor parade" would foment. The union objected, and, as we shall see, a compromise was arranged. Friday, March 31st, the coroner announced that the unclaimed bodies would be released for burial on Wednesday, April 5th.⁴⁵

The two events took place simultaneously but separately – the burial of the unidentified seven, and the troyermarsh, the funeral march, sponsored by the garment unions and the Women Trade Union League. The march was organized in two sections. The first consisted of the "Jewish unions" – as the *Forverts* put it – who assembled at Rutgers Square at the foot of the Forward Building. At 1:30 p.m. the procession began, an empty hearse drawn by six horses at its head, followed by the survivors of the fire, the waistmakers union and contingents from 60 other garment workers unions. Most wore black and many wore badges with the legend, "We mourn our loss." The uptown section – the "non-Jewish unions," leaders of the suffrage movement and socialists – which had assembled at Fourth Avenue and Twenty-second Street, met the downtown marchers at Washington Square. At the last minute the police diverted the downtown section from passing by the Asch Building where the Triangle Company was located. But the building was seen from a distance, and that was the one occasion when the silence of the marchers was broken by uncontrolled weeping. The two segments, now joined, proceeded up Fifth Avenue dispersing at Madison Park. At its head, marching arm-in-arm, were Rose Schneiderman, suffragist and labor organizer, Mary Dreier, the wealthy and socially prominent president of the Women's Trade Union League, and Helen Marot, the league's secretary. Despite pouring rain, 120,000 people took part, according to the police estimate, and twice that number watched. Shops and factories closed. By agreement with the police, there were no banners or placards. The "silent march" lasted six hours. The day of the funeral the *Morgen Zhurnal* called on the organizers to avoid turning the occasion into a political demonstration, pitting class against class. "Ideologies and politics should be set aside, opponents and enemies forgotten, and all should bow their heads and grieve silently over the victims of the horrendous misfortune." For the *Forverts*, the troyermarsh was a demonstration of nobility and sense of duty, and of the unity and strength of the unions.⁴⁶

Only an official party of six was present when the seven coffins, six women and one man, were taken from the morgue to the Twenty-third Street ferry where

several hundred mourners joined the party. A few thousand more waited at the entrance of the Evergreen Cemetery, part of the Cypress Hill Cemetery, in Brooklyn. The burial rites were ecumenical. At the graveside, Commissioner Drummond spoke briefly of the city's sorrow. A Catholic clergymen read the service over one body, an Episcopalian minister over a second, and Rabbi Magnes recited the kaddish. A quartet from an Elks Lodge sang "Abide with Me" and "Nearer, My God, to Thee." The demonstration was another matter. It blended class and gender, personified by the waistmakers union with its largely female membership and by the loyal support of the Women's Trade Union League and the garment unions. Class and gender were also multi-ethnic. The thousands of handbills distributed during the days before the funeral urging all workers to leave their shops and factories and participate in the march appeared in English, Yiddish and Italian. In sheer numbers and influence – victims and survivors, union leaders and members, organizational support and public protest – the Jewish immigrant populace contributed most to the Triangle affair. Notwithstanding, in the realm of public commemoration hardly a distinctly Jewish voice was heard or a Jewish symbol seen.⁴⁷

Sholom Aleichem's public funeral in May 1916 differed from all of its American predecessors. For a moment, it promised a restoration and American adaptation of the venerated tradition of an entire community paying homage to a revered figure and by that act reaffirming its basic unity and sense of common fate. Sholom Aleichem, one of the giants and founding fathers of modern Yiddish literature, may well have been the most illustrious Russian Jew to settle in the United States, although he arrived in New York only in December 1914 just a year and a half before his death. His fame as the self-effacing but wise observer of the tribulations of shtetl life had won him international notice. More importantly, his work was acclaimed by all sectors of the Yiddish public. In America, the Orthodox *Tageblatt*, the socialist *Forverts*, the radical *Warheit* and the nationalist-centrist *Tog*, in turn, praised his empathy for tradition, his social criticism and proletarian sensibility, and his nationalist pride. All four papers had published his stories at one time or another. In short, more than Jacob Joseph, Jacob Gordin or the Triangle fire tragedy, Sholom Aleichem's death provided the opportunity to bring together the most disparate elements of the Jewish immigrant community in a demonstration of affection and reverence.

In her fine study of the funeral, Ellen Kellman examined the manner in which the planners seized the opportunity. Soon after his death in his Bronx apartment, the family, together with close friends of the author, chose an arrangements committee which requested Judah Magnes to organize the funeral. As chairman of the New York Kehillah, Magnes was nominally the most representative figure of the Jewish community and much-esteemed by immigrant and establishment leaders alike. Using the Kehillah organization, he was in a position to move quickly in planning and coordinating the event. The Yiddish press enabled him to provide the public with details of the preparations for the funeral and cues for

understanding its communal character: the names of the arrangements committee and the cooperating bodies, the route of the march, the places the procession would pause for memorial prayers and eulogies, and the roster of speakers. Jews were implored to stop work and attend the funeral. "Jewish workers, it is your Sholom Aleichem," the *Forverts* declared.⁴⁸

Kellman argues that by directing the funeral, Magnes hoped to bolster the Kehillah's standing at a time when the organization was "facing a deep crisis of confidence." Caught in the bitter controversy between radical, Zionist and "establishment" circles over the proposal to create a democratically elected American Jewish Congress – in which the Kehillah was playing a mediating role – and opposed by the more conservative Orthodox rabbinate, Sholom Aleichem's death "provided the Kehillah with an opportunity to assert the unity of New York's Jews through the symbolism of the funeral pageant."⁴⁹

Unlike Gordin's funeral, Sholom Aleichem's funeral rigorously followed traditional ritual, although the writer himself was not observant. However, unlike Jacob Joseph's funeral, but foreshadowed by Sarasohn's funeral, the content and symbolism of Sholom Aleichem's funeral were designed to appeal to the different factions in Jewish life. Kellman has examined the intertwining of the two components of the funeral: the "pageant" itself, and those who played a public role in the proceedings. The arrangements committee had a distinctly Zionist complexion, more cultural than political. All except Magnes were Yiddish speaking secularists and several – the playwright Dovid Pinski and the prominent Russian revolutionist, Pinkhes Rutenberg – possessed respectable radical credentials.⁵⁰ The first decision of the committee was to invite over a hundred Yiddish writers, probably none of whom were observant, to take turns keeping vigil over the body. The Orthodox precept not to leave the body unattended – Sholom Aleichem died Saturday morning and the funeral was held on Monday – was thus given a dramatic and ecumenical twist. Ten prominent Yiddish writers were chosen to carry the coffin from the house to the horse-drawn hearse. A contingent of Yiddish writers was first in line in the procession. Finally, five of the 11 eulogists were Yiddish writers. As Kellman notes: "The extensive involvement of Yiddish writers in the public ceremonial aspects of the funeral added much to its solemnity and pageantry, and brought the image of Sholom Aleichem as an icon of the Jewish nation into relief." One might add that the choice of writers, drawn from every literary and political strand of the Yiddish cultural world, also appeased those radicals who may have been discomfited by the prominence of the Kehillah and its "bourgeois-Zionist promoters."⁵¹

The funeral details were orchestrated with great care. Just prior to the funeral the *Tog* described the "three old Jews with long beards" from the Pereyaslaver landsmanshaft society arriving to perform the *tahara* and clothe the body in shrouds and prayer shawl. (The widow was from Pereyaslav.) As the coffin was

taken from the house, Kellman points out, the “El mole rakhamim” memorial prayer was chanted by the cantor of a Bronx Reform temple, and at the head of the funeral procession, children from an Orthodox Talmud Torah and from the National Radical Yiddish School marched reciting psalms. The first stop the cortege made was the Ohab Zedek congregation, a modern Orthodox synagogue located in Harlem. On the steps of the synagogue, the congregation’s famous cantor, Yossele Rosenblatt, chanted the “El mole rakhamim.” The cortege continued south along Fifth Avenue and then Madison Avenue until it reached the United Hebrew Charities Building, on Twenty-first Street and Second Avenue, which housed the Kehillah offices. Crowds as large as those in the Bronx and Harlem awaited the cortege. The Yiddish Writers and Newspaper Guild, which had assembled in the Forward Building, marched four abreast up Second Avenue to join other delegations for the memorial service (*hazkara*) in front of the Charities Building which were led, once more, by Rosenblatt. As the procession continued on towards the lower East Side, the numbers of marchers and onlookers grew. Six mounted policemen now led the cortege, and a line of police flanked the hearse on each side. The cortege passed by the Yiddish theaters. Opposite the headquarters of the Hebrew Actors Union, a company of actors led by Jacob Adler fell into line behind the hearse. At the Educational Alliance the procession halted, and the coffin was brought into the auditorium for the main memorial service. Magnes spoke in English and read the ethical will Sholom Aleichem had asked to be opened on the day of his death. Pinski, the poet Yehoash (Solomon Bloomgarden), and the popular preacher Zevi Masliansky spoke in Yiddish; Israel Friedlaender of the Jewish Theological Seminary followed in Hebrew. The dignitaries on the podium included Jacob Schiff, Rabbi Joseph Silverman of Reform Temple Emanuel, Rabbi H. Pereira Mendes of the Spanish and Portugese Synagogue, Leon Sanders, the president of Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) and a former municipal judge, several orthodox rabbis associated with the Kehillah, and Jacob Adler, Chayim Zhitlovski, and Leon Motzkin, the European Zionist leader. As the *American Hebrew* expressed it, “On the platform and in the audience were the leaders of Jewish life.” The procession stopped once more, at the HIAS headquarters, where Rosenblatt repeated the memorial prayer.⁵²

The funeral procession had traversed the entire length of the city, from the Bronx, through Manhattan to the lower East Side, and then through Brooklyn to the Mount Nebo cemetery in Cypress Hills. People joined it at various junctures, others waited along the way for the cortege to pass, and many gathered at the designated stations for the memorial services. Altogether, between 150,000 to 250,000 participated in the funeral pageant. A considerable number travelled to the cemetery to be present at the interment where additional eulogies were offered. The Yiddish writers Sholem Asch and Abraham Raisin spoke, as well as the Yiddish socialist poet, Morris Winchevsky, the socialist Zionist publicist, Nahman Syrkin, and the visiting European Zionist leader, Shmaryahu Levin.⁵³

Sholom Aleichem's funeral was a remarkable event. The organizers adapted the religious commandment to "accompany" a famous personage from home-to-cemetery to the geography of the metropolis and its dispersed centers of Jewish population. (*Der Tog* commented that there were in fact three separate funerals: the Bronx, Harlem and the lower East Side.⁵⁴ They also orchestrated, with much circumspection, the mode of communal homage paid to the beloved writer. The European custom of routing the funeral procession of an eminent figure by the institutions he was associated with was applied in Sholom Aleichem's funeral to stress the existence of a united community. The combination of institutions selected for the sites of the memorial prayers evoked, in Kellman's words, "the domains central to conventional Jewish life: religious practice, self-government, education, and charity."⁵⁵

Sholom Aleichem himself sounded two dissenting notes apropos his own funeral. In his will he asked that his burial be temporary until circumstances allowed permanent reburial in Kiev, Russia. He was, after all, a sojourner in America, linked even in death to the "old home." (In 1921, when it became clear that his wish to be buried permanently in Russia could not be met, he was reburied in the Workmen's Circle Mount Carmel Cemetery.) Sholom Aleichem also requested that he "be buried not among aristocrats, but among ordinary Jewish working folk," in defiance of European convention but surely in accord with the ideals of his radical admirers. For immigrants, agitated and alarmed over the fate of family and friends in war-torn Eastern Europe, mourning and honoring him became a collective act of grief for the world he portrayed, which was also the world they had so recently abandoned. For the planners, the pageant was intended to be a paean to Jewish unity at a time of national crisis.⁵⁶

It was the closest to a state funeral one could come to, a final rite of passage for the humble hero who had served his people faithfully and whose memory and writings would be a source of national inspiration. Only the funeral of the Yiddish writer Isaac Leib Peretz, a year earlier in Warsaw, rivaled the funeral of Sholom Aleichem. In the midst of war and devastation, in a city overrun with refugees, the death of Peretz – the teacher and comforter of his people like Sholom Aleichem – united the "folk-masses" in grief. Delegations representing the entire spectrum of organized Jewish life – from hasidim to Polonized Jews – marched in the massive funeral procession that brought Peretz to his grave; and youth, "some with red insignia and others with blue and white insignia kept order along the march." Thus a particular concurrence of events produced the state-like funeral of Sholom Aleichem: acute anxiety pervaded New York's immigrant public; a renowned, non-controversial figure who personified the shared concerns and culture of the Jewish populace had died; and an ostensibly all-embracing communal agency sponsored the pageant.⁵⁷

Such a confluence of circumstances would not occur again. The death of Jacob Schiff, American Jewry's greatest philanthropist and one of its most eminent

figures, brought no mass funeral pageant, nor would the consummate patrician or his family have allowed it. (Schiff left instructions that there be no eulogies and that no flowers be sent.)⁵⁸ The funeral (September 1920) was a restrained affair. The service was conducted in Temple Emanuel by the congregation's rabbi in the presence of Governor Al Smith, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Oscar and Nathan Straus and other distinguished guests. Outside the temple, crowds gathered, including many who had walked from the lower East Side. Following the services, as *The Times* reported, "Governor Smith and the members of his military staff followed the pallbearers from the church, preceding the surviving members of the family." When the procession turned into Park Avenue, delegations from Jewish societies fell in line and marched the 20 blocks to the Queensboro Bridge. The courtly tribute paid to Schiff stands out in dramatic contrast to the Sholom Aleichem pageant.⁵⁹

Nor did the funeral of Rabbi Moses S. Margolies (Ramaz), the dean of the American Orthodox rabbinate who died in 1936, evoke the mass participation and emotion that Jacob Joseph's funeral had, Ramaz's spiritual predecessor. Rabbi for 31 years of the affluent Kehillath Jeshurun Congregation on the upper East Side, he had played a leading role in the major educational and philanthropic enterprises of the Orthodox community. The memorial services took place in the synagogue in the presence of four hundred rabbis, according to *The Times*.⁶⁰ Three rabbis, representing the institutions Ramaz had been most closely identified with delivered the eulogies: Joseph H. Lookstein, the associate rabbi of Kehillat Jeshurun Congregation and grandson of Ramaz, Bernard Dov Revel, dean of Yeshiva College, and Joseph Kanowitz, president of the Agudat Ha-rabanim (the Union of Orthodox Rabbis). (At Ramaz's home, prior to the memorial service, eight rabbinic scholars delivered eulogies following the *tahara*.) The *Morgen Zhurnal* described the anguish that overcame the eulogists forcing them to interrupt their remarks and the sobbing that swept the packed synagogue in response. The paper estimated that five thousand mourners waited in the street in front of the synagogue. *The Times* noted that 16 policemen were sufficient to keep order. (One should recall that two to three hundred policemen were necessary to handle the crowds at the lower East Side funerals.) At the conclusion of the services, when the coffin was taken out of the synagogue, the waiting crowd wept. A motor cycle police escort led the funeral procession of 30 cars to the Mount Carmel Cemetery in Cypress Hills.⁶¹

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Jewish labor movement alone maintained the tradition of the funeral pageant. Alongside continuities, there were also new emphases that reflected changing self-perceptions and an altered political and cultural context. The public funerals of London, Hillquit, and Vladeck were, predictably, more in keeping with Gordin's funeral than Sholom Aleichem's. In burying their leaders, Jewish radicals refused to compromise their agnostic, freethinking faith. However, in paying homage to political leaders, rather than to cultural heroes, a nonsectarian civic tone tinged the ceremonials which was

reminiscent of the Triangle fire commemorations. The pageants' organizers turned outward. Nevertheless, in the late 1930s there were those in the leadership of the Jewish labor movement who also wished to assign to it the responsibility of keeper of American Jewry's historical consciousness, indeed, creator and guardian of an American Jewish "valhalla."⁶²

London, who died as a result of an automobile accident (June 6, 1926), held a unique position in the Jewish labor movement. The first socialist to serve in Congress, and reelected twice more, he carried the fame of having been one of the two national legislators representing his party in Washington. A pragmatic reformer and civil libertarian while in Congress, London had acquitted himself with honor. In 1922, he refused to run for reelection when his lower East Side district was gerrymandered. In the Jewish labor movement, London's standing was legendary. For over two decades, he served as the legal counsel for many of New York's garment unions and was one of the founding fathers of the important institutions created by the movement – the *Forverts*, the Workmen's Circle fraternal order, the arbitration mechanism in the needle trades (the "protocol of peace"), and the People's Relief during World War One. The five organizations under whose auspices the funeral was held accurately reflected London's constituency: the Forward Association, the Workmen's Circle, the Socialist Party, the Jewish Socialist Farband, and the United Hebrew Trades.⁶³

In some respects, London's funeral surpassed all those that had preceded it. The traditional visit by friends to the home of the deceased prior to the funeral – following Sholom Aleichem's death thousands came – was transferred in London's case to the Forward building's hall where the body was brought for public viewing. Around the building, the *Forverts* reported, an honor guard of New York socialists was drawn up. Wearing "black and red armbands, dressed in simple workers' clothes, and standing in perfect order, the 'red guard' gave the street, where thousands waited to enter the building, an atmosphere of festivity and solemnity like Kol Nidre night in an Orthodox synagogue." Twenty-five thousand "women, children and workmen" passed by the open coffin which was banked by wreaths of red and white roses and flanked by members of the honor guard. They came "with bowed heads to see the beloved face of their beloved leader, to see the lips that had spoken so magnificently, moving people to tears and eliciting the most beautiful and noblest of feelings." Among the mourners were old Jews who needed help climbing the stairs, mothers who raised their children to view the corpse, and high school youth sent by their teachers. There were also non-Jews, and in particular, the *Forverts* noted, Negroes who "with full hearts and wide-eyes passed by the bier. For them London was more than a socialist and labor leader. In Congress he had fought for their interests and for their honor with the same bitterness as one of their own representatives."⁶⁴

The memorial service began at 10:45 a.m. when Baruch Vladeck, the veteran Jewish socialist, poet and business manager of the *Forverts*, instructed the

undertaker to close the lid of the black coffin. Vladeck's words – "the most exquisite vase in our house is broken to pieces, the most beautiful flower in our garden has been crushed" – evoked a wave of sobbing. Cahan of the *Forverts*, who followed, pointed out the diversity of people who had come to mourn London including elderly Orthodox Jews. (In a boxed, front-page brief, "Stirring Moments at London's Funeral," the *Forverts* described how when the funeral procession passed the Anshe Kaminetz Congregation on Pike Street, the rabbi chanted the "El mole rakhamim" prayer from the synagogue steps and the congregants recited psalms.) Among the speakers who followed were Victor Berger, the socialist congressman from Milwaukee, the socialist leaders Norman Thomas and Morris Hillquit, Lillian Wald of the Henry Street Settlement House, the socialist municipal court Judge Jacob Panken, and representatives of the Jewish trade unions, the Workmen's Circle, and the Bund. The recurring motifs were: London the fighter for humanity and socialism, and his devotion to the working class. In Rutgers Square and Seward Park, opposite the Forward Building, 50,000 listened to the speakers over loudspeakers. It is noteworthy that a photograph of the coffin as it was being carried out of the *Forverts* building quite clearly shows a sumptuous box with brass handles.⁶⁵

Mounted policemen led the cortege followed by six carriages filled with flowers. *The Times* estimated that 50,000 walked behind the hearse along the main streets of the lower East Side and then north on Second Avenue to London's home on Eighteenth Street where the funeral procession ended. Many paraded in groups carrying the signs of their organizations. "It seemed as if every organized labor body in the city was represented in the line," *The Times* remarked. Both *The Times* and the *Forverts* found it newsworthy to mention that a large delegation of striking furriers – according to the *Forverts*, 1,500 in number – marched in the procession despite the union's Communist leadership which London had fought bitterly. The furriers carried a placard: "We mourn the death of Meyer London, the founder of our union." Five hundred thousand lined the streets. In many store windows memorial candles were lit, black banners hung from tenement houses, and mourners carried pictures of London taken from the front page of the *Forverts*. From London's home, several thousand continued to the Workmen's Circle Mount Carmel Cemetery in a motorcade of over a hundred cars and buses. At the cemetery, on a platform decorated with an American flag and red and black banners, a number of Jewish labor leaders spoke briefly. Among them were Alexander Kahan and Abraham Shiplacoff of the *Forverts*, Abraham Beckerman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union (ACWU), and Saul Yanovsky, the *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme's* editor. Algernon Lee of the Rand School and James O'Neil of *The New Leader* spoke for the Socialist Party. When the time came for the interment, someone distributed white flowers to the mourners who flung them into the open grave. London was buried in the row of graves of the labor movement's luminaries to the left of Sholom Aleichem.⁶⁶ The funeral pageant was indeed a Jewish labor movement affair. But the Jewish radical camp also

addressed non-Jewish socialists and progressives, and it responded with warmth to the notion that religious Jews also mourned the loss of their leader.

Homage on a different scale and in a different tone was paid to Morris Hillquit, who died on October 7, 1933. Both he and London had done their socialist apprenticeship as young immigrants immersed in the struggle to make a living and the equally demanding struggle to unionize their fellow Yiddish-speaking workers and win them over for socialism. Both also served the garment workers unions as legal advisors. But Hillquit rose quickly to the national leadership of the Socialist Party, represented it at international socialist conferences, and before his death served as the party's national chairman. Proudly, the *Forverts* portrayed him as the incomparable teacher, thinker, and leader. For Vladeck, Hillquit was one of the two greatest leaders American socialism had known. The other was Eugene V. Debs. "Debs was the soul of the movement, Hillquit the brains." Cahan's front-page eulogy recalled the 43 years Hillquit and he had worked together, from the pioneer days when Hillquit had played a key role in establishing the Yiddish unions, Yiddish socialism, and the Yiddish socialist press, to the time when he became the pragmatic centrist leader of the party who was under continuous attack from its right and left wings. The *Forverts* coverage was massive. Norman Thomas and Algernon Lee wrote major articles. The verbatim texts of the condolence messages were printed. Those published on the front page alone included condolences sent by President Roosevelt, Governor Lehman, Phillip Green, the president of the American Federation of Labor, David Dubinsky in the name of the ILGWU, and European socialist leaders Leon Blum, Arthur Henderson and Karl Kautsky.⁶⁷

The *Morgen Zhurnal-Tageblatt* offered another perspective of Hillquit's public life. Hillquit, the paper wrote, had "quickly distanced himself from Jewish concerns. He believed in the older, cosmopolitan militant ideology and didn't change his views to the end. ... He remained far from Jewish national interests and Jewish culture."⁶⁸

The locations and tone of the commemorative ceremonies reflected the *Morgen Zhurnal's* understanding. The Rand School, the educational center of the Socialist Party, was chosen for the public viewing of the body (by then an established feature of the funeral rites of Jewish radical leaders). In the school's auditorium (the walls draped in black), Hillquit's body was placed upon a pediment. Masses of floral wreaths were placed behind the body in a semi-circle. The largest of all was sent in the name of the Socialist Party. Others were sent by the Socialist International, the Polish Socialist Party, the Polish Bund, the *Forverts*, and scores came in the name of ILGWU and ACWU locals and Socialist Party branches. An honor guard of young socialists stood next to the body; two others, holding red flags, remained at the door of the auditorium. For an entire day and night, the body was on view. Twenty-thousand persons came to pay homage to Hillquit. The following day, on the way to Cooper Union, where

the memorial meeting took place, the cortege – the hearse followed by a car carrying the family and open cars with flowers – paused before the headquarters of the ACWU and the ILGWU. The streets around Cooper Union were cordoned off and loudspeakers installed to carry the proceedings to the overflow crowd of several thousand. Seventy-five patrolmen were assigned to maintain order. The meeting opened with a string quartet playing Chopin's funeral march and the assembled rising in tribute to Hillquit. August Claessans, the secretary of the Socialist Party of New York, opened the meeting, and he was followed by Cahan. Among the speakers representing the Jewish trade unions were Dubinsky and Abraham Miller of the ACWU. Nathan Chanin spoke for Jewish Socialist Federation and Joseph Weinberg for the Workmen's Circle. The socialist mayor of Milwaukee, Daniel Hoan and other socialist leaders – James O'Neal, Charles Solomon, Louis Waldman, Harry Laidler – spoke. Algernon Lee concluded the program. The eulogists paid tribute to Hillquit as "the architect of the Socialist Party," "builder of the world of the future," "defender of labor," and the "great intellectual and humanitarian." The cortege made a final stop at the Forward Building where many had gathered. A choir sang the "International and other revolutionary songs." Since Hillquit requested that he be cremated, only the family and close friends proceeded to the crematorium.⁶⁹

More than any other contemporary figure, Baruch Vladeck personified the ideals of the Jewish labor movement and its new-found influence. When he was fatally struck by a heart-attack at his desk at the *Forverts'* offices, on Friday, October 28, 1938, at the age of 52, he had been serving on Mayor Fiorella H. La Guardia's New York City Housing Authority and had recently been elected to the City Council on the American Labor Party ticket. Together with Dubinsky, whose ILGWU had grown phenomenally since 1933, and other Jewish trade union leaders, Vladeck had formed the American Labor Party in 1936 as a way of moving Jewish trade union socialists from the radical periphery into mainline New Deal politics.⁷⁰ No less important was Vladeck's involvement in Jewish communal affairs. Beginning in World War One, he had played an important role in organizing the overseas relief efforts of the Jewish immigrant community through the establishment of the People's Relief Committee in 1915 and the American ORT Federation in 1923. Relief work brought him into the counsels of the Joint Distribution Committee, the most important agency in the field which was led and financed by American Jewry's philanthropic elite. In 1934, Vladeck was instrumental in forming the Jewish Labor Committee – "to fight Fascism and Nazism... and to represent organized Jewish labor in all Jewish problems" – and became its first chairman. In effect, he represented the non-communist Jewish left in the informal leadership group of the American Jewish community. Vladeck also possessed attributes that enhanced his stature as a leader of the Jewish left: his legendary revolutionary past in Russia (illegal work for the Bund, arrest, imprisonment, escape), for one; and his Yiddish literary bent (poet and literary critic), for another.⁷¹

The memorial meeting opened with the Workmen's Circle choir singing *Di sh>vnu-e* ("the oath") in Yiddish, the revolutionary hymn of the Bund. "Brothers and sisters of toil and and hardship... the banner is ready./ She flutters with wrath, and is red with blood!.../ Heaven and earth will hear us, ... an oath of blood and tears! We swear it!"⁷² The list of speakers who followed demonstrated the extraordinary honor being accorded the *Forverts'* business manager and a tribute, no less, to the influence and power Vladeck's supporters wielded. Governor Hebert Lehman spoke followed by Mayor La Guardia, who had ordered flags on all municipal buildings lowered to half-staff. Then Senator Robert Wagner and City Council president, Newbold Morris, spoke. For the 900 "important guests" crowded into the hall of the Forward Building, the 50,000 gathered in Seward Park listening over a public address system, and the millions who would see the photographs and read the news accounts the following day, the magisterialness of the event must have been stirring. It was reinforced when the governor, senator, mayor, and city councilmen walked behind the hearse in the front rank of an estimated 30,000 marching mourners. At Grand Street, the *Forverts* informed its readers, the procession halted momentarily to enable Governor Lehman, fatigued by election campaigning, to enter his car. Although he invited La Guardia and Wagner to join him, they and Newbold Morris at the head of the city councilmen continued on foot until the conclusion of the procession at Fourteenth and A Streets.⁷²

Thirteen other speakers eulogized Vladeck during the memorial meeting. They represented the Jewish trade unions (Dubinsky, Hillman, Zaretsky), the American Federation of Labor (Matthew Woll), the Workmen's Circle (Josef Weinberg), the American Labor Party (Alex Rose), the Socialist Party and its rival the Social Democratic Federation (Norman Thomas and Algernon Lee), and the *Forverts* staff (Adolf Held and Hillel Rogoff). The novelist Sholom Asch and Abraham Liesen, the poet and editor of the *Zukunft*, spoke for the Yiddish literary world. Liesin's ode on the death of Vladeck brought the audience to tears. Because the Jewish speakers were drawn from the Jewish labor movement, the presence of Rabbi Jonah B. Wise, national chairman of the Joint Distribution Committee, was especially noteworthy, although not unexpected. The *Forverts* quoted from his "moving eulogy": "'They' elected Vladeck councilman, but we Jews elected him in our special way to be our leader." Vladeck's involvement in the plight of world Jewry was a recurring theme of the eulogies, along with his humanity and his "fight for the underprivileged of all peoples." Dubinsky called Vladeck "the ambassador in America of the oppressed Jews of Europe." Asch began his tribute, "A great captain has fallen in Israel, prince of the Jewish working people and of Jewish poverty." However, Vladeck, Asch continued, also "spoke to the world not only of Jewish need, but he represented the interests of our entire Jewish people, indeed, of our entire human race." Crying into the open coffin, Asch called out, "You died a hero in our people's struggle."⁷³

The *Forverts* camp's eagerness to stress Vladeck's and its own standing within

the Jewish community expressed itself in various ways. The day of the funeral the paper announced that not only would garment factories release their workers to attend the funeral, but most offices of Jewish organizations and institutions would close in honor of Vladeck. Among the hundreds of condolence cables that arrived in the *Forverts'* office, the paper highlighted the fact that one of the first received was from Tel Aviv from the executive of the Histadrut, the Jewish Labor Federation, and a second message came from David Ben Gurion, Berl Katznelson, Moshe Shertok and Berl Locker, Histadrut leaders then on a political mission in London. It is significant that the list of honorary pallbearers – the *Forverts* explained its symbolic importance to its readers – included a number of uptown Jewish notables who would not have been approached to accept the honorific designation by the organizers of the London or Hillquit funerals, nor would the designees have agreed if asked. On Vladeck's list were: Paul Baerwald, George Becker, Jacob Billikopf, Benjamin Buttenweiser, Ira A. Hirschmann, James Marshall, Arthur Hays Sulzberger, Edward Warburg, and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise. Albert Einstein also appeared on the list in a paragraph by himself. Following the established Jewish labor tradition, the exposed body lay in state in an open coffin in the hall of the Forward Building the entire day prior to the funeral with an honor guard of Vladeck's close associates in attendance. Thousands of all classes, ages, and ethnic backgrounds, the *Forverts* reported, passed by the bier, and out-of-town delegations and representatives of hundreds of trade union locals and Workmen Circle branches joined the long lines.⁷⁴

The memorial service itself concluded with the Workmen's Circle choir singing David Edelstadt's workers' hymn, "Mein Tsvo'o" – My Will. ("Good friend! When I die, / carry to my grave our flag – / freedom's flag with its red coloring, / soaked with the blood of the workingman.") According to *The Times*, 500,000 lined the procession's route through lower Manhattan and Brooklyn. The *Forverts* estimated the number at a million. Vladeck was buried in the section of the Workmen's Circle Mount Carmel Cemetery reserved for the movement's heroes. Five thousand were present at the interment. The scene was an intimate one. "Old socialists, labor leaders, communal activists and writers – the most important personages in the socialist movement and in the world of Yiddish literature were there." Joseph Weinberg, president of the Workmen's Circle, opened the proceedings by saying that until now the eulogies had dealt with Vladeck's broad interests. The time had come to address his Jewish socialist work. An old comrade of his Bundist years in Russia recalled what Vladeck had meant to the movement then and what he meant to the Polish Bund today. "They have been orphaned," he cried. Louis Boudin, the socialist lawyer praised Vladeck's work for ORT. But Jacob Panken spoke mostly of the thinning ranks of the founding generation of the socialist movement: London, Hillquit, Debs, Berger, Hillquit, and now Vladeck had gone. Not all on Weinberg's speakers list had spoken, but the time had come. The body was interred as the assembled sang once more the Bundist hymn, "Di sh^vvu-e."⁷⁵

For the Jewish labor movement, the Vladeck pageant was a reaching outward. It neared, but did not merge with, the mainstream of public life, still proudly retaining its identity. The movement had demonstrated its wherewithal, experience and passion in mounting an enormous celebration in homage to its dead leader and proven its worth to its own followers as well as to the wider public. No other Jewish organization could or wished to do the same. The Jewish labor movement also approached, but did not merge, with the main currents in Jewish communal life guarding its secularism and maintaining its socialist rhetoric. One need only compare Vladeck's public funeral with those of London and Hillquit to realize the distance the movement had come, and to recall the Sholom Aleichem pageant to measure the disparity that remained. Undoubtedly, beneath the ceremonials and eulogies a liberal-ethnic consensus was taking form driven by domestic conditions and the gathering storm in Europe.

Although Vladeck's funeral symbolized the movement at its summit, the more reflective leaders were troubled over its future. Panken had expressed his fears over Vladeck's grave: the ranks are thinning; a generation is passing; who will follow if no one remembers? Aside from the public funeral – a passing event no matter how momentous – how could one maintain and strengthen the sense of common history?

In an introduction to the 1939 annual report of the Workmen's Circle Cemetery Department, Mikhl Ivanski, a member of the National Board of Directors of the order, expressed with much eloquence the need to nurture the historical consciousness of American Jews. "In ancient times, in Rome and Athens," he wrote, "temples were built called Pantheons, temples for the Gods. In modern times Pantheons are also built, not for mythical figures but for the nation's civil and spiritual heroes." Ivanski described the role of London's Westminster Abbey, the "Pantheon of the English people," where Britain's kings, great military commanders and statesmen were buried and where her best-known poets found their resting place. In other corners of the cathedral, the graves of scientists, philosophers, authors, and composers were to be found. "Here, English history is hallowed." Indeed, "all civilized people honor their great men with monuments and temples that are designed to glorify those who shaped their history." The French had their Pantheon, the Germans their Victory Boulevard in Berlin's Tiergarten, and America its Arlington Cemetery. But the Jewish people were in a different category. "We are an ancient historical people possessing a long historical memory, but our history has taken us to all the corners of the earth." Although the Jewish settlement in America was young, nevertheless, it had made history. "Occupying an honored place in the history of the Jews of America is the Jewish labor movement which is dedicated to the ideals of justice and brotherhood." American Jews could not survive without ideals, and the ideals required nurturing by "our spiritual leaders." But their ranks were thinning, their successors few. It was incumbent upon the "organized Jewish workers of America to fill the vacuum and repay the national debt of the Jewish

people to its great men and women.” The cemeteries of the Workmen’s Circle were fulfilling that function. “There is a corner in the Mount Carmel Cemetery of the Workmen’s Circle,” Ivanski continues, “which may be truly called the Valhalla or Pantheon, of Jewish literary giants and the leaders of the labor movement. Sholom Aleichem, Meyer London, Philip Krantz, Vladimir Medem, Morris Rosenfeld, Abraham Raisen, Morris Winchevsky, the victims of the Triangle fire” – and the list goes on – “all found their last resting place in the heroes section.”⁷⁶

The fact is that the Jewish labor movement held no other funeral pageants on the scale of Vladeck’s commemoration. In its form, Abe Cahan’s public funeral in 1951 followed the earlier ones. The body lay in state in the Forward Building for the entire day before the funeral. A number of the garment unions called on their workers to stop work for one hour at the time of the memorial service. As befitting the patriarch of the Jewish labor movement, distinguished figures eulogized him. Among them were Maurice Tobin, Secretary of Labor, Abba Eban, Israeli Ambassador to the United States, and David Dubinsky. Ten thousand people, according to *The Times*, listened to the speeches standing in Rutgers Square or else waited along the route for the cortege to pass. The *Forverts* estimate was 25,000. The cortege took the usual route through the lower East Side to the Williamsburgh Bridge and on to the cemetery. Cahan was interred in the “heroes’ section” of the Mount Carmel cemetery where more eulogies were given. In comparison to London’s, Hillquit’s and Vladeck’s funerals, the atmosphere was muted and venerable, appropriate to the 91 year old editor and his aging followers.⁷⁷

The life of the funeral pageant lasted a generation, shorter for the Orthodox, longer for the labor movement, and briefest for the Zionists. It was a characteristically immigrant phenomenon. The factors that linked it to immigrant life explain its dynamics: population density, the ability of a denomination or organization to command the loyalty of its followers, the cultural-religious tradition of participating personally in the collective mourning of a great figure, and the power and interest of the Yiddish daily press in transforming the public funeral into a public and political spectacle. Surely, the mundane and the traumatic contributed to its eclipse. On the one hand, suburbanization and embourgeoisment presented geographic and cultural impediments to participation in mass events like public funerals. On the other hand, World War II and the destruction of European Jewry required a reassessment of the dimensions and objects of public grieving. The most dramatic instance was the 1943 “We Will Never Die” pageant produced in Madison Square Garden by Billy Rose and directed by Moss Hart with a script by Ben Hecht. In the early post-war years, memorializing the victims of the Holocaust was placed prominently on the calendar of Jewish religious and civil life. State funerals and days of national remembrance in Israel were also, to an extent, surrogates for those occasions of collective mourning that were once typical of Jewish life and

were transferred to America to be transmuted into the religious and secular funeral pageants we have considered. Collective mourning also presumed consensus, at least for the moment: a coming together of the scattered flock to remember the fallen leader. This, as we have seen, was hard to achieve during the immigrant generation, although the need remained and strenuous attempts were made. Mount Carmel Cemetery never became Valhalla. For half a century, now, the heroes, martyrs and saints honored are those who died in the Holocaust and in Israel's wars. Pilgrimages to the sites, monuments and museums tied to those events, and annual religious services and civic ceremonies to commemorate them are the ways collective remembrance and the reaffirmation of kinship are fostered. But they belong to a venerable tradition of which the public funerals we have discussed have a place.

For Further Study

Modern Jewish historians in general and American Jewish historians in particular have given little attention to the study of attitudes towards death, cemeteries, and monuments. One need mention only Philippe Aries' *The Hour of Our Death* and George Mosse's *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* to appreciate the value of such work for understanding the cultural life of a people and the promotion of group solidarity. Hence, it seems appropriate to raise some of the questions implicit in the present limited consideration of the Jewish public funeral as an "integrating ritual."

The deeper significance of the changes in the rites and customs of Jewish public funeral will become evident only from more extensive and comparative study than was possible here. We should then have not only a better understanding of the sources of the adaptations and innovations that were introduced, but of the manner of their institutional transmission and of their societal reception. For example, the practice of expressing condolences by sending wreaths to a memorial meeting, which were then conveyed in open cars in the funeral procession, was not universally followed in the public funerals of Jewish notables. Not only the Orthodox opposed the practice as *hukkat ha-goi* ("pagan custom"), but Jacob Schiff was no less adamant in the instructions he left for his funeral. The use of a sumptuous coffin made of oak or bronze on the death of Jewish socialist and labor leaders is surprising. One would have expected the socialists to have embraced the egalitarianism symbolized in the Orthodox law requiring a "plain pine box" for all. No less perplexing is the adoption of the "open viewing" of the corpse, apparently with little or no comment, let alone criticism. The social and cultural significance of public laying-in-state and the disapproval of expressive, vocal grieving also require attention. Clearly, non-Jewish customs provided the models for Jewish religious and secular innovations and also for norms of behavior. The selective borrowing from various Christian denominations and from civic ceremonies is apparent from a

cursory comparison of such disparate sorts of funerals as those of Archbishop Corrigan (1902), Carl Schurz (1906), German American hero, Tammany politician “Big Tim” Sullivan (1913), Mayor William Gaynor who died in office (1913) – all of New York City – and the most magnificent of all funeral spectacles, as the *Warheit* proclaimed, that of Ulysses S. Grant (1885), which was actually a state funeral dominated by military pageantry. In the funerals of Solomon Schechter (1915), the president of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and Rabbi H. Peirera Mendes (1937), Orthodox tradition blended with upper-class American sensibilities. Nor should one lose sight of the influence of Jewish public funerals in Europe that were extensively reported in the United States, for example: Theodor Herzl, President of the World Zionist Organization, in Vienna in 1904; Baron Nathan Mayer Rothschild, head of the English branch of the House of Rothschild, in London in 1915; and Arkady Kremer, leader of the Polish Bund, in Vilna in 1935.

Clearly, Jewish funeral directors played an important role in mediating the transference of American customs to their Jewish venue. How important a role is unclear. The most prominent Jewish funeral director of the early decades of the century, Sigmund Schwartz, handled the funerals of Kasriel Sarasohn, Jacob Gordin, Jack Zelig, and victims of the Triangle Fire (gratis). Beginning about 1920, the Cemetery Department of the Workmen’s Circle hired its own funeral director and a Cemetery Department began formulating a standard secular service.

Katheleen Neils Conzen has pointed out that only recently have historians, influenced by anthropological models, “begun to look more directly at the rituals and rhetoric of immigrant ‘festive culture’ itself, interpreting them variously as manifestations of an evolving folk culture creating meaning and helping immigrants cope with an alien world, as instruments for the promotion of group solidarity, and as public assertions of group power and demands.” It is such insights which should inform further study of Jewish public funerals as well as the entire area of ethnic “festive culture.”⁷⁸

NOTES

I want to thank the following scholars who responded to my inquiries with helpful advice and leads: Dina Abramovicz, the librarian of the YIVO Institute, Ellen Kellman, Rabbi Samuel H. Dresner, and Professors Lucjan Dobrosycki, Ezra Mendelsohn, Deborah Dash Moore, David Nasaw and Michael Stanislawski. James M. Korten was a resourceful research assistant, and at a critical moment I turned to Ayalah Kadman Goren for help. I want to also thank the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation for a grant which enabled me to expedite the research for this essay.

1. For Revel see, *New York Times*, 3 December 1940; 4 December 1940; Aaron Rothkoff, Bernard Revel, *Builder of American Jewish Orthodoxy* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1972), 221-23; for Brandeis see, *New York Times*, 8 October 1941; Alpheus Thomas Mason, *Brandeis: A Freeman's Life* (New York: Viking Press, 1946), 637-38.
2. "English Department," *Yiddishes Tageblatt*, 31 July 1902; "English Department," *Yiddishes Tageblatt*, 15 January 1905; *New York Times*, 23 April 1949; Melvin I. Urofsky, *A Voice that Spoke for Justice: The Life and Times of Stephen S. Wise* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1982), 370-72.
3. Two studies of public funerals deserve mention: Leonard Dinnerstein, "The Funeral of Jacob Joseph," in *Anti-Semitism in American History*, ed. David A. Gerber (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 275-301, and Ellen Kellman, "Sholem Aleichem's Funeral (New York, 1916): The Making of a National Pageant," *YIVO Annual* 20 (1991): 277-304. Dinnerstein focuses on the riot that marred the funeral in the context of police brutality, ethnic group relations, anti-semitism, and municipal reform politics. Kellman's study pays meticulous attention to the funeral as cultural and social event and places it firmly within the context of communal politics.
4. Kh. Khayus, "Gleybungen un minhagim in farbindung mitn tyt," *Filologin shriftn*, vol. 2 (Vilna: Schiftn fun YIVO, 1928): 281-327; Jacob Shatzky, "Merkvirdige historische factn vegem der amoliger hevra kadisha," *39th yohr cemetery department yohrbuch und barichet* (New York: Arbeiter Ring, 1946): 28-36.
5. In this paragraph, I have drawn on two articles of mine, "Traditional Institutions Transplanted: the Hevra Kadisha in Europe and the United States," in *The Jews of North America: Immigration, Settlement and Ethnic Identity*, ed. Moses Rischin (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 62-78; and *Saints and Sinners: The Underside of American Jewish History* (Cincinnati: The American Jewish Archives, 1988). See also, Marelyn Schneider, *A History of a Jewish Burial Society: An Examination of Secularization* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), 83-105.
6. *Forverts*, 28 February 1903.
7. J.S. Hertz, *Hirsh Lekert* (New York: Farlag Unser Tsait, 1952); Morris U. Schappes, "Hirsh Lekert, Worker Hero," *Jewish Life: A Progressive Monthly* (June, 1952): 19-21.
8. Goren, *Saints and Sinners*, 19-21.
9. Abraham J. Karp, "New York Chooses a Chief Rabbi," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 44 (March, 1955): 129-87, especially 181-82; Leonard Dinnerstein, *Anti-Semitism in American History*, 275-78, 280-98; Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 123-24, 194-95; Gerald Sorin, *A Time for Building: The Third Migration, 1880-1920* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 176-77.
10. Ephraim Shimoff, *Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Spektor: Life and Letters* (Jerusalem: Sura Institute for Rabbinical Research and New York: Yeshiva University, 1959), 151-54; *Hamelitz* 48 (24 Adar 5656), 2-3; *Hatzfira*, 53 (1 Nisan 5656), 252.
11. *Hatzfira* 53: 252; *Hamelitz* 48: 2.
12. See the Hebrew section of Shimoff, *Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Spektor*, 139-58 for the texts of some of the eulogies, and the accounts in *Hamelitz* 48 and *Hatzfira* 53.

13. *Yiddishes Tageblat*, 29 July 1902; *New York Times*, 31 July 1902.
14. *New York Times*, 29 July 1902; *New York Times*, 31 July 1902; *Yiddishes Tageblat*, 29 July 1902; *Yiddishes Tageblat*, 31 July 1902; Dinnerstein, *Anti-Semitism in American History*, 278-87.
15. *Yiddishes Tageblat*, 31 July 1902; *New York Times*, 31 July 1902.
16. *Yiddishes Tageblat*, 29 July 1902; *Yiddishes Tageblat*, 31 July 1902; The *New York Times* reported that many prosperous Jews "vied with each other in their efforts to secure in advance the right to be buried near him in the cemetery," one merchant offering \$5,000 to the Beth Hamidrash Hagadol which had won the right to bury Rabbi Joseph in its cemetery. The offer was rejected (29 July 1902). Karp writes that the Beth Hamidrash Hagadol won the rights by promising the widow \$1,500 and a \$15 monthly stipend. *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 44 (March): 180-81.
17. *New York Times*, 29 July 1902; *New York Times*, 31 July 1902.
18. "English Department," *Yiddishes Tageblat*, 31 July 1902.
19. *Yiddishes Tageblat*, 15 January 1905.
20. Cutouts from *New York Evening Sun*, *New York Evening Post*, *New York Times*, *New York Sun*, 13 January 1905 in H. Kasriel, "Sarasohn Scrapbook," *American Jewish Archives* (Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion). The *Evening Post*, for example, commented that "Inspector Titus and Captain Shaw preserved excellent order, which was in sharp contrast to the riots of two years ago, when a crowd of hoodlums stoned the hearse containing Rabbi Joseph's body and assaulted his mourners." Victor R. Greene, *American Immigrant Leaders, 1800-1910* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 93-95, used much of the same materials I have in describing Sarasohn's funeral in the context of his discussion of Jewish immigrant leader.
21. *Yiddishes Tageblat*, 15 January 1905; "English Department," *Yiddishes Tageblat*, 15 January 1905; "Sarasohn Scrapbook," *New York Sun*, 15 January 1905.
22. "Sarasohn Scrapbook," *New York Evening Post*, 13 January 1905.
23. *Yiddishes Tageblat*, 15 January 1905; "English Department," *Yiddishes Tageblat*, "Sarasohn Scrapbook," *New York Sun*, 14 January 1905.
24. "English Department," *Yiddishes Tageblat*, 15 January 1905; cutouts from *Evening Post*, "Sarasohn Scrapbook," *New York Times*, 13 January 1905.
25. *Forverts*, 14 June 1909.
26. *Warheit*, 12 June 1909. For a contemporary critique of Gordin's work, see Louis Lipsky, "The Future of the Yiddish Theater," *The Maccabean* 16:4 (April, 1909): 134-38.
27. *Warheit*, 12 June 1909.
28. *Warheit*, 11 June 1909; *Warheit*, 12 June 1909; *Warheit*, 13 June 1909; *Forverts*, 11 June 1909; *Forverts*, 12 June 1909.
29. Gordin was buried in Washington Cemetery, Brooklyn, NY in a grave donated by a friend. See Goren, *Saints and Sinners*, 25, note 30 for the location of the grave.
30. *Warheit*, 14 June 1909; *Forverts*, 14 June 1909; *New York Times*, 9 May 1902.
31. *Warheit*, 14 June 1909; *Forverts*, 14 June 1909.
32. *Forverts*, 14 June 1909; *Warheit*, 14 June 1909. The *New York Times*, 14 June 1909, reported that Rabbi Judah L. Magnes and the Rev. Zevi Masliansky spoke. Both were also on the list of speakers scheduled to address the memorial meeting (*Warheit*, 13 June 1909) but are not mentioned in the *Forverts* or *Warheit* reports of the meeting. In 1905, Magnes, a young Reform rabbi and Zionist, had headed the short-lived Jewish Defense Association, a coalition of downtown radicals and uptown donors, which raised money to buy arms for defense against pogroms in Russia. Masliansky, Zionist and religiously Orthodox, was a popular preacher for a variety of causes.
33. *Forverts*, 14 June 1909.

34. See, for example, the warm tribute by Bernard G. Richards, a centerist Zionist active in the cultural life of the lower East Side (*American Hebrew*, vol. 84 [18 June 1909]: 172-73), and the critique of Gordin's dramatic work by Louis Lipsky, the Zionist, publicist and theater critic, *ibid.*, 192-93. Kellman has made the point that popular Yiddish authors were often regarded as "national figures" and their funerals well attended. Kellman mentions the funerals of Nokhum Mayer Shaikevich-Shomer (1905), Gordin (1909) and Eliakum Zunser (1913). See Kellman, *YIVO Annual* 20: 303.
35. *Morgen Zhurnal*, 14 June 1909; *Morgen Zhurnal*, 13 June 1909. The issues of the Yiddishes *Tageblatt* are missing for the dates under consideration in the microfilm runs held by the main Jewish research libraries. There are photographs of exposed bodies of Jewish dead. In nearly all cases, they are of pogrom victims and were taken for use as evidence or for propaganda purposes. See Zvi Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881 to the Present* (New York: Schocken, 1988), 22, 30-31, 111. Gitelman does bring a photograph of the dead wife of a wealthy Jewish merchant in Siberia and notes in the caption the "combined Christian customs, such as the flowers and candles shown here, with their Jewish beliefs" (p. 85).
36. Leon Stein, *The Triangle Fire* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1962) is a detailed account of the fire and its aftermath. See also Charlotte Baum, Paula Hyman and Sonya Michel, *The Jewish Woman in America* (New York: Dial Press, 1976), 148-53.
37. *Morgen Zhurnal*, 27 March 1911; *New York Times*, 28 March 1911; *Forverts*, 28 March 1911; *Forverts*, 29 March 1911; Stein, *Triangle Fire*, 101, 105-106, 108.
38. *Morgen Zhurnal*, 27 March 1911; *Yiddishes Tageblatt*, 17 March 1911; *Forverts*, 27 March 1911.
39. Maxine Schwartz Seller, "The Uprising of the Twenty Thousand: Sex, Class, and Ethnicity in the Shirtwaist Makers' Strike of 1909," in *Struggle a Hard Battle: Essays on Working Class Immigrants*, ed. Dirk Hoerder (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986), 254-79. Seller offers the following ethnic make-up of the shirtwaist makers at the time of the strike: "Of a total of 30,000 strikers, approximately 21,000 were Jewish women, 2,000 Italian women, 1,000 were American women, and 6,000 were men, almost all of them Jewish." Her source is John Andrews and W.D. Bliss, *History of Women in Trade Unions: Woman and Child Wage-Earners in the United States*, vol. 10 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911).
40. *New York Times*, 27 March 1911; *New York Times*, 30 March 1911; *New York Times*, 31 March 1911; *Morgen Zhurnal*, 26 March 1911; *Forverts*, 28 March 1911; Stein, *Triangle Fire*, 122-24, 128, 149.
41. *Forverts*, 30 March 1911; *Forverts*, 3 April 1911; Stein, *Triangle Fire*, 135-45.
42. *Forverts*, 2 April 1911.
43. *New York Times*, 29 March 1911.
44. *Ibid.*; *Morgen Zhurnal*, 29 March 1911.
45. *New York Times*, 30 March 1911; *New York Times*, 31 March 1911; *Morgen Zhurnal*, 29 March 1911; *Morgen Zhurnal*, 30 March 1911; Stein, *Triangle Fire*, 148-49.
46. *Forverts*, 6 April 1911; Stein, *Triangle Fire*, 149-52; *Morgen Zhurnal*, 5 April 1911.
47. *New York Times*, 6 April 1911; *Forverts*, 6 April 1911; Stein, *Triangle Fire*, 149, 153-55. With unintentional irony, a historian of cemeteries comments on the monument marking the burial of the unidentified victims: "Though the memorial to the unidentified victims of the Triangle Factory Shirtwaist fire which stands in an empty field in Evergreen Cemetery, Brooklyn, is not lettered in Hebrew (and does not, for that matter, in any other fashion indicate the ethnicity of those it commemorates), it remains as a monument to the early twentieth century Jewish experience in America." Roberta Halporn, "American Jewish Cemeteries: A Mirror of History," *Ethnicity and the American Cemetery*, ed. Richard E. Meyer (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1993), 143. For a photograph of the memorial see *ibid.*, 146.

48. Kellman, *YIVO Annual* 20: 282-84, 288-97; *Der Tog*, 14 May 1916; *Forverts*, 14 May 1916.
49. Kellman, *YIVO Annual* 20: 287-88.
50. Kellman stresses the Zionist politicization of the arrangements committee. The fact that three members of the committee-to-be were present when Sholom Aleichem died indicates, I believe, that close friendship with the deceased was as important as ideological orientation. The Zionists on the committee were “klal yisrael” Zionists i.e., they emphasized Jewish “peoplehood,” “Jewish unity,” Hebrew culture, and group survival in the diaspora. For the Bundist-type of socialist, the impeccable literary credentials of the committee and their “benign” brand of Zionism may explain the acquiescence of socialists like Abraham Cahan to playing a minor role in the ceremonies.
51. Kellman, *YIVO Annual* 20: 288-89. Kellman points out that “two important segments of the community... were underrepresented in the levaye funeral,” the socialists and uptown Jews. She ascribes this to their opposition to the Jewish congress movement which Magnes supported at that time.
52. *Forverts*, 16 May 1916; *Warheit*, 16 May 1916; *Tog*, 16 May 1916; Kellman, *YIVO* 20: 290-92; *American Hebrew* 99: 2 (19 May 1916): 40.
53. According to the *Warheit* (15 May 1916), Sholom Aleichem was interred temporarily (according to Orthodox practice) in a vault belonging to Congregation Ohab Zedek. The remains were eventually reburied in the Har Carmel Cemetery of the Workmen’s Circle. For photographs of the monument see, *Dos Sholom Aleichem Bukh*, ed. Y.D. Berkowitz (New York: Sholom Aleichem Book Committee, 1926), 376-78.
54. *Der Tog*, 16 May 1916.
55. *Der Tog*, 16 May 1916; Kellman, *YIVO Annual* 20: 292.
56. Kellman, *YIVO Annual* 20: 301. The unveiling of Sholom Aleichem’s monument took place on June 5 1921 in the presence of family and several thousands Yiddish writers (Berkovitz, *Sholom Aleichem Bukh*, 369).
57. Nakhman Meizel and Y.L. Peretz, *Zein lebn un shafn* (New York: Idisher Kultur Farband – IKUF, 1945), 350-54; *Forverts*, 6 April 1916; *Forverts*, 7 April 1916; *Forverts*, 17 April 1916; *East and West* (June 1915): 90-91. During the two days that Peretz’ body lay in his home, an “honor-guard of students stood near the coffin and changed off every three hours.” Thousands of visitors – “authors, journalists, acquaintances, religious Jews, workingmen, young students” – passed by the coffin which was placed in Peretz’ study. When the time came, “literary figures and family carried the coffin from the home.” More than 150,000 took part in or watched the procession. (See Meizel above.)
58. *New York Times*, 29 September 1920.
58. *Ibid.*
60. *New York Times*, 27 August 1936.
61. *Morgen Zhurnal*, 27 August 1936.
62. Jacob Adler’s funeral in April 1926 had all of the attributes of a funeral pageant of the tradition of the Jewish labor movement: the lying in state, memorial services in non-religious hall (Kessler’s Second Avenue Theater), and the long procession through the streets of the lower East Side filled with tens of thousands of mourners. *New York Times*, 2 April 1926; *New York Times*, 3 April 1926. Noteworthy are Adler’s intellectual ties with the Jewish labor community and the organizational input of the Jewish Actors Guild and the Jewish Writers Union.
63. *Forverts*, 9 June 1925. In its editorial on London’s death, the *Forverts* stressed that he had represented the Socialist Party and the Jewish quarter in Congress and “made the Jewish workers known” (9 June 1926).
64. *Forverts*, 9 June 1926.
65. *New York Times*, 9 June 1926; *New York Times*, 10 June 1926; *Forverts*, 10 June 1926. For the photograph of the coffin see page 10.

66. *Ibid.*; *Der Tog*, 9 June 1926; *Der Tog*, 10 June 1926.
67. *Forverts*, 9 October 1933; *Forverts*, 10 October 1933.
68. *Morgen Zhurnal-Tageblatt*, 9 October 1933.
69. *New York Times*, 11 October 1933; *New York Times*, 12 October 1933; *Forverts*, 10 October 1933; *Forverts*, 11 October 1933; *Forverts*, 12 October 1933.
70. Melech Epstein, *Profiles of Eleven* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1965), 338-42; *New York Times*, 31 October 1938.
71. Epstein, Profiles, 329-33, 343-44, 347-51; *Forverts*, 1 November 1938. On the front page of the *Forverts* carrying the news of Vladeck's death, the paper published two poems and a feuilleton of his (31 October 1938).
72. Freiheit, *Revolutsiäre lider un shirn* (Geneva, Switzerland: Algemine idisher arbeiterbund in lita, poilen un rusland, 1905), 109; *Forverts*, 3 November 1938; *New York Times*, 3 November 1938.
73. *Forverts*, 3 November 1938.
74. *Forverts*, 1 November 1938; *Forverts*, 2 November 1938.
75. *Forverts*, 3 November 1938.
76. *32nd yehrlicher report fun dem cemetgery department* (Arbeiter Ring, 1939): 10-16.
77. *New York Times*, 6 September 1951; *Forverts*, 4 September 1951; *Forverts*, 5 September 1951; *Forverts*, 5 September 1951.
78. Katheleen Neils Conzen, "Ethnicity as Festive Culture: Nineteenth-Century German America on Parade," *The Invention of Ethnicity*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 46. For an influential study of this approach, see Susan G. Davis, *Parades and Power: Street Theatre in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986).

Columbia University
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem