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Foreword

Sergio DellaPergola
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem[1]

The joy at the appearance of Steven Lowenstein's landmark study of the demography of Jews in Germany is tempered by sadness at the circumstances under which it will be published. Sadly, Professor Lowenstein did not live long enough to see the final results of his more than fifteen years of labor and scholarship; he prematurely succumbed to pancreatic cancer in 2020 when he was attending to the last details of the present volume. But the events that preceded his achievement were also sad. In fact, the involvement of Steven Lowenstein with this project began in 2003 when the then Chairman of the Jerusalem branch of the Leo Baeck Institute, Professor Robert Liberles, invited him to revive and complete the huge work of documentation that had been undertaken for decades by Prof. Usiel Oscar Schmelz at the Institute of Contemporary Jewry of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem but had not been completed due to Schmelz's death in 1995. In a sense, the present volume is twice posthumous.

Prof. Oscar Schmelz (Usiel was his adopted first name in Israel) was born in Vienna in 1918 and emigrated to Palestine in 1939. He started working at the

1 Chair emeritus, The Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and former director of its Division of Jewish Demography and Statistics.

British Mandate's Office of Statistics, and from the time of the founding of the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), became the head of its Division of Social Statistics and one of its leading demographers. For many years he was the closest collaborator of Professor Roberto Bachi, dean of the demographic profession in Israel, professor at the Hebrew University, founder and first director of the CBS, and cofounder of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry. With the establishment of the Division of Jewish Demography and Statistics at the Institute, Schmelz became its director and remained in the post until his formal retirement in 1986. Bachi and Schmelz envisaged the Division as the heir of the Bureau für Statistik der Juden established in Berlin in 1904 and directed by Arthur Ruppin and Jacob Segall. During his tenure at the Division and in the following years, Schmelz developed a very extensive research program on Jewish demography, which unfolded in different directions. Among them were world Jewish population estimates, the demography of the state of Israel, the urban evolution of Jerusalem, population in Ottoman Palestine, and Moses Montefiore's censuses. Schmelz was a European intellectual with an old Hapsburg style, possessed of wide cultural horizons and meticulous in his attention to the collection of detailed sources for his research. He edited a comprehensive bibliography of works on Jewish demography and statistics and also organized the physical collection and storage in Jerusalem of copies of all relevant sources of quantitative documentation on world Jewish populations.[2]

In this context, Prof. Schmelz, whose mother tongue was German, developed a particular interest in the demographic statistics of Jews in the German lands. He was able to compile a very large body of information, including a collection of original publications, copies of all original censuses, vital and social statistics, national and regional, as well as secondary sources. These documents covered decades and, sometimes, hundreds of years that captured in the most comprehensive way the demography of Jews in Germany. This documentation was intended to serve him for an ambitious project to reconstruct the demographic history of Jews in Germany. He envisaged several volumes on regional demographics and one volume of synthesis. A preliminary essay outlining the broader work to be accomplished appeared in 1982.[3] The plan was hugely ambitious, and the amount of documentation massive. During

2 For a complete bibliography of Schmelz's works see Judith Even, "Bibliography, Uziel O. Schmelz, 1918–1995," *Papers in Jewish Demography 1993: In Memory of U. O. Schmelz*, ed. S. DellaPergola and J. Even (Jerusalem: The Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1993), 17–31.

3 U. O. Schmelz, "Die demographische Entwicklung der Juden in Deutschland von der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bis 1933, *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaft*, 8, no. 1 (1982):, 31–72.

the 1990s Schmelz began perceiving that perhaps there would not be enough time to bring his project to full fruition, and he decided to focus on a single book devoted to the districts of Hesse, to be published under the aegis of the Leo Baeck Institute.[4] He wrote an extensive volume on the topic and followed its production until the last stages, but unfortunately he was not able to see the final product which appeared in 1996, shortly after his death from heart failure in September 1995. The volume on the Jews of Hesse remains an exemplary monograph—indeed, a prototype of what might have become a vast library of in-depth studies about one of the most interesting, influential, and central Jewish communities in Europe and globally in the modern era.

After the publication of the Hesse volume, a number of colleagues in the social sciences, modern Jewish history, and Judaic studies felt that Prof. Schmelz's legacy should not be left uncompleted—even if his grand project was not realized exactly as he had conceived it. The preferred way was to find a scholar who would be able to bring new life to the sources collected at the Hebrew University and synthesize them in a new volume. The challenge was finding a scholar who would be able to carry on his shoulders Schmelz's vast, multidisciplinary scholarship. What was needed was full command of the history of German Jews, competence in quantitative sources, and an ability to bring together an enormous volume of data. Above all, what was needed was a scholar of real stature, accomplishment, and motivation, who was also endowed with one precious resource—time.

The meeting of Steven Lowenstein, the directors of the Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem, and representatives of the Division of Jewish Demography and Statistics at Hebrew University—Professor Uzi Rebhun and myself—was a most fortunate one. Lowenstein agreed to take charge of the project and started his long journey through the many sources with patience. But he also brought his own independent approach as one of the leading social historians of German Jewry. The analytical choices in the present volume are Lowenstein's, not those of his predecessor. He deserves full credit for developing the structure of this volume and then filling its various parts with his own findings. The result of Steven Lowenstein's study is a remarkable piece of detailed analysis and, at the same time, a unique and brilliant synthesis of the large mass of documents he had at his disposal.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Prof. Lowenstein for bequeathing us with what will remain the definitive study of the demographic history of Jews in Germany.

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4 Usiel Oscar Schmelz, *Die Jüdische Bevölkerung Hessens von der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bis 1933* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996).

German Jews were among those communities whose populations anticipated later demographic transitions. Their history reveals the multiple avenues of social and geographical mobility, innovation, and assimilation, all of which contributed to the remarkable intellectual creativity of the community.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to all those who invested time and skill to bring this complex project to conclusion. At the Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem, the persons who were involved included Professor Robert Liberles, Shlomo Meir, Dr. Anja Siegemund, and the current director Dr. Irene Aue-Ben-David, along with Professor Guy Miron who was the head of the publications committee, Naftali M. Greenwood who did the language editing, and Liad Levy-Mousan who assisted with the tables and maps. The Institute of Contemporary Jewry of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem has been headed since 2010 by Prof. Uzi Rebhun. Their collective efforts have now been rewarded by this extraordinary piece of scholarship by our late friend and colleague, Professor Steven Lowenstein.

Preface 1.
The Life and Work of Steven M. Lowenstein *z"l* (1945–2020): "From Washington Heights to Skid Row—a Life of Learning and Doing"

David N. Myers
UCLA

This volume marks the crowning scholarly achievement of Steven M. Lowenstein (1945–2020). Having gained a reputation over various stages of his productive career as a master archivist, linguist, and historian, Lowenstein labored for decades on a grand project which he essentially completed before his life was prematurely taken by a fast-moving case of pancreatic cancer in 2020. What makes this monumental demographic history of German Jewry all the more remarkable is that Lowenstein worked on it after leaving his academic position as the Isadore Levin Professor of Jewish history at the American Jewish University to pursue a second career as a social worker on Skid Row, dealing with the large homeless population of Los Angeles.

This may be the most extraordinary, but by no means the only, twist in a fascinating life and career. Steven Lowenstein was born in 1945 in New York City. He grew up in the distinctive ambience of Washington Heights in upper Manhattan, which after the Second World War boasted a large population of German-Jewish refugees and survivors. It was there that he first began to develop the finely tuned sensors that he used as an historian—and later as a social worker—to discern differences within seeming uniformity. To the outside observer, the world of Washington Heights, the world of New York's *yekkes* (nickname German Jews), seemed to be a striking example of group cohesion. But from within, it teemed with variety in socio-economic, political,

denominational, geographic, even linguistic terms. Lowenstein knew early on that not all German Jews were urban, educated, and assimilated. After all, his own family was of rural origins and Orthodox, two features of German Jewry that continued to fascinate him throughout his life. The resulting sense of this texture anchored his first major book *Frankfurt on the Hudson: The German-Jewish Community of Washington Heights, 1933–1983* (1989). Lowenstein would go on to study different Jewries, dialects, and customs, but he always maintained deep pride in his German-Jewish origins—to the point that when he moved to California, he got a vanity license plate for his car that read "A YEKKE."[1]

Lowenstein first exited the world of Washington Heights when he went to Bronx Science for high school. The renowned institution was filled with gifted students destined to make an impact on the world, including future Jewish studies scholars Eugene Orenstein, Rakhmiel Peltz, and Richard Steiner, journalists Joseph Berger and Clyde Haberman, and the future Black Power activist Stokely Carmichael. After graduating in 1962, Lowenstein made his way with Peltz and Orenstein to the City College of New York (CCNY). There he met a pair of students in the intellectually rich environment of the CCNY History Department who would leave a mark in the field of Jewish studies, Sara Reguer and David Ruderman. Lowenstein took a BA in history at CCNY, graduating in 1966 (three years before another future Jewish studies scholar, Deborah Lipstadt, finished there). At that point, Lowenstein decided to continue his historical studies, but not in Jewish history. He headed to Princeton, where he worked under the supervision of Theodore Rabb, the eminent European-born scholar of early modern Europe. Lowenstein chose to write a dissertation on a persecuted religious minority in Europe, not the Jews but the early modern Huguenots whom he examined in careful, almost microhistical, detail in his dissertation, "Languedoc Region: Resistance to Absolutism: Huguenot Organization in Languedoc, 1621–22" (1972). While he did not continue with the study of French history, Lowenstein did acquire and retain fluency in French, an aptitude he shared with his late wife Marilyn, who herself received a PhD in the subject. Evidence of this aptitude exists not only in the numerous French letters that he received and wrote, which are collected in his *Nachlass*, but in the curious North African-inflections that he sometimes used in liturgical Hebrew, picked up during Sabbath services at a North African synagogue in Montpelier in the course of his doctoral research there.[2]

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1 See the *Bnai Brith Messenger*, May 27, 1983, 5.

2 Lowenstein left behind a huge archive of more than ten linear feet, including thousands of pages of memorabilia, correspondence, research notes, and scholarly drafts. Included in the

At this intriguing point in the story, Lowenstein left behind French history, where neither his deepest passions nor robust job prospects lay. When he went on the job market after receiving his PhD, and with the active encouragement of Ted Rabb, he pursued a range of employment opportunities in academia and beyond, including in the Princeton library system and at an archive in Atlanta, Georgia. He ended up receiving a job as an archivist at YIVO, the preeminent research institute for Eastern European Jewish history and Yiddish culture. It was indeed striking that this young German Jew from Washington Heights with a PhD in French history was now dwelling in the bastion of Yiddish. But he had long been interested in Yiddish, especially those traces of it preserved in rural Germany. Lowenstein now immersed himself in the world of Yiddish culture and scholarship at YIVO, where he served as assistant archivist from 1973 to 1975. He also continued to conduct research that he had begun while at CCNY in 1964 on a project devoted to creating a linguistic and cultural atlas of Ashkenazic culture that was led by two Columbia professors, Uriel Weinrich (son of YIVO's founding director Max Weinreich) and Marvin Herzog.[3]

After two years at YIVO, Lowenstein moved over to YIVO's peer and rival, the Leo Baeck Institute, where he served as archivist and assistant to director Fred Grubel from 1975 to 1979. On the face of it, this was a return home for Lowenstein, given that the LBI was the premier research institution for the study of German Jewry. But one of the distinctive features of his intellectual and scholarly personality was that Lowenstein paid no attention to the cultural chasm and mutual disdain between German and Eastern European Jews. He reveled in and attained mastery over both the German and Yiddish languages and was ceaselessly fascinated by the differences in customs and habits of each group without exhibiting any trace of condescension toward either.

Steve Lowenstein was a bridge builder. He overcame seeming opposites, taking what others cast as coarse stereotypes and crafting them into nuanced distinctions, as he did with both German and Eastern European Jewish cultures. With similar ease, he moved between east and west coasts of the United States when, in 1979, he assumed a long-sought-after academic post as an assistant professor at the University of Judaism, which in 2007 became the American Jewish University. Although he had previously taught at the college level (at

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archive at the Leo Baeck Institute are letters and cards he received from French friends and a letter he wrote to a French colleague in French. The archive is the Steven M. Lowenstein Collection, AR 25335, Leo Baeck Institute, Center for Jewish History.

3 That work, featuring extensive interviews with Yiddish speakers and field notes, is preserved at the digital Language and Cultural Archive of Ashkenazic Jewry at the Columbia University Library, https://dlc.library.columbia.edu/lcaaj.

Columbia, Stern College, and Monmouth College), this was his first tenure-track position, and he flourished. At the UJ, as it was known then, he now had the time to publish a series of important articles and later books devoted to German-Jewish history. In doing so, Steve Lowenstein proved himself to be a bold innovator.

The field of Jewish studies has devoted a large, some would say disproportionate, amount of attention to German Jewish intellectual history.[4] This history encompasses a distinguished lineage of thinkers, beginning with Moses Mendelssohn in the eighteenth century, Samson Raphael Hirsch, Abraham Geiger, and Zacharias Frankel in the nineteenth century, and then figures such as Hermann. Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, Gershom Scholem, and Hannah Arendt in the twentieth. These thinkers generated an exceptionally rich body of thought that deserves the abundant scholarship that envelops it.

But Steven Lowenstein pursued an entirely different path, whose roots lay in his own upbringing during which he developed sensitivity to intra-communal difference in his native Washington Heights. He did not place urban elites at the heart of his interest, but rather rural Jews (who constituted a majority of the community until 1871); nor did he concentrate on high-society German, but rather small-town German dialect. The objects of his investigations were now shopkeepers and cattle dealers (from whom his own people descended). This emphasis on normal folk added a huge degree of evidentiary difficulty, because his protagonists did not leave behind detailed written treatises on the ethics of cattle transactions.

Lowenstein had to be methodical and dogged to track down sources to reconstruct the lives of average German Jews. This, of course, is the burden of the social historian who reconstructs history from the *bottom up* rather than from the top down, focusing on material, rather than more abstract intellectual, aspects of the past. It is this careful attention to the lives of ordinary people, as well as to long-term social processes, that animated his book *The Mechanics of Change: Essays in the Social History of German Jews* from 1992. Each of the essays in this book is a condensed master class in German-Jewish social history; as a whole, they add up to a compelling look at the process by which "German Jewry was transformed from a traditional into a modern Jewish community."[5] Social historical work of this nature takes years of labor and requires a tremendous

4 See, for example, David Sorkin, review of *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Community (1770–1830)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), by Steven M. Lowenstein, *Central European History* 29, no. 1 (1996): 129–133.

5 See the author's introduction to Steven M. Lowenstein, *The Mechanics of Change: Essays in the Social History of German Jews* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 1.

attention to detail. Happily for the historian, Lowenstein evinced the same attention in preserving his own papers, thousands of pages of which are now housed in the archive of the Leo Baeck Institute.

Lowenstein brought this new methodological approach to old topics such as the Berlin Jewish community, about which he wrote a pioneering book in 1994 (*The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family and Crisis, 1770–1830*). Departing from previous accounts of Berlin Jewry that focused on intellectual innovation, Lowenstein set out to analyze the processes of social change of a diverse range of Jews in Berlin. He relied on a wide body of sources (including communal records, tax ledgers, and memoirs) and quantitative methods to tell a different kind of story—not the classic *histoire événementielle*, but a bottom-up glance that revealed longer-term changes affecting ordinary Berlin Jews, as well as a small handful of wealthy elites.[6] Already in this book, Lowenstein evinced a strong interest in aggregating statistics, often about important life-cycle moments (marriage, birth, conversion), to chart that change. And indeed, change was afoot in the late eighteenth century, as new fissures emerged within the community over questions of religion and class. Here Lowenstein understood, as he had intuited in his native Washington Heights, that German Jewry was not a single unified group. Beneath the surface of uniformity lay ample diversity.

Ever attentive to the dynamic tension between diversity and uniformity, Lowenstein moved away from German Jews and quantitative social history in 2000, when he published the book *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*. This book evinced his usual interest in the quotidian experience of Jews, but used the manifold varieties of Jewish cultural production, in the form of local customs (*minhagim*), as the prism. Typical of the breadth of his cultural appetite in this book was the chapter that staged an encounter between gefilte fish and cholent, on one hand, and malawach and couscous, on the other. In recognition of its boundary-crossing quality, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry* was awarded the National Jewish Book Award in 2002.

By this point, Steve Lowenstein had gained the acclaim of his colleagues as an historian's historian. The next year, 2003, he was approached by the Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem with a major request: to pick up the work of the late Usiel Oscar Schmelz, the Vienna-born Israeli demographer, who left behind massive troves of research files on German Jewry. It was this scholarly project to which Lowenstein devoted himself for the rest of his life. It was so large and exacting a project that it would take nearly two decades. And yet, in the

6 See David Sorkin's review of the book, referenced earlier, and the review by Jeffrey Grossman in *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 87, nos. 3/4 (1997): 396–401.

midst of it, Lowenstein made a dramatic career move that baffled many fellow academics. He left the heights of Bel Air, where the American Jewish University sat, for the flats of downtown Los Angeles, where he began a new career as a social worker after receiving his MSW. There, in his new workplace, Lowenstein met up not with nineteenth-century Jewish cattle dealers, but rather twenty-first-century unhoused people, drug addicts, the mentally ill, and those facing severe economic disadvantage. It was stunning to hear Lowenstein talk about the people he encountered in the course of his workday. As with his historical subjects, he betrayed no trace of condescension nor judgment, but rather deep appreciation for their life situation and dignity. In a certain sense, his new vocation was a continuation of his old. He was still collecting, reconstructing, and weaving together stories—rich, partial, and deeply meaningful stories.

One of the most intriguing documents in the Lowenstein archive at the Leo Baeck Institute is a National Career Services (NCS) punch-card profile from September 13, 1977, intended to highlight vocational strengths and weaknesses (see Figure 1). Unsurprisingly, one learns from the profile that Steven Lowenstein had very considerable aptitudes in public speaking and writing. It further reveals that he was not cut out for a career as a carpenter, police officer, or physical education instructor. By contrast, he rated very highly in the fields of librarianship, psychology, and social work. This assessment seems spot-on. Steve Lowenstein was a lover of libraries, as he voraciously consumed books and documents. And he betrayed a great deal of psychological insight as he entered the homes and minds of the everyday women and men who populated his social history. And unbeknownst to almost all, he was a natural social worker, sharing his great powers, empathy, and insight to offer comfort to those most in need.

It still boggles the mind to recognize that after a full day of demanding social work, Steve Lowenstein would labor into the night, poring over texts and manuals containing statistics on the births, deaths, marriages, divorces, immigrations, and conversions of German Jews. The aggregate of these thousands of data points makes for an altogether new and comprehensive picture of German Jewry, more thorough than any other account we have on record. But what, the reader may ask, links this monumental book and Lowenstein's labor as a social worker on Skid Row? While there is no explicit evidence, and in all likelihood, Steve may not even have articulated this to himself, it does not seem far-fetched to see links between his admirable work with unhoused people in Los Angeles and his obsessive quest to understand the demographic history of German Jewry. In both cases, there is an abiding quest for a stable home. The latter case of German Jewry, on which Steven Lowenstein labored until pancreatic cancer tragically sapped his strength, ended in murderous dispossesion. It is

the most minimal of debts that we, his colleagues, owe him—and the victims of Nazism—to see to the publication of this book chronicling the struggle for the stable settlement of Jews in Germany.

The world of scholarship has been much diminished by Professor Lowenstein's premature death. In personal terms, I was deeply touched by Steve's extraordinary wisdom, expertise, story-telling, generosity, good cheer, humor, and array of accents, often conveyed in synagogue in the magical conversational space that lies between prayers; I, and so many others, sorely miss him. But that same world in which his absence is so conspicuous now has an enduring testament to his manifold contributions as a Jewish historian, the culmination of which comes in this extraordinary volume. May Steven Lowenstein's memory be a blessing to all who knew him. And may his remarkable scholarship continue to be an inspiration to generations of scholars and students.

Preface 2.
Steven Lowenstein's *Demographic History*

Michael Berenbaum
American Jewish University

It is a privilege to participate in bringing this volume to publication. Being asked to write this introduction allows me to participate in one of Judaism's most gracious commandments, to fulfill an obligation to do a *chesed shel emet* (an act of true grace without personal reward)—twice over. Why is it a double act of true grace? We herein honor the memory of my friend and distinguished colleague, Professor Steven Lowenstein *z"l*, who engaged in a true act of grace when he honored the memory of Professor Usiel Oscar Schmelz *z"l*, by recognizing his monumental research and his work. Lowenstein gives new life to Schmelz's demographic collections and research in this master work, *The Population History of German Jewry: Based on the Collections and Preliminary Research of Professor Usiel Oscar Schmelz*.

Characteristically, Steven Lowenstein never claimed more credit than he deserved. The subtitle of his book is testament to that: *Based on the Collection and Research of Professor Usiel Oscar Schmelz.* He would have it no other way. But we must say that his work was voluminous. One can notice his hand and his unique insights on every page of commentary.

Professor David Myers has just offered a biographical account of Steven Lowenstein's life, so I will be restrained, except to refer to an obituary I wrote on

Lowenstein for the Los Angeles Jewish community.[1] We were fortunate enough to celebrate the pending publication of this book when Professor Lowenstein was still with us and well enough to attend.

I am tempted to begin my preface by facetiously saying "I did not have time to read his work, I merely read his footnotes, along with the graphs and tables that show, in detail after detail, town after town, village after village, year after year, the demographic information of German Jews from 1815 to 1939." But I would be lying.

I read the book even as my eyes often glazed over the tables and the graphs and focused on Lowenstein's interpretations. He made certain his readers did not drown in the comprehensive, encyclopedic, overwhelming information, but could absorb the details and glean from those details the story of German Jewry during industrialization, urbanization, migration, in migration and outmigration primarily to the United States; revolution, emancipation, unification, democratization, disemancipation, escape, exile, tyranny, persecution, and ultimately deportation and annihilation. All of this occurred during those 125 years, 1815–1939, years portrayed with precise demographic detail and informed, insightful, and comprehensive interpretation of the numbers.

Lowenstein organized this book in a masterful way. He looks at the material chronologically, beginning with the period from 1815 to 1871—from Napoleon to German Unification. From 1871 to 1918, he examines the *Kaiserreich*, Imperial Germany, and from 1918 to 1939, the final pre-Holocaust chapter from the post-World War I era through the Nazi prewar period. Later chapters are arranged regionally: Eastern Provinces, Central and Northwest Germany, Western Germany, and Southern Germany. They are also arranged topically: Natural Growth and Changing Age Structure; Conversion and Intermarriage; Migration, Immigration, and Emigration; and Urbanization.

He discusses Jewish living patterns, neighborhood by neighborhood, village by village, town by town, city by city. Whatever Lowenstein touched, he illuminated. He offers comparisons to the general German population, and from time to time, to living patterns among Jews and other American ethnic groups in the United States. He suggests how this massive data can be used to understand general patterns and significant trends. He makes the demographics come to life in the lives of real German Jews, the heart and soul of his life-long research.

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1 See Lowenstein's obituary in the *Jewish Journal*, https://jewishjournal.com/judaism/obituaries/316707/obituary-steven-lowenstein-1945-2020/.

Readers may be forgiven if they cannot fathom why Lowenstein began immediately after Napoleon. The French values of "liberty, equality, and fraternity" were imposed upon German lands by the Napoleonic conquest. For Jews, it meant Emancipation came from without, a result of invasion. It was not the internal achievement of a people committed to freedom and Jewish participation as citizens in German society. Napoleon's defeat reversed the uneven process of Emancipation in Germany and was a significant transitional moment for Jewish life in Germany.

What was the impact of German unification and Emancipation? During the *Kaiserreich*, conversion decreased, secession from the Jewish community increased. More left the community than converted to Christianity. Prior to Emancipation, the only way to avoid being discriminated against as a Jew was to convert and many of those who converted like Heinrich Heine did so for social or economic rather than religious reasons. Most who left the Jewish community during the Kasierreich declared themselves without religion, a category now familiar to students of American Jewish demography from the Pew survey. Intermarriage, then newly permissible by law, began its long and steady rise. More common in large cities than in small towns, men intermarried more than women and Jews were more likely to marry Protestants than Roman Catholics. For the Jewish community, the loss of these Jews was a defection and within families, even a betrayal. For antisemites, conversion, intermarriage, and withdrawal from the Jewish community tainted German society.

Lowenstein was a meticulous scholar. For instance, he details a small but significant difference between the 1910 census and 1925 census. In 1910, all who were in Germany were counted in the census including tourists; in 1925, only residents were counted. The difference is all the more noticeable to American readers following the Donald Trump's administration's attempt to ask the citizenship question in the 2020 US census, a request denied by the United States Supreme Court. One must pay attention to the questions being asked and to whom the questions are being asked. Dry census statistics made manifest the changes in German law. The 1939 census distinguished between Jews by religion and Jews by race, reflecting the Nuremberg laws of 1935 and their implementation later that fall by the German bureaucracy.

So, while this work seems to note "every leaf on the trees in the forest," Lowenstein never loses sight of the trees and well understands the forest—the larger picture—in context. For example, in 1871, 70 percent of the Jews in Germany lived in towns of less than 20,000. By 1910, only 32 percent lived in smaller towns. 53 percent lived in large cities, with Berlin as the most Jewishly

populated. In those years, the percentage of German Jews living in Berlin more than tripled from 7 percent to 23.42 percent.

Lowenstein worked on this book for sixteen years before its completion. Knowing full well his days were numbered, he rushed to finish the work. He was aware from the onset of his last illness that this would be his final work, so different in scope from his other writings dealing with German Jews from small towns and rural communities, or those later in his career—a tapestry of diverse customs among German Jews.

This work was compiled while Lowenstein was studying full-time to become a social worker, interning and working in his new career. Lowenstein had retired from teaching at the American Jewish University to study social work and to ultimately work on Skid Row with people whose backgrounds could not be more different from his. He was able to relate to them and, often, to his own non-cynical amazement, helped them cope and occasionally heal. His last efforts at finishing this massive work came when he was fighting the cancer that was to devour his body but left his mind, his soul, and his curiosity undiminished.

Anyone who knew Lowenstein personally or read his work would notice his quick wit and keen sense of irony. At the beginning of what turned out to be a 700-page work, he apologizes for not detailing Jews by occupation and economic standing in order—and these are his words, not mine—"to reduce the project to a manageable size." (I guess 700 plus pages with maps and graphics, tables and text were manageable.)

His irony is obvious when he comments that the 1944 census measured the Jewish population of Germany on the basis of the 1939 numbers, when, with only two exceptions—the intermarried Jews and those hiding underground—the entire German Jewish population had already been deported to death camps or Theresienstadt.

Lowenstein documented the impact of urbanization on Germany and is mindful that Jews were urbanized earlier than others there. "Pioneers" in urbanization relative to the rest of the German population, German Jews were approximately one generation ahead of Germans-at-large. They were "trailblazers" in planning smaller families. They had lower infant mortality rates, lower rates of illegitimacy, married later, had fewer children than their German counterparts. It took almost half a century for the general population to catch up. Density enhanced Jewish visibility and the migration to Berlin—much like the choice of New York in the United States—enhanced the importance and the influence of the Jewish community in Germany.

Beginning in the twentieth century, this pattern of an aging population with a lower fertility rate characterized Europe as a whole. Lowenstein observed that

while the Jewish birthrate was certainly linked to urbanization—urbanized residents have lower birthrates—Jews had a lower birthrate earlier than their gentile neighbors both in cities and the countryside. He even offers a correlation between birth control use and birthrates.

Lowenstein's scholarship allows us to substantiate Arthur Hertzberg's controversial claims regarding American Jewry: "The best did not come to the United States. They stayed [in Europe]." During the period of mass migration to the United States beginning in 1840, poor rural Jews left Germany. While there was a sizable German migration to the United States, Jews were disproportionately represented among those immigrants. Often, as one can witness in other immigrant groups, Jews from a town or a village tended to cluster, and a result was chain migration. As poor Jews and younger Jews left Germany, the graying German Jewish community turned into a middle-class community, which in turn served to induce Eastern European Jews to immigrate to Germany even as it set obstacles in their path, obstacles Christians did not face. Between 1840 and 1880, the peak years of German immigration to the United States, emigration of German Jews exceeded immigration. Beginning in 1880 to 1920, a period that coincided with Emancipation, immigration exceeded emigration.

Lowenstein does not miss those cities where the population composition may reflect previous restrictions on where Jews could live, even during a time of rapid assimilation where Jews were comfortable with other Jews. Core neighborhoods developed near a city center. The wealthy moved beyond it. And in a pattern recognizable for the American Jewish story, Jews in Germany moved from the core neighborhood to new neighborhoods, and as they moved, poor Jews or new immigrants moved into the "old" core neighborhoods. Lowenstein's previous studies of small towns and specific cities allowed him to interpret the demographic data clearly and precisely. Even under Nazism, without any formal ghetto, Jews were inclined to cluster. Clustering made it easy to target them but it also made life under persecution a bit more bearable as the misery could be shared and only partially alleviated by community action.

Lowenstein places the Jewish experience in its larger context. World War I resulted in a decrease in marriage yet a notable increase in German Jewish intermarriage. Intermarriage increased during the Weimar period as Jews were more integrated into German society, yet notably in the immediate postwar period when soldiers, Jews and non-Jews alike, returned home from war, intermarriage rates were the lowest of any year between 1912 and 1933. During Weimar, birthrates fell, death rates rose.