In late August 1935, five young German rabbinic students left their homeland on a journey to an unknown land and to experiences they had never dreamed of. Unknown to them at the time, their departure was an appointment with destiny. The Gang of Five, as they came to be known by their Hebrew Union College student colleagues, included W. Gunther Plaut, Herman Schaalman, Wolli Kaelter, Alfred Wolf, and Leo Lichtenberg. Their experience in coming to America turned out to be transformative and gave them the opportunity to make important contributions to the development of twentieth-century Reform Judaism. Who were these young men, how did they see themselves, and what impact did they have on twentieth-century Reform Judaism? Each has a separate story to tell.

Two Seminaries Collaborate

In 1935, Hebrew Union College (HUC) offered its Berlin counterpart, Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums, scholarships for five rabbinic students to attend the Cincinnati-based Reform Jewish seminary. The story behind this offer begins in the 1920s when HUC sent five of its faculty to study at the Liberal Berlin seminary.
Although worlds apart geographically, the two seminaries had much in common. HUC had been founded by Lehranstalt graduates, and members of the HUC Board of Governors had parents or grandparents who were German immigrants.\textsuperscript{3} Moreover, HUC’s American-born faculty members, including the college president, Dr. Julian Morgenstern, had received their doctorates at Berlin universities and had intimate acquaintances amongst German Jews. Very likely, there was also a humanitarian motive. In 1935, HUC was aware of the increasing dangers for Jews in Germany and that the very survival of German Jewry was in jeopardy. The HUC Board of Governors decided to reciprocate the Lehranstalt’s hosting of five HUC faculty in 1920s with its offer of five scholarships.\textsuperscript{4}

Part of the agreement between the two seminaries was that if conditions permitted, once the students were ordained, they would return to Germany. If that were not possible or desirable, they would remain in the United States, where they would seek rabbinic positions. To HUC’s credit, despite its own financial difficulties and the lack of pulpit vacancies for its own students, the college decided to underwrite the students’ expenses.\textsuperscript{5}

By June 1935, the president of the Berlin seminary, Ismar Elbogen and faculty member Leo Baeck, had selected two of the five students, Wolli Kaelter and Gunther Plaut.\textsuperscript{6} Kaelter was part of a group of students that the president and his wife hosted regularly. At one of these events, Elbogen asked, “Herr Kaelter, how would you like to continue your studies in America? Dr. Baeck and I thought that you and Plaut would most likely be very much interested and that it would be good to send you.”\textsuperscript{7} At first Kaelter did not take the offer seriously, and told Elbogen he had to consult his mother. She objected, but, when Wolli told her that he would take advantage of all the cultural opportunities and that he would return in a year’s time, she let him go.\textsuperscript{8} That was all the assurance his parents needed.\textsuperscript{9}

Plaut may have been the first one selected. The day after Passover (April 27, 1935), Professor Leo Baeck called him into his office and offered him the opportunity to continue his rabbinic studies in America at Hebrew Union College. He told Plaut it was “a splendid place.”\textsuperscript{10} Plaut didn’t hesitate: “I knew at once I wanted to go.”\textsuperscript{11} To get approval from his parents, he had to promise that he would return in two years. Plaut’s father wasn’t taking any chances and bought him a round-trip ticket.\textsuperscript{12}
Kaelter thought the decision to send him and Plaut “was rather random.” When the seminary announced that three more scholarships were available, five other students applied. Subsequently, one of them dropped out because his family wouldn’t let him go. Now, there were four finalists for the remaining three slots: Herman Schaalman, Alfred Wolf, Leo Lichtenberg, and Heinz Schneemann.

In Wolf’s account, the invitation to attend HUC “came like the answer to a prayer.” Conditions for Jews in Germany were rapidly deteriorating. A few days before he knew about the scholarship possibility, Wolf remembered, “My parents and I had a conversation about the desirability of my leaving Germany. Apart from relatives in the Netherlands, we had no ‘foreign’ contacts, and the relatives living outside Germany were ‘too close for comfort’ near the German border.” When he informed Elbogen that he was applying for one of the scholarships, Elbogen requested an approval from his parents. They were only too happy to give it, and Alfred became one of the finalists. Nonetheless, like Plaut’s parents, they bought him a round-trip ticket so that he could come home after two years during his summer break. Getting out of Nazi Germany was a huge relief for Alfred: “I remember that I literally breathed more easily the moment my train crossed the border into France.”

At the end of June, Elbogen brought the four applicants together in a room adjoining his office and said to them, “Gentlemen, you have fifteen minutes to decide which three of you will go. When you have made your decision, knock on the door, come in my study, and close the door.”

For the young Herman Schaalman, who did not want to go but had been pushed by his father to enter the competition, suddenly everything changed: “All of a sudden destiny was knocking on the door . . . Each student tried to figure out reasons why the others should not go.” After several rounds of votes, Schneemann, whom both Schaalman and Kaelter report did not want to leave his fiancée, announced that he was not going and left the room. The three remaining finalists knocked on Elbogen’s door and, when the door opened, told him they would accept the scholarships. Elbogen replied, “Congratulations, you are going to America.”

The five finalists knew next to nothing about America. For Schaalman, it was not only a strange land, but “an uncivilized
Indian territory . . . the wild west . . . gangster territory . . . .” Had he been asked to name all the emperors, their mistresses, and kings of Germany, he could rattle them off. But Cincinnati he had never heard of, or for that matter Hebrew Union College. He didn’t even know that Cincinnati was a city until he looked it up in his encyclopedia. According to Plaut, although the students knew little about HUC, they assumed that their education at the Berlin seminary “would be more than adequate to meet all requirements” and that HUC “would be religiously comparable to the Berlin institution. In both respects, we were in gross error.”

Leaving home was not easy for Schaalman or Wolf. For Schaalman, it was heartbreaking: “I will never forget hanging out of the window of the train of the Munich station and waving a handkerchief and seeing their handkerchiefs waving goodbye. And somehow or other I had an anticipation . . . I felt terribly lost and alone.” At the time, he had no idea that he would not see his brothers or parents until twelve years later.

Wolf remembered a deep sense of loss: “I was leaving all I had known for something that was yet unknown but showed great promise for my future. So, there was a great deal of uncertainty and a certain amount of worry mixed in with my high expectations for ‘the new place . . . ’ I was leaving a place that had ceased to be the only home I ever knew and which, outside of the walls of the paternal and grand-paternal homes, no longer felt like home at all.”

The Impact of Nazism on Their Decisions to Leave Germany

Why did they go? Faced with an increasingly difficult situation for German Jews, not only were the Lehranstalt administrators and faculty worried about their futures in Germany, but so too were the young men’s parents. Germany was moving quickly to become a police state, anti-Semitism had become state policy, and violence against Jews was now part of daily life. Nazis promulgated ever-increasing, and menacing legislation aimed at demonizing Jews and depriving them of their civil rights, their livelihoods, and their property. Despite the violence and the economic discrimination, in 1935 German Jews did not know that the Nazis would turn their full savagery on them in an attempt to exterminate them. Thanks to the publication of Schaalman’s biography, Plaut’s and Kaelter’s
autobiographies, and Wolf’s extensive unpublished “Collected Memories,” we know a great deal about them but unfortunately very little about Lichtenberg.27

Departure for America

By leaving Germany, they left behind their culture, their religious views and practices, and their families. They also left a country with a cultural heritage that was the envy of the Western world. The rabbinic students’ decision to leave their homeland was an act of courage and foresight. Yet, they had no idea how lucky they were to get out of Germany when they did. They fully expected to return and lead “normal” lives once the Nazi period came to an end. In that, they shared the all-too-common perspective of many German Jews who could not believe that catastrophe was just around the corner.

In 1935, getting a student visa to the United States was easy. The Nazis were, as Plaut wrote, “[only] too cooperative.”28 A month after the scholarship students were selected, they began their journey to America. They left just shortly before the Nuremberg Laws were enacted on September 15, 1935, that denied Jews their German citizenship. The students’ plan, according to Schaalman, was to meet in Paris where they would board the Britannic and arrive in New York September 5, 1935, the day before Labor Day.

For this group of foreign students, the arrival in New York harbor was a cultural awakening. Wolf described it this way:

To a European who had seen New York’s skyline only in movies or still pictures and for whom one of the very few twenty or thirty story buildings in places like Berlin or Hamburg were exceptionally tall structures the actual view of New York approaching from the ocean and steaming into the harbor has to be an emotional experience. In Europe, the Eiffel tower is literally a unique experience, but part of is [sic] uniqueness is its standing completely alone on the vast skyline of Paris. And you know that it was built as part of an exhibit and that nobody lives or runs a business there. New York, on the other hand, is a city. People live in those buildings, work in those buildings. It’s unique.29

To learn more about America, HUC had arranged that on their way to Cincinnati they would take a detour and make a brief visit to the nation’s capital. After a one-day visit, they traveled
overnight on a B&O train to Cincinnati. The journey turned out to be an unexpected delight. Schaalman explains that, although he had ridden on trains in Germany, he was not used to riding in luxury. The coach class, where he was sitting on his way to Cincinnati, had upholstered seats. In Germany, coach meant you sat on wooden benches, the only way the Schaalmans could afford to travel. On this trip, his cushioned seats were the equivalent of second class, which was more luxurious than coach.

Because they knew little about America and even less about American Reform Judaism, their first impressions reinforced the negative stereotypes they brought with them. When they arrived in Cincinnati, Nelson Glueck, Professor of Bible, who later became famous as an archaeologist and president of HUC, was supposed to meet them at the train, but he was late. Because they were guests of HUC, the young men expected they would be picked up promptly, but when they arrived no one was there: “We got off the train and waited . . . Soon we were the only ones by the tracks except for a young man who approached us reluctantly and said, in fairly good German, ‘Are you the five students from Berlin?’”

Schaalman reports that the professor took them to breakfast at the home of his mother-in-law, Mrs. Ranshoff, the daughter of a prominent Cincinnati family. She served them bacon and eggs, a “treat” that was totally foreign to them and a major violation of their kosher upbringing. Despite the fact that the students were famished, Plaut, speaking for the rest of them, told their hosts that they were not hungry and had already eaten. When Glueck realized that none of them would eat non-kosher food, he was “mortified” and immediately ordered that the food be taken away. According to Schaalman, “The food that was served next was either new eggs without the bacon or the old eggs with the bacon removed from their plates.” Not wanting to offend their hosts, they ate the food.

At first, the young refugees had difficulty adjusting to this new religious world and to American customs and values. In that, they were no different from other immigrants, Jewish and non-Jewish. According to Schaalman, “We saw ourselves as coming to a new world that called on us to radically reshape our entire existence . . . We had to adapt to this new world in ways we could not have imagined. Intellectually and emotionally, this radical adjustment was confusing and disorienting.” Plaut wrote, “I was a total
The refugee students’ had a harder time adjusting to the ways of American Reform Judaism. On the second day after they arrived at HUC they ran smack into the wall of classical Reform. It was Shabbat and Rabbi David Philipson, one of the foremost rabbinic scholars of his time and a teacher at HUC, invited them to attend services at his Rockdale Temple in Rockdale, a Cincinnati neighborhood.

According to Kaelter, Philipson’s assistant, Rabbi Morton Cohen, dispatched his wife to pick them up. Behind the wheel of a flashy car with radio blaring, they saw “a buxom blonde who looked like Jean Harlow . . . in short skirts” and not much older than the students themselves. Plaut wrote that he did not “know a single rabbi who had a car let alone a rebbetzin who would be allowed to drive one.” Schaalman was similarly impressed.

When she got out of the car, she introduced herself as Sally Cohen, wife of Rabbi Mort Cohen, Philipson’s assistant, and she was there to drive them to the temple. Although none of the young men had ever ridden to Shabbat services, as captives to their new surroundings they got in the car and drove off with her. Sensing their embarrassment, Sally responded, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do.” She was probably just as surprised and amused by the students’ appearance as they were about her. They were dressed in their formal German synagogue clothes, replete with their broad-brimmed hats. (According to Schaalman, no respectable German Jew would be seen in a German synagogue without a top hat.)

When the students arrived at the temple, an usher escorted them to the front row. As was customary in a Reform synagogue, men and women were seated together; however, the sanctuary was nearly empty. This new fact of life took the students by surprise. In Germany, synagogues were packed and served as the center of Jewish life. The thin prayer books were another surprise. Largely in English, the books opened from left to right. Sitting on the bimah were two men in black robes. Plaut assumed one of them was the cantor. Later, he learned that one was Rabbi Cohen, the assistant rabbi. The other silver-haired man, his senior, was the famous Rabbi Philipson. Another surprise was that he did not wear a kippah or prayer shawl and conducted the service almost entirely
in English because most of the congregation knew almost no Hebrew. The students had entered the strange new world of American Reform Judaism.

In the meantime, Philipson had his own issues with the greenhorns. He was seventy-three years old and had been serving as Rockdale Temple’s rabbi for the last forty-seven years. He was also a founding member of the CCAR. He had served as its president from 1907 to 1909 and was regarded as a leader of classical Reform Judaism. As a staunch advocate of “Americanism,” he had devoted his life to Jewish assimilation into American life, was in no mood to tolerate the students’ outlandish attire.43

Philipson had a clear view of the refugees, and, as the service proceeded, became increasingly irritated. Kaelter described him as “close to apoplexy.”44 The custom of wearing hats in a Reform service was strictly taboo. As Kaelter tells it, “He could barely get through the Kaddish before summoning us to his study.”45 In Plaut’s account, Philipson “glowered” at them and in “stentorian tones well within the hearing of the other congregants” ushered them into his study and demanded to know why they did not remove their hats.46 “The first thing you have to learn,” he reprimanded them, “is manners. In our temple we have long given up the wearing of hats.”47 Then he turned nasty, “If you ever appear here again with those things on your heads, I will have you physically removed.”48 Plaut speculated that to Philipson the immigrants must have represented “the antithesis of his ideals.”49 With their butchered English, they must have reminded Philipson of the Old World from which Reform Judaism had tried to distance itself.

In their attempt to defend themselves, the students told him that they had cleared wearing hats with HUC’s president, Dr. Julian Morgenstern. Philipson was not mollified: Morgenstern might have given them permission to wear their hats during services at HUC, but not in Rockdale. In separate accounts of the incident, Schaalman and Kaelter reported that, when they objected, Philipson gave them the same response as Sally Cohen, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do.”50 Schaalman, the brash and quick-witted youngest member of the group, fired back, “I thought we were in Cincinnati.”51 Plaut vowed that he would never “set foot in the Rockdale Temple again as long as Dr. Philipson was the rabbi.”52
The students’ next major religious event was the High Holy Day services. The experience was an eye-opener. Held in Cincinnati’s famed Plum Street Temple, the synagogue was crammed wall to wall.53 The entire service was conducted in English, and the women were dressed in “party-like” dresses, “too showy, too extravagant.”54 To Kaelter, the music, which sounded “totally goyish,” was unrecognizable.55 Nor could the students understand the sermon. Kaelter was so shaken up by the experience that he left the service “in tears and vowed never to return or to participate in such a service.”56

Hebrew Union College: 1935–1941

In 1935, Hebrew Union College was a small seminary with an enrollment of sixty students. Having been built in the 1920s, it was relatively new. In comparison to the modest building of their Berlin seminary, which, according the Plaut, was located in “squalid surroundings,” the college was “unreal in its splendor and extravagance . . . a series of castles set in spacious grounds” and a reflection of American opulence.57 In addition to an administration building, which housed the classrooms, the complex included a dormitory, gymnasium, swimming pool, and two outdoor tennis courts.58

HUC provided the refugees full financial aid, including tuition, room and board, and all fees. This beneficence was part of an “ancient custom” of relieving aspiring scholars of financial worries, a practice for scholars in European shtetls and one that had been transplanted to America.59

Because the Nazis had devastated their families’ financial resources, the young men would not have been able to accept the offer without financial assistance. When the students arrived without any money, the college gave them a loan of $20, which they were required to repay when they left the college.60

The seminary was strictly a male institution. The only women on campus were two secretaries, two cooks, and Lillian Waldman, the dorm matron. Plaut and Schaalman were extremely fond of her. Schaalman described her as “wise, gentle, [and] charming . . . a good sounding board; because I was far from home and parents and utterly alone, I confided in her and asked questions I could never ask anybody else.”61 Speaking for himself and possibly for
his colleagues, Schaalman said, “I was alone in a foreign country participating in a new religion that was totally foreign to me.”

Schaalman was not the only one feeling isolated and alone. Plaut wrote that the refugee students felt “rootless,” like aliens in a strange new land. They compensated for this feeling by sticking together and creating a shared fraternity with a common language and culture, sharing collected memories and stories of their past lives. They found comfort in the fact that most of their teachers had been educated in Germany and spoke fluent German.

Compounding their adjustment difficulties was their growing awareness of what was happening in Germany and the danger these events posed to their parents and families. “Our inability to do anything about these dangers,” Plaut wrote, “produced a profound sadness.” The cables they received from home made them anxious about the safety of their families. Despite these worries, when the war broke out in Europe in 1939, Schaalman recounted, “They did not feel engaged . . . We felt protected and sheltered from the world.”

Another of the profound transformations the students had to make was to their cultural stereotypes of America. They came with the idea that Americans, including American Jews, owned guns and used them for hunting. Traditional Judaism frowns on hunting or any other activity that causes pain to living creatures. The Jews Schaalman knew in Germany did not own guns or hunt or fish; the few Jews who did were the exception. When one of his fellow rabbinic students brought out a gun and boasted about its use, Schaalman was surprised and put off.

Americans, unlike Germans, gave their children middle names. As part of his effort to adopt the customs of his new country, Schaalman used his Hebrew name “Ezra” as his middle name. Ezra was the name he had been given to perpetuate the memory of his maternal grandfather “Ernst Ezra.” He even had to change the spelling of his name. Soon after his arrival in America, he was advised to use an American spelling, which required that he drop the double “n.”

In practical terms, the culture of Reform Judaism was embodied by the HUC president, Dr. Julius Morgenstern, its faculty, and its students. Morgenstern had never attended a Passover seder until he was ordained in 1902. Even after that, he was not observant and “would always feel slightly uncomfortable in traditional Jewish
settings.”70 His minimalist ritual practice was also the practice of “most of the faculty, and nearly all of the students.”71 Only a handful of the faculty and students were Shabbat observant or kept kosher. Because classical Reform had banned the wearing of yarmulkes and tallit, services in the HUC chapel were conducted without head coverings or prayer shawls. Most of the students only came to Shabbat morning services when attendance was required, and they rarely came to the daily services.72

Not all of the adjustments the refugee students had to make to their new lives were problematic. As students in the Berlin seminar, they had been responsible for finding their own housing and providing for their own meals. Not so at HUC. Room and board, including all meals, were provided. The food, however, was a problem. As Schaalman explains, and he might have been speaking for all of them: “Because I had been brought up in a strictly kosher home, the thought of eating non-kosher food was at first repugnant, though later it proved to be liberating.”73 HUC did not serve pork or shellfish, but it did not observe the commandment to keep milk and meat separate, another unpleasant reality for the refugees.74

More astonishing for Schaalman was the fact that he did not have to clean up after himself: “Every day, a man showed up to make my bed and clean my room. Like all the other serving help at the college, this man was African American, the first I had ever met. Although all of these amenities were ‘foreign’ at first, I soon got used to them, though I felt like I was living in a ‘Never Never Land.’”75

Not only were the customs strange, but because Schaalman had not mastered the language, trouble started on his second day when he found himself the butt of an upper classman’s practical joke. When his dorm matron invited Schaalman to introduce himself to a group of women visiting the college, he readily accepted. The upperclassman, however, exploiting the fact that Schaalman knew very little English, told him to address the women with a word that Schaalman later learned was “foul and sexually perverted.” When he greeted the women with the “word,” they turned all shades of red and looked very uncomfortable. When this writer asked Schaalman to identify the word, he refused to reveal it: “The episode was so demeaning that I have never used the word again.”76

Newspapers also proved to be a challenge for the students. When Schaalman read on the sports page, “Webber died on third,” he wondered what it might mean. What was “third”?
Who was Webber? How did he die? Learning English was a continuing challenge: “I still remember to this day how difficult it was for me.” Plaut relates a similar experience. The headline of the Cincinnati paper read: “REDS MURDER CARDINALS.” He thought that it meant, “the revolution had come to Rome.” In time, Schaalman claims that his command of German began to slip: “Now my German is street German, but my vocabulary for curses remains strong, particularly Bavarian curses.” Referring to his friends, he says, “We were really masters, experts in swearing.”

One of Kaelter’s near-comical experiences with learning English involved a mix-up of English words. Lillian Waldman had discovered him in the hall with a pocketbook he had taken from a young woman who was visiting a friend. He had taken the purse as a joke, but when Waldman confronted him, he said, “Oh, Mrs. Waldman, I just raped her.” He intended to say, “I just robbed her. When I discovered my error, I was so mortified that I hid in my room for the next two hours.”

When they arrived, the refugee students were not well received by the other students. Kaelter described them as “suspicious and standoffish.” Plaut thought that at first they were “leery.” “This response,” Schaalman adds, “was based, in part, on their perception that we huddled together to talk about them in German and because we introduced rituals (such as the Birkat HaMazon) in the dining hall that were not part of the seminary’s practice.” It is quite likely that their perceived clannishness and their attempts at reforming ritualistic practices moved some of their classmates to label them “The Gang of Five.”

Fortunately, a group of eight or ten classmates with similar religious beliefs formed a support group for the refugees. Kaelter identifies them as Lou H. Silberman, Myron Silverman, Dudley Weinberg, Morton Fierman, Malcolm Stern, Bernie Rosenberg, Abe Shaw, and David Schor. Schaalman describes them as “sensitive,” “gentle,” and understanding: “They helped us learn English and served as a buffer against other students who might otherwise have made fun of us.” Plaut described Weinberg as “one of the most sensitive and beautiful human beings it has ever been my privilege to know.” Because of his friendship with the Germans, Weinberg became known to his American classmates as the “sixth German.”
Despite the best efforts of their friends, some unfortunate incidents did occur. A classmate, whom Schaalman declines to identify, referred to the Germans as “Heinies,” a derogatory term coined during World War I: “He never spoke of anything else and enjoyed announcing when they arrived at an event, ‘The Heinies are here,’ or ‘Hi, Heinies.’” Although spoken in jest, the Germans sensed an insult.85

Because many HUC faculty members were also foreigners who had had to learn English when they arrived in America, most were largely sympathetic, but not all. A few who were wedded to the school of biblical criticism thought the Germans were not convinced that HUC’s methods and conclusions were valid. Schaalman believes that these faculty members were frustrated because they didn’t get the enthusiastic response they desired: “When it did not happen, they chose to ignore us.”86

Another immediate challenge the refugee students faced was an entrance examination. According to Kaelter, “The news really shook the five of us.”87 Why would such tests be necessary when so many of the HUC faculty had studied at the Hochschule in Berlin? Because the refugee students considered Hebrew Union College inferior to their Berlin seminary, they had expected that shortly they would be asked to teach in the institution but were rudely disappointed. In their second week, they were told they had to enroll at the University of Cincinnati to earn undergraduate degrees. Although they did not know it at the time, they were not singled out as exceptions: some of the American-born students entering HUC had come directly from high school and were required to get an undergraduate degree from the University while at the same time pursuing a BA from HUC.88

Notes

1. Richard Damashek, A Brand Plucked from the Fire: The Life of Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman (Jersey City, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 2013), 56. “Schaalman and Wolf were the youngest of the five, Lichtenberg and Kaelter were one year ahead of them, and W. Gunther Plaut was their senior by two years.”

2. When Hebrew Union College merged with the Jewish Institute of Religion in 1950, it became Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR). When reference is made to the seminary after 1950, it will be referred to as HUC-JIR.

4. Ibid., 31.

5. From 1935 to 1942, HUC rescued eleven Jewish scholars from Nazi persecution and revived the careers for some who had already left Germany. HUC also saved the lives of a few others. Meyer claims that the “number of refugees from the Liberal Seminary in Berlin . . . made up 12 percent” of HUC’s student body. See Michael A. Meyer, “The Refugee Scholars Project of the Hebrew Union College,” in *A Bicentennial Festschrift for Jacob Rader Marcus*, ed. Bertram Wallace Korn (New York: KTAV, 1976), 312, 359–75.


7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid. Kaelter’s sister and brother-in-law had already set a family precedent by leaving Germany.


11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.


14. Ibid., 44–45. Though they knew each other, they were not close friends.


16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., #385, 181.


19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., 53; Kaelter, *From Danzig*, 44.


22. Ibid., 52.


24. In their autobiographies, neither Kaelter nor Plaut lamented their leaving Germany, and for Lichtenberg, no written testimony is available.

25. Damashek, *A Brand*, 54. Years later year when he was looking for an explanation of how events unfolded in his life, Schaalman said, “Things happened to me that I could never have predicted nor expected,” 278.


27. Remarkably, except for Lichtenberg who died at the age of sixty-six, the others lived long lives: Plaut to ninety-nine, a few months’
shy of his one-hundredth birthday; Kaelter to ninety-four; Wolf to eight-eight; and Schaalman, who turned 100 in April, 2016, “the oldest living Reform rabbi.”

28. Ibid.
31. Meyer writes that their backgrounds in German Liberal Judaism were not very different from the Judaisms they encountered in America. On the other hand, there was a difference in “emphasis” and this difference had an effect. Meyer, Response to Modernity, 102. Meyer’s view stands in sharp contrast to the views of the rabbinic students themselves who reported that the Reform Judaism they encountered was totally foreign to them. The students thought of themselves as “crusaders on a mission to reform the heathen American Jews by teaching them what it meant to be truly Jewish.” Damashek, A Brand, 53ff.
33. There seems to be some discrepancy about the actual place. According to Wolf, the breakfast was served at the home of the Dr. and Mrs. Iglauer, Glueck’s in-laws (“Collected Memories,” #35, 21).
34. Damashek, A Brand, 59.
35. Ibid. Wolf had a slightly different memory: “We were greeted by Mrs. Iglauer and a black servant brought a large tray which Dr. Glueck immediately sent back into the kitchen. We found out later that it was loaded with ham sandwiches. It was quickly replaced by something more acceptable. The adjacent and equally impressive home belonged to the Nathan Ranshoff family and, not long afterwards, became my second home in Cincinnati. (“Collected Memories,” #35, 21)
37. Ibid., 63.
38. Plaut, More Unfinished Business, 109. Plaut’s sense of alienation never quite left him. “Maybe I have always remained somewhat a stranger.”
40. Plaut, Unfinished Business, 54.
41. Ibid.
42. Plaut described them as communities of hope and “Places of instruction and spiritual security” for people who otherwise led “constricted lives.” Plaut, Unfinished Business, 55.
43. David Philipson Papers: Manuscript Collection No. 35, n.d.
44. Kaelter, From Danzig, 54.
45. Ibid., 53.
47. Ibid., 54.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid, 56.
52. Plaut, *Unfinished Business*, 56.
53. Kaelter writes that the situation of Jews in large numbers turning up for High Holy Day services was also true in Berlin: “There were always more Jews on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur than the synagogues could accommodate.” Kaelter, *From Danzig*, 58.
54. Ibid., 51.
55. Rabbi Richard G. Hirsch told this writer that when he entered HUC in 1944, he “felt it was goyish: the Classical Reform services were goyish and the food service was not kosher.” Damashek, *A Brand*, 519.
56. Kaelter, *From Danzig*, 51. Ironically, he did return many years later to give the ordination speech to the 1985 graduating seniors. Schaalman also came back to give the ordination speech to the graduating class of 2007.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid, 54.
60. Ibid., 57.
61. During the school year, the dormitory served as the center of student life. The college provided the students with the luxury of “servants,” black men, who worked as waiters and also cleaned their rooms and took care of their laundry.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid., 60.
67. Damashek, *A Brand*, 63,
69. Ibid., 25.
70. Ibid., 33.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
74. Ibid. According to Schaalman, giving up this commandment was the easiest of all.
88. Typically, students would spend five or six years in rabbinic training before they were ordained. Half of their studies consisted of graduate work leading to rabbinic degrees.