

Samuel N. Deinard

and the

Unification

of Jews

in Minneapolis

Michael G. Rapp

THE AMERICAN JEWISH community of the 1970s, although diversified in terms of family origin, religious practice, educational attainment, geographical location, and financial position, is essentially a united, "self-conscious" — though hardly monolithic — ethnic group. However, this condition of corporate self-identification did not always exist. During the latter years of the nineteenth century and the early ones of the twentieth, a major and often crucial cleavage within American Jewry was one of national origins, essentially German Jew versus Eastern European Jew. By the late 1920s the difference was greatly diminished; by the late 1940s it hardly existed. Its disappearance as a powerful factor in the Jewish community was the result of sociological forces, accidental events, and the self-conscious efforts of certain community leaders to create a unified body.

What was true among Jews nationally was also true among Jews in Minneapolis. The original purpose of this study was to examine the general history of Minneapolis Jewry up to 1922 and determine, if possible, the role of the Anglo-Jewish press in this integrating process. It soon became evident that it would be impossible to divorce the major example of Anglo-Jewish journalism in Minneapolis — the *American Jewish World* — from the personality of its founder and editor, Samuel N. Deinard.

In addition to having been the prime mover of the *World*, Deinard was rabbi at Shaarai Tov¹ (later named Temple Israel), a professor of Semitic languages and literature at the University of Minnesota, and an active participant in both local and national fraternal and charitable organizations. Yet, except for his editorials in the *American Jewish World* and a copy of his doctoral dissertation, almost none of his writings are available today. There are at least two reasons for this. One is that Deinard rarely wrote out, *in toto*, any speech or sermon. He would merely jot down a few key ideas, speak from these notes, and later discard them. Another reason for the lack of his writings is that Deinard died of a heart attack at the age of forty-eight. Had he lived longer, he perhaps would have attempted to write

¹ The spelling of Shaarai Tov (Gates of Goodness) varied widely. This is true of many Hebrew words, so the most commonly used and accepted spellings have been adopted in this article. When doubts arose, the spellings used are those employed by W. Gunther Plaut in his *The Jews in Minnesota: The First Seventy-Five Years* (New York, 1959).

Mr. Rapp, a doctoral candidate at the University of Minnesota, is preparing his dissertation on anti-Semitism in Minnesota. He is now on the staff of the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith in Chicago.

his autobiography or reminiscences or to compile a collection of his sermons.

In his attempt to ascertain Deinard's activities and determine his views regarding the potential nature of the local Jewish community, the author examined closely the editorials, news items, and fiction in the *American Jewish World* from its inception in 1915 until after Deinard's death in 1921, studied the papers of selected Jewish community leaders with whom Deinard had contact, and interviewed several individuals who knew him personally. The most important source is the newspaper, although the personal motivation of its editor often proved difficult to deduce. The collections of papers of Jewish leaders, while yielding much information about early Minneapolis Jewry, do little toward furthering knowledge of Rabbi Deinard. The main problem in seeking to learn about Deinard through interviews is that most of his contemporaries are dead.

The most difficult aspect of this project was attempting to ascertain if and how Deinard and the *American Jewish World* influenced community thought and action and if and how the man and his newspaper helped create a unified community. It is certain that had Rabbi Deinard never gone to Minneapolis the national divisions within the Jewish community still would have crumbled. However, the author suggests that through word and deed Deinard was directly and indirectly responsible for many changes which did occur — and he hastened the inevitability of others.

IN 1856, two years before Minnesota became a state, Minneapolis was authorized by the legislature to organize as a town. Originally settled by New Englanders, Minneapolis soon attracted a wide variety of people through its mining, milling, quarrying, logging, shipping, and fishing industries. By 1866 at least two Jews, both in the clothing business, were known to have been residents of the city. In 1872, the year that Minneapolis and St. Anthony joined, the *Minneapolis Tribune* noted that the Jewish population of the city consisted of nine heads of families plus several single men and women. By 1877 the Jewish population had risen to 172, while in 1881 the total population of Minneapolis had grown to about 50,000, of whom some 2,500 were Jews.²

The majority of Jews living in Minneapolis before 1881 originally came from Germany, Austria, Hungary, or Bohemia. Because of similar cultural traits essentially Germanic in nature, these Jews will hereafter be referred to as German Jews. The few native-born were of parents who had emigrated from those areas. These early Jewish settlers had first lived in other sections of the United States, and most arrived with some accumulated capital. Once in Minneapolis, they opened dry-

goods stores, clothing stores, and general furnishing establishments.³

The early German Jews soon became members of the merchant class and subsequently reaped the rewards which late nineteenth-century society presented to its more successful entrepreneurs. They lived in good homes and, though physically close to each other, did not create a cultural or religious ghetto. Their children attended public schools, and they had friendly and close relations with non-Jewish neighbors. Their general language was English, but they might have spoken German in some intimate situations. These early settlers wanted to integrate themselves into the American cultural patterns and to eschew any characteristics which would demonstrate cultural differences between them and the non-Jewish community in which they lived. Consequently, most joined the Reform movement.⁴

Although the German Jews had a great desire to merge culturally with the surrounding non-Jewish community, they did not deny their Jewishness. In fact, on the more intimate social levels, they generally associated only with each other. The men often belonged to the B'nai B'rith, a national Jewish philanthropic and communal society founded in 1843, or the Apollo Club, a local Jewish social group later called the Phoenix Club. The women might join the Baszion Benevolent Society (later named the Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society), the women's auxiliary of Temple Shaarai Tov, or, later, the Council of Jewish Women. In these early years there were no special organizations for young people aside from Sunday school, so social outings were arranged for them by their parents.⁵

² Albert I. Gordon, *Jews in Transition*, 12 (Minneapolis, 1949); *Minneapolis Tribune*, April 23, 1872; Work Projects Administration, *Annals of Minnesota, 1849-1942*, in the Minnesota Historical Society; Herman Bernstein, ed., *The American Jewish Year Book*, 5675, 367 (Philadelphia, 1914); Judith R. Kramer and Seymour Leventman, *Children of the Gilded Ghetto: Conflict Resolutions of Three Generations of American Jews*, 38 (New Haven, Connecticut, 1961).

³ Plaut, *Jews in Minnesota*, 39; Gordon, *Jews in Transition*, 12-14.

⁴ There are three major divisions in Judaism. Orthodoxy, the most traditional, accepts both the written law (Torah) and the oral law (Talmud) as the divine Word of God. Consequently, changes in laws and customs must be held to a minimum. Reform or liberal Judaism accepts oral and written law as guides rather than as the direct Word of God. The spirit but not necessarily the letter of the Torah is accepted by the Reform movement. Midway between Orthodoxy and Reform is Conservative Judaism, generally traditional in outlook, but also subject to change.

⁵ Gordon, *Jews in Transition*, 12-17.



SAMUEL N. DEINARD

By 1900 the Jews in Minneapolis numbered about 8,000 out of a total population of 202,718. Much of the Jewish community's growth at this time was the result of the great influx of Eastern European Jews who, because of increased religious persecution and economic deprivation, were beginning to reach the shores of the United States. By 1918 Jews in Minneapolis numbered about 15,000.⁶

When the Eastern European Jews began arriving in Minneapolis in the mid-1880s, they segregated themselves not only from the non-Jewish community but also from the German Jews and from each other as well. The Russian, Polish, and Lithuanian Jews settled on the near north side. The few Rumanian Jews, plus some from Russia, established their community on the south side around Franklin Avenue and Fifteenth Street. These newly arrived Jews differed appreciably from

the German Jews who had been in the city for a decade or two. Most were peddlers who lived in two- or three-room frame houses which frequently held more than one family. The majority of these houses had outdoor plumbing, and few if any had gaslights. The Eastern European Jews did not readily become assimilated, nor did they necessarily desire to do so. They observed orthodox religious customs in homes and synagogues, maintained Old World habits of dress (long coats, broad black hats, and beards for the men, wigs for the married women), and, with few exceptions, spoke Yiddish. Their relations with non-Jewish neighbors were often strained.⁷

Gradually these immigrants established synagogues, a press, and various cultural, social, and educational organizations. Soon kosher butcher shops, bakeries, food stores, and restaurants appeared, and two self-segregating "ghettoes" emerged. Thus, by the early years of the twentieth century, Minneapolis had three distinct Jewish communities. The national origins of the founders of some of the synagogues then in existence were good indicators of this condition. The only Reform congregation, Shaarai Tov, was made up primarily of German Jews, and, as late as 1895, sermons were preached in both English and German. The first Orthodox synagogue, Adath Jeshurun, was founded by Russians and Rumanians. B'nai Abraham was composed entirely of Rumanians. Ohel Jacob was established by individuals mainly from Poland and Lithuania; it was dissolved in 1891 to be succeeded by another and larger Orthodox synagogue, Kenesseth Israel. Anshei Russia, whose name was later changed to Mikro Kodesh, was founded entirely by men from Russia. Fileshter Shul was organized by men from Fileshter, Bessarabia.⁸ This, then, was the general condition of the Jewish community in Minneapolis when Rabbi Deinard appeared on the scene in 1901.

SAMUEL N. DEINARD was born on January 25, 1873, in Rossijeny — now Raseinai — Lithuania, Russia. Sometime before Samuel was ten years old, his father, David Mendel Deinard, a recognized Hebraic scholar and early Zionist, moved the family to Palestine. Samuel received his early schooling in Jerusalem and at the age of seventeen was sent to Germany on a Baron de Rothschild scholarship to continue his secular education at schools in Berlin and Cologne. In 1892 he immigrated to the United States and shortly thereafter began work at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1896 Deinard accepted a pulpit position in Terre Haute, Indiana, where he remained for about four years. While in Indiana he earned his A.B. degree from De Pauw University in 1897. In 1900 he became rabbi at the

⁶ *United States Census, 1900, Population*, 1:219; Kramer and Leventman, *Children of the Gilded Ghetto*, 39; *American Jewish World* (Minneapolis), 6:544 (April 12, 1918); Harry Schneiderman, ed., *American Jewish Year Book*, 5680, 608 (Philadelphia, 1919).

⁷ Gordon, *Jews in Transition*, 17–21.

⁸ Gordon, *Jews in Transition*, 148–163.

Southside Hebrew Congregation in Chicago and soon received his M.A. from the University of Chicago. In 1901 he moved to Minneapolis to become rabbi at Shaarai Tov. In 1905 he earned his Ph.D. in Semitic languages from the University of Minnesota. Rabbi Deinard remained in the Minneapolis area until his sudden death on October 12, 1921.⁹

It is impossible neatly to classify the character of Rabbi Deinard. At a time when the overwhelming number of Reform Jews, and especially the Reform rabbinates, were of German extraction, Deinard was of Eastern European origin. At a time when most Reform Jews equated Zionism with anarchy and radical socialism, he vigorously advocated and worked for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. And at a time when most Reform Jews cringed when they heard Yiddish being spoken, Deinard frequently addressed Orthodox congregations in fluent Yiddish.¹⁰

A contemporary of Deinard's, George J. Gordon, gave his impression of his departed friend in the *American Jewish World* of September 22, 1922, an issue that commemorated both Deinard and Rosh Hashana (Hashonoh). Wrote Dr. Gordon: "... my first glimpse of him was as, umbrella in hand, he stepped forward in that jaunty, unassuming manner which endeared him to his intimates. He was then in his late twenties,

of a slight, almost boyish figure. . . . When he smiled, it was with his eyes rather than his lips, the kindly smile of a man with a humorist's temper and a scholar's calm. . . ." Gordon went on to say of this initial meeting: "While we talked, the impression deepened in me, that here was a man whose coming [to Minneapolis] could mean a strength to the Jewish community, a man of passionate loyalty, and with the capacity for leadership which would make that loyalty tell."

Another contemporary, Ruby Danenbaum, writing on "The Jews of Minneapolis" in the November 16, 1907, issue of the *Reform Advocate* (Chicago), said of Deinard: "His progressive ideas are slightly ahead of those of his Congregation and require some time to

⁹ Michael Rapp interview with Amos S. Deinard, son of Samuel Deinard, in Minneapolis, August 30, 1971 (hereafter cited as Amos Deinard interview); *American Jewish World* (hereafter cited as *World*), October 14, p. 3, October 21, p. 9, and December 9, 1921, p. 21; Plaut, *Jews in Minnesota*, 213. (Earlier editions of the *World* were paged consecutively in volumes; with the September 5, 1919, issue they were paged separately.)

¹⁰ Amos Deinard interview; Gordon, *Jews in Transition*, 33. In addition to speaking Yiddish, Deinard was fluent in English, Hebrew, Arabic, French, and German. He also knew several Slavic languages. See Plaut, *Jews in Minnesota*, 214.

TEMPLE ISRAEL (photograph at right), as Rabbi Deinard knew it, was located at Tenth Street and Fifth Avenue South and still stands. Completed and dedicated in December, 1903, it was used as a synagogue until 1928. It was preceded by a modest wooden edifice in 1880 and partly destroyed by fire in 1902. Today's Temple Israel is located at Twenty-fourth Street and Hennepin Avenue.




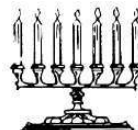
he worked out but will eventually satisfy his followers.”¹¹

Active in both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities, Deinard spoke before such diverse groups as inmates of the state penitentiary at Stillwater, various church organizations, and the Hennepin County Equal Suffrage Association. He was an official representative of the state of Minnesota to the National Conference of Charities and Corrections as well as the first president of the Minneapolis chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He also was chairman of the editorial committee of *Parents and Teachers*, a monthly bulletin of the Parents and Teachers Association of Minneapolis, in addition to being a member of the advisory committee for the Minneapolis Board of Education. He was a member, too, of the Community Chest Council, the mayor's committee on unemployment, the Elks, and the Civic and Commerce Association. Deinard also made patriotic speeches at various times during World War I and was a leader in the Liberty Loan campaigns.¹²

Within the Jewish community, his activities were indeed numerous, and most of them crossed “national lines.” He continually pleaded that the Talmud Torah, the community-sponsored Hebrew school traditionally attended by the children of Eastern European Jews, be made academically sound. In one editorial he called for broadening of the curriculum and giving more time to the study of Jewish history and religious and ethical literature, so that the institution could “serve as a Jewish Normal School for the training of competent teachers for the more liberal religious schools.” He helped organize a Minneapolis Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA), the Jewish Home and Free Dispensary Society, and a Hebrew Free Loan Society. Deinard also was a member of B'nai B'rith, financial secretary for a number of years of the Associated Jewish Charities of

THE AMERICAN JEWISH WORLD

VOL. II NO. 1		JULY 30 1915
SPECIAL ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE		
TRUE AMERICANISM		Louis D. Brandeis
WHY THE JEWISH CHILD SHOULD BE TAUGHT HEBREW		Dr. S. N. Deinard Dr. M. Silber
THE ZIONIST CONVENTION		
THE MINNEAPOLIS COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN		Mrs. Leopold Metzger
THE WAR AND THE JEWISH QUESTION		Dr. Stephen S. Wise
THE LADIES' AUXILIARY OF THE TALMUD TORAH		Mrs. A. Berman
THE PRESSING PROBLEM OF THE JEWISH CHARITIES		Julia I. Felsenthal Louis L. Schwartz
ELLIS N. HARRIS: An Appreciation		



THE FIRST COVER of the American Jewish World listed the articles and their authors and set the tone for subsequent issues. It was apparently numbered volume two because it was considered a continuation of the Jewish Weekly, which Deinard began in 1912 and which failed in the same year.

Minneapolis, a representative from Minneapolis to the American Jewish Congress (at that time an essentially Eastern European Jewish organization), a manager of the Jewish War Relief, and a director of the Sheltering Home for Jewish Children. His concern for Eastern European Jews — as well as his general compassion — led him publicly to protest the murder of thousands of Jews in the Ukraine in the days following World War I. He made frequent appearances in the Orthodox congregation of Keneseth Israel and Adath Jeshurun.¹³

He demonstrated his compassion not only in official and public ways but in private ways, too. Deinard was a very energetic man, and George Gordon wrote of him: “With all his public responsibilities, Dr. Deinard was never too busy to assist the unfortunate. Scarcely a week passed when he did not intercede on someone's behalf before a board of pardon, a superintendent of

¹¹ Quoted in Albert G. Minda, *The Story of Temple Israel, Minneapolis, Minnesota: A Personal Account*, 15 (Minneapolis, 1971).

¹² *World*, 2:412 (February 4, 1916), 3:538 (March 31, 1916), 4:231 (December 15, 1916), 5:360 (August 17, 1917), 6:291 (December 28, 1917), 6:754 (July 12, 1918), and October 14, 1921, p. 3; program of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, sixty-second annual convention, Minneapolis, July 5–9, 1971 (copy in possession of author); Parents and Teachers Association of Minneapolis, *Parents and Teachers*, February 15, [1921], [2].

¹³ Plaut, *Jews in Minnesota*, 217; *World*, 2:282 (December 10, 1915), 2:362 (January 14, 1916), 3:501 (March 17, 1916), 5:101 (May 14, 1917), 7:78 (September 27, 1918), 7:222 (November 29, 1918), 7:665 (June 6, 1919), October 3, 1919, p. 9, 12, November 28, 1919, p. 9, June 4, 1920, p. 8 (quote), December 17, 1920, p. 6, April 29, 1921, p. 7.

education, a juvenile parole officer, a business men's organization, or a court. . . . I remember how often he would telephone to me, sometimes late at night, to ask my assistance in a particular case. . . . His social conscience knew no line of color or creed."¹⁴

ONE OF Deinard's greatest interests, and the one which perhaps most endeared him to the Eastern European community, was Zionism, to which he was deeply committed. His stand was courageous at the time. Gordon wrote in the September 22, 1922, issue of the *American Jewish World*: "Twenty years ago or more, any Rabbi was daring indeed, who proclaimed himself a Zionist; and yet from the earliest day of his ministry, Dr. Deinard strove to make his congregation adherents to the Zionist cause."

As early as 1904, Deinard was national vice-president of the Federation of American Zionists. Active in various local Zionist movements, Deinard spoke on the importance of a Jewish state whenever and wherever the opportunity arose. He debated anti-Zionists at one meeting and at another explained the necessity for a Zionist organization. He lectured on the topic before the Lady Zionists, the Minnesota Zionist Society, Temple Emmanuel in Duluth, and the Young Women's Hebrew Association (YWHA). In August, 1917, Deinard spoke at a mass meeting celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the calling of the First Zionist Congress by Dr. Theodore Herzl. In November, 1917, he addressed about one hundred professional and businessmen attending a luncheon given by the Ohaway [Ohavei] Zion Society (Lovers of Zion) in honor of the visiting Zionist, Judge Hugo Pam. In March, 1918, he encouraged men not eligible for the American army to enlist in the British Jewish Battalion which was scheduled to fight in Palestine. Finally, one of Rabbi Deinard's most audacious acts (considering his congregation's negative views on Zionism) was to invite Dr. Benzion Mossinson, superintendent of the Herzliah Gymnasium in Jaffa, Palestine, and a leader of international Zionism, to speak at a Friday night service.¹⁵

Zionists in Deinard's day — as well as now — are often challenged as to the object of their loyalties. Though Deinard strongly supported Zionism in its attempts to re-create a vibrant Jewish state in Palestine, he did not suggest that Jews within the United States separate themselves from their non-Jewish neighbors and form a distinct national political group. Nor did he suggest that all American Jews should or would eventually migrate to Palestine. To Deinard, "A Jewish nation [could] exist only in a Jewish home land, in Palestine. In other lands [if possible] the Jew must be politically completely identified with the interests of the nation to which he belongs."¹⁶

The question of dual loyalty, of Jew or American, never tormented Deinard, just as it never tormented men such as Judge Louis D. Brandeis or Professor Horace M. Kallen, two prominent Americans active in Zionist circles. In fact, these men and others like them defined and have continued to define their Zionist interests in terms of their Americanism. As the *American Jewish World* concluded in an unsigned editorial that might have been written by Deinard:

"Zionism is Americanism, the latest and most ideal type of Americanism, the Americanism that stands for the preservation, the security, the self-determination of all national groups; the Americanism that is willing to sacrifice its blood and its treasure for the attainment of this ideal condition for humanity. Zionism is in full accord with America's program in the present war as interpreted by America's great leader, President Wilson. Therefore, if you are a Jew and a loyal American, all the more reason for you why you should be a Zionist."¹⁷

Deinard's strong espousal of Zionism thus helped him to win the respect and admiration of the Eastern European Jews. Within their community he acted as a teacher while serving as their spokesman to his own community. "Through his efforts," said one observer, "his people came to understand these strange 'foreigners' from East Europe who also spoke of themselves as Jews."¹⁸

Yet Deinard wanted more than just to explain one group to the other. He wanted their unification. He chose the press as the instrument to achieve this end. George Gordon wrote of Deinard: "When he had a message, he was really not content merely with the audience that his congregation afforded. He wished rather to express himself to the community at large. This probably explains his persistent efforts to establish a Jewish weekly in the Twin Cities." In 1904 he established the weekly *Jewish Progress*, but it was unsuccessful. In 1905 he tried again with the *Judaean*, another weekly that failed. His third attempt, in 1907, was the *Scribe*, a weekly that published a four-page supplement in Yiddish because many in the Jewish community still used that language. This paper also failed

¹⁴ *World*, September 22, 1922, p. 9.

¹⁵ Amos Deinard interview; *World*, 2:442 (February 18, 1916), 2:474 (March 3, 1916), 3:555 (April 7, 1916), 4:99 (October 20, 1916), 5:202 (June 15, 1917), 5:380 (August 24, 1917), 6:154 (November 2, 1917), 6:203 (November 23, 1917), and 7:219 (November 29, 1918).

¹⁶ *World*, 5:358 (August 17, 1917).

¹⁷ *World*, 6:560 (April 19, 1918).

¹⁸ Gordon, *Jews in Transition*, 33.

within a few years. In 1912 Deinard launched the *Jewish Weekly*, but within six months it, too, was forced to cease publication. Finally, in 1915, he began the *American Jewish World* which has been published continuously since then.¹⁹

Considering the views of Deinard, it is not surprising that the general theme of the *World* was the desire to create a unified, self-conscious Jewish community. In its initial issue, the weekly declared in an editorial: "We need not assure our readers that this paper will be strictly Jewish, Jewish in the broadest sense of the word. Nothing of Jewish interest will be foreign to it; nothing of interest to any Jewish section, to the adherents of any Jewish movement."²⁰ The paper kept its promise, and events occurring in the various communities — German, Lithuanian, Polish, and Rumanian — were duly and respectfully recorded.

THE NEWSPAPER particularly reflected the concept of communal solidarity in editorials. In one the readers were told: "Be a Jew, no matter what other label you wear. Be a Jew, an Orthodox, or a Conservative, or a Reform, or a Zionist, or a Socialist, or even a lodge-Jew; but be a Jew." In another the paper lectured readers on the absurdity of using the word "kike" to describe fellow Jews. In a third editorial, readers were told how junk peddlers, most of whom were from Eastern Europe and "who have been looked upon with pity, disdain, in embarrassment and shame," really deserve honor for their "patriotic and highly meritorious work," that of "saving and utilizing waste material" — a World War I attempt at recycling. The last two editorials referred to were obviously addressed to the German Jews and reflect the general contempt with which the Eastern European Jews were held by the Germans.²¹

In the issue immediately following editor Deinard's death in 1921, the *World* published the last two editorials he ever wrote. One, typically, was on Zionism.

¹⁹ *World*, September 22, 1922, p. 9; Plaut, *Jews in Minnesota*, 166; Michael Rapp interview with Leonard (Leo) H. Frisch, retired editor of the *World*, July 24, 1971. Mr. Frisch started working with Deinard in 1912. Unfortunately, few editions of Deinard's earlier papers appear to have survived. Some copies of the *Scribe* are in Cincinnati. Dr. Israel Markus was editor and publisher of a Yiddish weekly, *Die Shabbosdige Post*, in Minneapolis from 1917 to 1921. See Gordon, *Jews in Transition*, 177.

²⁰ *World*, 2:26 (July 30, 1915).

²¹ *World*, 2:136 (October 8, 1915) (first quote), 2:200 (November 5, 1915), 3:888 (September 1, 1916) ("kike" quote), 6:528 (April 5, 1918) (last quote).

²² *World*, October 14, 1922, p. 12.

²³ See, for example, Martha Stanton, "His Kind," in the *World*, 3:837, 3:853 (August 11, 18, 1916).

²⁴ *World*, 2:7 (July 30, 1915).

The second, also typical, reflected the words of one of his contemporaries who described Deinard as "intensely Jewish" and indicated, too, his warmth, humor, compassion, and his ease among Jews of all national origins and beliefs. The rabbi wrote: "The 'notions' that the old time Yankee peddler carried around in his pack are not half as curious and odd as the ecclesiastical and ceremonial notions that we Jews are still carrying with us as symbols of our faith and ideas." He noted that, when the finest musical instruments are available, Jews still observe holidays like Rosh Hashana by bringing forth the ram's horn (shophar), the "most primitive sound producer, and with its shrill staccatos spread awe over the congregation of worshippers." And in the fall Jews still construct the arborlike Succah (booth), originally intended for the vineyards and orchards of Palestine where fall is the warmest time of year. "Yet," asked Deinard, "who would be so dull as to rail at these curiosities and mementoes, that we retained from our people's childhood days and early youth? . . . The Jew is still one of the world's arch dreamers, and in a drab, prosaic, utilitarian age he carries with him those queer notions that lend a bit of poetry to life."²²

To underscore its Jewish unification message, the *World* also employed fiction in the form of frequent short stories. In them the Eastern European Jews and their traditions and institutions were presented in a favorable and sympathetic light, and Eastern European Jews and German Jews often became friends and relatives at the stories' conclusion. Though of dubious literary quality, these stories expressed the view of the editorial staff that to make national distinctions within the community was a meaningless exercise.²³

Finally, in his call for a strong Hebrew education for Jewish youth, Deinard again demonstrated his feelings toward the concept of Jewish cohesiveness. "A study of Hebrew," he observed, "must awaken in the child a consciousness of Jewish unity, a sympathetic brotherly feeling for all our fellow Jews, no matter in what clime they may dwell or from what country they may hail."²⁴

HOW DOES ONE effectively measure the influence of an individual and a newspaper within a specific community? It would be foolish and erroneous to imply that Samuel N. Deinard and the *American Jewish World* singlehandedly erased the barriers that divided the Minneapolis Jewish communities from one another. Factors such as the eventual economic success and improvement of the Eastern Europeans, the arrival of ever more Jewish emigrants from Slavic lands — making the Germans a small minority within the Minneapolis Jewish community — anti-Semitism, and the mere passage of time blurred national lines.



THE HUGE FUNERAL service for Deinard in 1921, according to Rabbi Minda, was "said to be the largest and most diversified group present at any funeral ever held in Minneapolis up to that time."

Still, Deinard's role and that of the *World* in Jewish unification cannot be denied. It was Deinard's newspaper that reinforced the Americanization and English classes in which many of the Eastern European immigrants took part and the regular public school classes which their children attended. Also, it has been recorded that Deinard's appearance at Adath Jeshurun in 1911 crystallized the demand by many members to secure the services of an English-speaking rabbi. The culmination of this movement came in 1912 when C. David Matt was named spiritual leader.²⁵ With the gradual adoption of English by the Eastern European Jews, another barrier between them and the German Jews was destroyed.

Finally, the personality of Rabbi Deinard himself, which inspired the love of German and Eastern European Jews alike, doubtless affected the unification process. Because of their respect for the man, many Orthodox Jews maintained dual synagogue member-

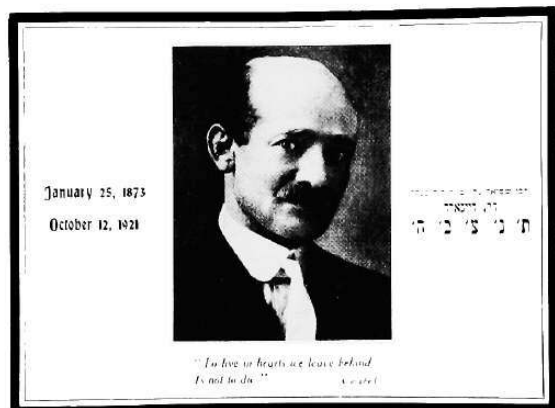
ships — one in their traditional congregations and one in Deinard's.²⁶ An article in the September 22, 1922, issue of the *World*, already referred to, noted that C. David Matt's congregation had more than doubled in the ten years he had been rabbi at Adath Jeshurun, but added: "One must bear in mind, in order to adequately appreciate this achievement, the fact that the late Dr. Deinard of blessed memory, was fully as beloved by the conservative Jews of this city as he was by those of reform leanings, and that he thus constituted a powerful magnet to those very people who largely compose Matt's membership."

The same September 22, 1922, *World* welcomed the new rabbi of Temple Israel (formerly Shaarai Tov),

²⁵ An undated, untitled manuscript which appears to be an early history of Adath Jeshurun is in the Joseph H. Schanfeld Papers, in the Minnesota Historical Society.

²⁶ Leonard H. Frisch interview, July 24, 1971.

THE AMERICAN JEWISH WORLD



SAMUEL N.
DEINARD



MEMORIAL
NUMBER

²⁷ Minda, *Temple Israel*, 15.

²⁸ Plaut, *Jews in Minnesota*, 217.

THE PORTRAIT on page 215 is published through the courtesy of Amos Deinard. The photograph of the temple on page 216 is through the courtesy of Temple Israel. The photograph of Dr. Deinard's funeral was taken by a *Minneapolis Tribune* photographer and reprinted in the *American Jewish World* of December 9, 1921.

DEINARD'S SUDDEN DEATH, at the age of only forty-eight, was made even more poignant because it came on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement and the most solemn of all the Jewish holy days. This was the cover of the December 9, 1921, issue of the *World*.

Albert G. Minda, cautioning him, however, that he had much to live up to. Many years later, the much-revered Rabbi Minda himself wrote of Deinard: "A warm, genial personality, he was persona grata with his congregants both in their congregational and social life. He held strong convictions and championed them courageously. He was liberal in the realm of economic and social betterment as well as in his religious philosophy."²⁷

Perhaps W. Gunther Plaut's estimate of Deinard best sums up the role of the man:

"He served as the bridge between the old and the new, between Reform and tradition, between East and West, and therein lay perhaps his greatest contribution. This small, fiery, liberal rabbi was accepted and honored as a Jewish leader by all portions of the community. Came *Rosh Hashanah* and Rabbi Deinard would spend the second day (when his own Temple had no services) at Orthodox Keneseth Israel where he was invited to deliver the sermon—in Yiddish. . . . Many were the assemblies which he addressed in this their mother tongue. The rabbi who represented Reform but also worshipped in the Orthodox synagogue became the symbol of his era in Minneapolis, in which the gap between the old and the new was rapidly narrowing and closing."²⁸



Copyright of **Minnesota History** is the property of the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, or email articles, however, for individual use.

To request permission for educational or commercial use, [contact us](#).