

Dartmouth's Jewish Quota: A History in Documents

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Preface

This monograph represents the culminating product of a term's worth of research that I completed in Spring 2023 on Dartmouth College's use of a Jewish quota. I performed the vast majority of this research by closely examining correspondence, memoranda, minutes, institutional records, and an array of related papers held at Dartmouth's Rauner Library.¹ My research was the central part of a broader project facilitated by Rauner, under the auspices of its Historical Accountability Student Research Fellowship. I am very grateful for the opportunity which Rauner afforded me through this Fellowship. Particular thanks are due to Rauner's staff, whose untiring enthusiasm for my project and breadth of background knowledge regarding institutional history were of invaluable benefit in the course of my research. I would especially like to thank: Val Werner, my counselor throughout the Fellowship; Dr. Jay Satterfield; Dr. Morgan Swann; and Peter Carini.

During my research stage, I reviewed several thousands of individual documents found in several dozens of collections (boxes, folders, etc.). Nearly two-thirds of these collections proved fruitless or virtually so: Most contained few, if any, relevant documents, and no institutional collections proved to be "smoking guns" containing a monumental number of documents relevant to Dartmouth's Jewish quota. While a large number of relevant documents did exist, I found them scattered across a multiplicity of collections—in many of which I had not planned to search and of whose potential importance or even existence I had, in several instances, been unaware until my research was well underway. My research process involved reading, learning, conferring with Rauner's staff, and then "guessing and checking" the contents of collections.

Mine was a long and often wearisome task but one punctuated by moments of great excitement upon discovery of relevant documents. In sifting through dozens of collections and thousands of documents, I "flagged" (for my purposes, photographed) a miniscule number proportionally but a number that is quite substantial taken by itself. Specifically, I determined that roughly 400 individual documents (amounting to nearly 600 photographs stored on my computer) were relevant to my historical study of Dartmouth's Jewish quota. There were many other notationally relevant documents of which I was aware but which I did not photograph for later consultation, typically because I deemed them repetitive or formulaic in nature. These were in large part cases of external correspondence, in which Dartmouth officials' responses reiterated points made elsewhere or even were derived from form letters—as was the case with letters found in the various collections, from 1945, regarding President Ernest Martin Hopkins' self-created controversy about the quota. However, I did take note of them and of their presence in so voluminous a quantity, which factored into my understanding, and my subsequent articulation, of the quota's history.

While the research that I undertook was largely original and I know well that I reviewed collections and culled documents which had not been previously examined or

¹ Other sources, though fewer in number, proved important and are duly noted in the monograph.

otherwise recorded, I must add that my research hardly began in a vacuum. In addition to valuable advice given by Rauner's staff, a number of senior honors theses enumerated in my bibliography, especially Amanda Shepard's 1992 thesis "Seeking a Sense of Place: Jewish Students in the Dartmouth Community 1920-1940," steered the early stages of my research. The portions of these theses' bibliographies that I was able to retrace served as a good starting point for my research.² I then sought to make previously recorded history fuller and richer, clarifying lingering questions and contextualizing where possible. I also sought variously to fill in gaps in the quota's known timeline, to clarify key dates in that timeline, and to investigate policies and concerns that antedated or postdated the quota. In this way, I could produce a more complete and conclusive history.

My research process may be fairly characterized as having been a matter of "following a paper trail." My monograph was composed (and, indeed, reads) in much the same way. Before beginning the writing process, I manually assigned the original days, months, and years to all documents that I photographed so that my computer would sort them by date across source collections. Consequently, I was able to "see" and thereby write about the totality of the quota's history according to chronology, without having to actively navigate among the many collections in which I had located relevant documents. I note as well that I assigned dates to documents iteratively, rather than in sum total at the end of the term. Doing so proved helpful, but it was also necessary, for I produced two precursors to this monograph: a brief blog post of May 11, 2023 (from which the relevant section here is adapted), whose subject was Hopkins' aforementioned 1945 controversy; and a public presentation of May 23, 2023, in which I provided an overview of the ideas explored in detail here.

In this monograph, I present only a select few of all relevant transcriptions and documents—and purposely so. I have sought to present the most important and illuminating of them. The many which I do not present herein instead greatly informed my composition of the quota's contextual history, as the footnotes tend to reveal.

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² In the case of Shepard's thoughtful thesis, attempting to retrace her exact steps proved difficult. Her much-cited entry, "Hopkins papers," is considerably ambiguous in the context of Hopkins' colossal administrative archive (DP-11) and manuscript collection of personal papers (MS-1359).

Introduction

This monograph examines the history of Dartmouth's "Jewish quota," a discriminatory restriction on the percentage of admittees in each Class who were Jewish. An admissions tool from roughly 1931 to 1946,¹ Dartmouth's quota was not so much an administrative policy as an administrative practice, in that it was employed under the auspices of a preexisting policy, the "selective process for admission" (est. 1921). This monograph presents the history of the quota's development, implementation, and ultimate repudiation as a chronological, detailed "paper trail" of memoranda and correspondence, interpolated in a contextual history. Numerous documents are transcribed and excerpted, but direct scans of others are included, either for narrative clarity or born of the theory that certain egregious documents simply need to be seen (in their original form) to be believed. The story of Dartmouth's Jewish quota is a fascinating one, and so too is the evolution of its "paper trail." Together, they make for compelling—and often disturbing—reading and review.

Background

Jewish immigration in the early- to mid-nineteenth century, mostly from Central Europe, resulted in a Jewish population in the United States of 300,000 by 1880.² Many of these largely German Jews assimilated readily and entered business. A number of them became quite wealthy and ascended the social ladder, and their affluence ensured that their progeny attended the nation's most prestigious academic institutions.

A new wave of Jewish immigration occurred somewhat later, this time from Eastern Europe, and, between 1881 and 1924, more than two-and-one-half million Eastern European Jews arrived in the United States.³ They settled predominantly in major urban areas on the East Coast, especially New York, joined the working class, spoke Yiddish, and developed robust intra-Jewish networks.⁴ Notably, their presence produced demographic changes in the metropolitan areas in which they lived. In New York City, for instance, the percentage of Jews increased from 4% to nearly 30% from 1880 to 1920.⁵

When these new immigrants' children came of age, they sought to break social barriers by obtaining a good education, as had their German-Jewish predecessors: They applied and were accepted to the nation's foremost colleges and universities. Consequently, in the aftermath of the First World War, and even amidst a post-war increase in applications overall, academic institutions—notably those in urban areas,

¹ Assigning a clean start date or a clean end date to the quota poses problems which shall be discussed.

² "From Haven to Home: 350 Years of Jewish Life in America," Library of Congress.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Lance S. Sussman, "New York Jewish History," NY Archives qtd. in "The Peopling of New York," CUNY.

including Harvard, Yale, and Columbia in particular—began to see especially increased percentages of Jewish applicants and students. By the early 1920s, Columbia's entering Classes, for example, had become about 40% Jewish.⁶

Of course, prestigious colleges and universities had long had Jewish attendees, who came from the by-then established, assimilated, and often wealthy families that had arrived in the earlier wave of German-Jewish immigration. However, the children born to the new Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe were increasingly a cause of concern for colleges and universities. Not only were campuses' religious demographics changing, but these new Jewish students were commonly viewed as the wrong "type" of Jews, as-yet unestablished and insufficiently assimilated.⁷ Such views led many of the United States' most prestigious academic institutions to take action, imposing "Jewish quotas," a form of silent anti-Semitism by which they could restrict the percentage of Jewish students they admitted to their undergraduate and graduate schools.

In 1922, Columbia cut its Jewish enrollment figure in half to 20%.⁸ That same year, President A. Lawrence Lowell of Harvard made a public announcement that he desired to limit the University's percentage of Jewish students. Lowell's declaration attracted much controversy and subjected Harvard to public scrutiny; nevertheless, Lowell prevailed, and Harvard ultimately implemented a quota in 1926, reducing its Jewish percentage from 20% to 10%.⁹ From 1922, Yale also had a quota on Jewish students of 10%.¹⁰ Incredibly, even earlier, in 1921, Princeton had introduced a quota of 3%.¹¹

In order to impose these restrictions, admissions policies had to undergo substantive change. Admission to college had traditionally been a matter of merely satisfying a school's requirements: having enough high-school credits, meeting certain scholastic benchmarks, filling out the appropriate forms in a timely fashion, and adhering to the prescribed application procedure. In 1921, however, amidst an influx of applicants in the aftermath of the war, Princeton and Dartmouth led the charge towards a new type of admissions policy.

In Princeton's case, this new policy marked a direct response to an uptick in Jewish applications in particular. Admissions to the University became based on two counts: "scholarship" and "character."¹² Princeton met the 3% quota which it had set by denying Jewish applicants en masse for lacking in supposed "character."¹³ Harvard, Yale, and Columbia followed suit in discriminating against Jewish applicants in this fashion—by employing such empty signifiers as "character."¹⁴

⁶ Nathan Belt, *A Promise to Keep* (New York: Times Books, 1979), p. 99.

⁷ See Harold Wechsler, *The Qualified Student* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1977).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Charles Hyman and Monica Piascik, "Retrospection: President Lowell's Quotas," *The Harvard Crimson*, March 26, 2015.

¹⁰ See Dan Oren, *Joining The Club: A History of Jews and Yale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

¹¹ "A Brief Timeline of Jewish Life at Princeton University," *Princeton Alumni Weekly*, May 11, 2016.

¹² "The Chosen," *Princeton Alumni Weekly*, February 15, 2006.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ See Jerome Karabel, *The Chosen* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005) & Wechsler, *The Qualified Student*.

The Selective Process

By 1921 Dartmouth, for its part, was receiving applications from five times as many students¹⁵—and roughly three times as many academically qualified students¹⁶—as it could conceivably accept for its entering Class, which led the College to implement the “selective process for admission.” In principle, Dartmouth’s “selective process” was the same process as that used in college admissions today: It sought the creation of diversity that was deemed desirable. Officials could *craft* their desired distribution of students in a given Class by numerous metrics, including “geography,” “secondary school,” and “parental occupation.” Preference was given to all properly qualified sons of Dartmouth alumni and officers and to applicants from New Hampshire and from the west and the south.

Unlike the prescriptively prejudicial admissions processes that other institutions were beginning to impose at the time, Dartmouth’s selective process was created in response to an increase in applications overall—not of Jewish students in particular. Indeed, to date, Dartmouth had seen Jewish students enroll in the low single digits at a maximum,¹⁷ and, under its new selective process, the College did not even ask applicants’ religion. Rather, the College continued to determine its religious distribution only in surveys of matriculated students. Clearly, then, as yet the potential limitation of Jewish enrollment at Dartmouth simply was a non-issue for College officials.

In 1921 and 1922, Dartmouth’s selective process received substantial publicity, as the College issued releases to the national news media and disseminated literature explaining the new process. Officials from colleges and universities across the country, including Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania, and Swarthmore College, eagerly wrote to Dartmouth to obtain copies of this literature and to ask detailed questions about the selective process.¹⁸ Curious and excited alumni did the same.¹⁹

Quickly, however, Dartmouth’s selective process also drew accusations of being merely an anti-Semitic screen for limiting Jewish students’ enrollment. These charges stemmed from the process’s broad publicization at the same time (1922) that A. Lawrence Lowell was infamously, and publicly, advocating the use of firm quotas on Jews at Harvard.

Early Accusations of Anti-Semitism in Dartmouth’s Admissions

One of the first allegations levied against the selective process was relayed from one of Dartmouth President Ernest Martin Hopkins’ close friends, then-Harvard Law Professor Felix Frankfurter, who wrote to Hopkins on July 10, 1922, regarding the selective process. Frankfurter quoted a “most important Harvard man,”

¹⁵ E.M. Hopkins to L.A. Williams, “Selective Process, 1921-1922,” December 10, 1921 (DP-11).

¹⁶ Hopkins to Felix Frankfurter, “Selective Process, 1922-1923,” July 15, 1922 (DP-11).

¹⁷ Hopkins to Jerry Danzig, “Jewish Controversy, 1944-1945,” September 24, 1945 (MS-1359).

¹⁸ See: Selective Process, 21-22; Selective Process, 22-23; Selective Process, 26-27 (DP-11).

¹⁹ Ibid.

Charles Hall Grandgent, chair of Harvard's admissions committee, who—apparently in trying to justify President Lowell's remarks and plans—had suggested that Dartmouth's selective process was itself a “screen for anti-Semitic discrimination.”²⁰ Frankfurter therefore asked that Hopkins defend the process and explain its origins, noting his own “very lively unwillingness, closely akin to inability, to believe that [Hopkins] would sanction any ‘screen for anti-Semitic discrimination.’”²¹

After receiving Frankfurter's letter, Hopkins sent a memorandum on July 15 to E. Gordon Bill, Dartmouth's Director of Admissions and Dean of Freshmen, to which he appended Frankfurter's note and in which he expressed his views on the matter and discussed what his reply to Frankfurter would entail:

I have heard the identical phrase, from several different quarters, that our selective process was simply a smoke screen to hide a fundamental antagonism against the Jews. [...] I have stated emphatically and categorically, in regard to all inquiries, that the elimination of the Jews never figured in the slightest way in the formation of our plans, nor in our practice since the plans were adopted. I think it not unlikely that some attempt will be made during the summer to get Dartmouth into publicity on this point ... I should prefer that no publicity be issued if it can be avoided. On the one hand, I do not want to seem in the slightest way to reflect on Harvard, and on the other hand I am not willing to have motives and practices ascribed to us which have not been at all in our minds.²²

The reply that Hopkins made to Frankfurter, sent that same day, accorded with the dual objectives defined in his memorandum to Bill. This is to say, Hopkins rebuffed any ulterior motives to the creation or use of Dartmouth's selective process but was also an apologist for Lowell, whom he said he could not condemn without reviewing “more data” to which he was not privy.²³

Responding in turn on July 21, Frankfurter accepted and appreciated Hopkins' guarantees of the integrity of Dartmouth's process, but he promised that “not a little of the data as to the Harvard situation is documented” and that this information would in due course change Hopkins' mind on Harvard's president.²⁴ (So it did, as, in fact, six months later, Hopkins wrote to Frankfurter that he had come to appreciate the severity of Lowell's “attitude in regard to race distribution” in light of what he described as the publicization of “overwhelming” evidence.²⁵)

Hopkins' rather defensive memorandum to Bill concerning Frankfurter's initial letter was among the first communications in which Hopkins and Bill commented on, and thus revealed their awareness of, anti-Semitism in other institutions' admissions processes and of the potential that Dartmouth's selective process receive criticism along the same lines. In this way, the Frankfurter-Hopkins correspondence demonstrates that, early on, the question of Jewish admittances to Dartmouth was known to Hopkins and hence to Bill but that they simply did not regard it as a problem just as yet.

²⁰ Frankfurter to Hopkins, “Selective Process, 1922-1923,” July 10, 1922 (DP-11).

²¹ Ibid.

²² Hopkins to E. Gordon Bill, “Dean of Freshmen, 1921-1922,” July 15, 1922 (DP-11).

²³ Hopkins to Frankfurter, “Selective Process, 1922-1923,” July 15, 1922 (DP-11).

²⁴ Frankfurter to Hopkins, “Selective Process, 1922-1923,” July 21, 1922 (DP-11).

²⁵ Hopkins to Frankfurter, “Selective Process, 1922-1923,” February 26, 1923 (DP-11).

However, the topic itself did remain on their minds. On October 7, 1922, Bill forwarded to Hopkins a brief computation of Jewish students' respective enrollment in the Class of 1925 (the last admitted on the basis of priority of application) and in the then-freshman Class of 1926 (the first admitted under the selective process). In both Classes, Bill highlighted, the percentage of Jewish students "is almost identically 2%."²⁶ So, the population of Jewish students was remaining in its traditional proportion, being in no way changed—neither increased nor decreased—by the use of the selective process. Bill emphasized as well that the admissions blanks used under the selective process "have no reference whatever to the man's religion";²⁷ hence, religion did not, and could not, play a part in admissions deliberations. Undoubtedly, for Hopkins, Bill's memorandum served to vindicate his indignation at accusations and imputations made about the selective process—and even invigorated his conviction that no charge of anti-Semitism in admissions might be effectively levied at Dartmouth.

Indeed, Hopkins was soon motivated to write a highly defensive, unsolicited letter to Rabbi Harry Levi, of the Temple Israel in Boston, whom the *Providence Bulletin* reported in October as having asserted that Dartmouth discriminated against Jewish applicants. In his letter, Hopkins denied outright Rabbi Levi's claim as reported and asked that the rabbi explain his rationale for making such a declaration if indeed he had done so.²⁸ In reply, Rabbi Levi suggested that his expressed view stemmed from statements which had been made to him personally by Jewish Dartmouth students. He described, for instance, having been informed that, "when the Jewish boys wanted to organize a fraternity because they were excluded from all the Dartmouth fraternities, they were refused permission, altho [sic] all the existing fraternities are exclusively Christian."²⁹ He added that he had been told of a bigoted comment made by a Dartmouth administrator and that he had been advised repeatedly "that Dartmouth would admit only a certain small percentage of Jews."³⁰ He asked Hopkins bluntly: "Are these facts?"³¹

Hopkins responded by refuting the charges and staunchly defending Dartmouth's admissions process as nonprejudicial in origin and practice alike. He also told his side of the story, in detail, about the attempted creation of a Jewish fraternity. In doing so, however, Hopkins suggested in effect that Jews were responsible for anti-Semitism:

I had supposed ... that men most solicitous for the welfare of the Jewish boys wished and approved the policy which the College followed. [...] I stated that the Administration would not forbid any group of boys to organize for any purpose ... but that personally I thought the project represented the attitude on the part of Jews which created most of the social animus against them ... namely, that they preferred to set themselves apart as a group, rather than to be amalgamated or absorbed.^{32, 33}

²⁶ Bill to Hopkins, "Dean of Freshmen, 1922-1923," October 7, 1922 (DP-11).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Hopkins to Harry Levi, "Selective Process, 22-23," November 15, 1922 (DP-11).

²⁹ Levi to Hopkins, "Selective Process, 22-23," November 20, 1922 (DP-11).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² The first fraternity which would openly accept Jewish students was not established at Dartmouth until 1924 (See C. Dawkins, "Establishment of Jewish Fraternities on Campus.") Nevertheless, before that time, a small number of Jewish students managed to pledge fraternities among already-existing houses.

³³ Hopkins to Harry Levi, "Selective Process, 22-23," November 21, 1922 (DP-11).

Indeed, this passage bespeaks a wholly and incredibly misplaced conception of anti-Semitism, to which conception Hopkins would continue to subscribe throughout his presidency. What is striking here, moreover, is the forthrightness, even eagerness, with which Hopkins explains his view. Yet Hopkins did not stop there, going on instead to summarize what he called his “whole attitude” on the question of Jewish admittances; evoking a decidedly racist sensibility, he wrote:

In general, the men of Jewish blood do not like the lack of certain urban characteristics which are wanting in the Dartmouth environment, and still less, in our experience, do they like the somewhat definite vogue in favor of the strenuous life physically as a concomitant to mental effort. The result is that the percentage of those boys who seek to gain entrance to the College is small.³⁴

In so asserting, Hopkins doubtless sought to explain the stable 2% figure forwarded to him by Dean Bill.

Critically, however, Hopkins added as well that, should “any racial strain” start to predominate in a way that changed desired proportions of student representation at the College, he “should not hesitate ... to attempt to offset [its] influence[.]”³⁵—namely, by artificial means, under the auspices of the selective process.³⁶ But, he said, in the case of Jewish students, “this is a purely theoretical statement,”³⁷ insofar as Dartmouth had low enrollment numbers of Jewish students—as yet.

Bill and Hopkins, and Their Views

The diminutive 2% figure of Jewish enrollment at Dartmouth roughly continued in the first several years of admissions under the selective process, increasing only marginally and briefly and in a way that did not cause concern for Hopkins or Bill.

Jewish enrollment at Dartmouth before and after the introduction of the selective process, 1920-1921 to 1924-1925

Cycle Admitted	Class Year	Number of Jewish Students	Number of Students	Percent of Jewish Students
*1920-1921	1925	12	578	2.1
1921-1922	1926	11	552	2.0
1922-1923	1927	21	595	3.5
1923-1924	1928	18	673	2.7
1924-1925	1929	13	638	2.0

*Statistics from Committee on Admissions files (Box 5124, DA-82)
& Nov/Dec editions of the Alumni Magazine*

*Last year of admission by priority of application

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

In 1924, however, the question of Jewish admittances became a subject of internal discussion once again for Hopkins and Bill—prompted by letters from a student, no less. In May of that year, Hopkins received two letters from a Jewish student at the College, Paul L. Hexter, who was a junior and a member of the Sigma Nu Fraternity. Hexter wrote in his capacity as “the last Jew ... taken into a fraternity” and advised the president that, in his view, “the cause of no Jews being taken into fraternities since 1922 [was] the lowering of the class of Jews” being accepted to Dartmouth.³⁸ Hexter asserted that he was concerned about maintaining Dartmouth’s liberalism and freedom from religious prejudice, conditions which he said had existed for so long “due to the fact that only the highest type of young Jewish men have come here.”³⁹ Such men, Hexter said, “have belonged to fraternities and have made names on the campus.”⁴⁰ However, he worried that there were “fewer of the outstanding type entering ... they all seem to be of the distinctly objectionable type”—apparently, those who would “not become assimilated completely.”⁴¹ He continued:

It is in the future that prejudice will come if that [objectionable] type of man is the only type of Jew that one can find here. There will be nothing to counter that unfavorable impression which he gives. [...] If my reasoning is valid then the only way to eliminate prejudice from Dartmouth is to refuse admittance to more of the objectional type and to admit more of the type that will make good here. A selective process could be applied to these men considering their preparatory school activities rather than their studies because they all seem to be able students.⁴²

Upon receipt of Hexter’s second letter, which included this passage, Hopkins forwarded it to Dean Bill to ask his opinion of what he deemed an “interesting suggestion.”⁴³ However, Bill was unimpressed, writing to Hopkins:

I have not any particularly positive ideas on the matter discussed by Mr. Hexter. The percentage of Jews admitted under the Selective Process has not increased. Personally[,] I would just as soon our Jewish [population] was made of good but unattractive scholars as of smooth “gents” who succeed in cloaking their nationality. As I would understand Mr. Hexter [...] he would advise that no Jew be admitted to Dartmouth who had not previously shown popularity among his fellows by successful participation in school activities. I wonder what percentage of the Jews in college or in the country in general would subscribe to this thesis. Incidentally, how are we to know when a Jew applies?

My own feeling is that if we knew the names of all Jewish applicants we should take the outstanding scholars—unless thereby some sectional representation should become predominantly Jewish—and also take average Jewish scholars who have shown qualities of leadership among their fellows.

Of course[,] the whole problem is complicated by the fact that most Jewish applicants are rated by Jewish alumni.⁴⁴

³⁸ Paul L. Hexter to Hopkins, “Selective Process, 1923-1924,” May 5, 1924 (DP-11).

³⁹ Hexter to Hopkins, “Selective Process, 1923-1924,” May 13, 1924 (DP-11).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Hopkins to Bill, “Dean of Freshmen, 1923-1924,” June 4, 1924 (DP-11).

⁴⁴ Bill to Hopkins, “Dean of Freshmen, 1923-1924,” June 6, 1924 (DP-11).

Bill, then, rejected at this point taking any action regarding Jewish enrollment. He suggested that he was personally partial to scholars over “gents,” but he clearly regarded the whole proposition as a non-issue. The Jewish student population remained low as it had always been, and the proposal in question was unactionable anyway, as Dartmouth’s admissions blanks did not ask applicants their religion or race.

For his part, Hopkins deferred to Bill’s judgment on the matter. But he also took time to ruminate upon it himself in a memorandum that he sent to Bill in response—as was a custom of his:⁴⁵

Just one additional word in regard to the Jewish situation, on which you have commented very much along the line that I think I should make comment.

I have argued with my Jewish friends, and I have many, very definitely along this line, namely, that if an institution be instituted for a given purpose, and if it decide the general qualities most desirable in men upon whom it shall work, it has a right to seek these qualities wherever found, and the fact that they may be found in only ten per cent as many men of one race as of another does not constitute race prejudice if you accept the ten per cent of the specified race.

This whole question gets into a realm troublesome to me more and more. The leading psychiatrists of the country, although not willing to express themselves publicly as yet, are definitely of the opinion that there are certain combinations with Jewish blood, such as the Russian Jew, the Polish Jew and the German Jew, that tend to produce undesirable, and sometimes abnormal, effects in an undue proportion of cases.

Naturally, the Jewish people themselves, in the main, argue against this point of view, but not all of them do. President Garfield told me confidentially a little while ago that a committee of the foremost Jewish alumni at Williams had requested that the names of all applicants of Jewish blood be submitted to a committee of Jewish alumni appointed by them before these should be accepted, because they felt the matter to be of such grave importance that the race, in self-protection, must

begin at all points to differentiate between its better and its poorer men.

I am only conscious of this feeling as regards myself, that even the best of my Jewish friends reason in a roundabout method that oftentimes is wholly inexplicable to me, and whether it be the much discussed Oriental strain or whether it be some other factor at work, I am unable again and again to harmonize the public and private actions of men of high repute of Jewish blood with their professions and their ideals. Doubtless they feel the same way towards me, but, all in all, the matter is one of the most baffling that I have ever met, so far as maintaining any consistency goes, and I find my instincts and practice very different from my theories.

If you find it impossible to make anything out of such a statement as this, I shall not be surprised, because I have no clear conviction that anybody could. The difficulty of the whole matter is that I have no reason to expect ever to be more lucid with the complication of mind that I have upon the whole subject.

⁴⁵ Hopkins to Bill, “Dean of Freshmen, 1923-1924,” June 9, 1924 (DP-11).

Hopkins' memorandum to Bill is significant on several fronts. It demonstrates his partial alignment with Hexter's position, and, notably, it reveals his subscription to pseudo-science, thereby evoking something in the nature of scientific racism. But it also foregrounds Hopkins' own conflicted views on the question of Jewish admittances and of Jews in general, with which views he was actively grappling.

The year 1926 saw another round of accusations levied against Dartmouth, as was reported prominently in the *New York World*. In April, Adolph Lewisohn, Gustavus Rogers, and other Jewish businessmen of note alleged at a conference in New York City that East-coast universities, including Dartmouth, were discriminating against Jewish applicants. The men did not claim that complete exclusion was being sought but alleged, rather, that there was a concerted effort at such institutions to reduce the percentage of Jews except for "irreligious Jews of [the] highest social type,"⁴⁶ something akin to what Hexter had advocated.

When the *World* sent a telegram asking for comment, Hopkins—increasingly agitated by such accusations as these—cabled in response:

Believe charges that universities in general [are] discriminating against Jews to be false and the reasons ascribed for this to be ingenious hypothes[e]s but nothing else. Statement of these gentlemen in so far as Dartmouth [is] concerned has no semblance of truth and no basis in fact. Am becoming somewhat impatient at gratuitous interpretation of entrance systems of respective colleges from different groups who see in these systems principles never existent and purposes never considered. [...] There are undoubtedly many Jews in number declined but we have no reason to suppose and do not believe percentage varies from percentage declined in other groups.⁴⁷

Effectively, then, Hopkins denied discrimination in admissions not just at Dartmouth but at other colleges in general. This, he did in spite of his earlier, privately expressed disdain for President Lowell's discrimination at Harvard. In a form letter which he drafted concerning the charge levied by Lewisohn and Rogers, Hopkins reiterated this view, evincing a sort of defensive esprit de corps among academic institutions. He wrote: "I have never heard anything in regard to any institution which made me believe that ... discrimination based on racial or religious grounds ... was being made."⁴⁸ He also remained considerably aggravated, defending Dartmouth from charges of anti-Semitism but also opining, at the end of the letter, that:

If the statements of these gentlemen have been accurately reported[,] they have simply bespoken a feeling in regard to the Jews which would be bespoken by many other groups concerning refusals of their candidates for admission if other groups had the combined unity and aggressiveness which characterize the Jews as a racial unit.⁴⁹

So, while denying that the selective process was a veil for anti-Semitism, Hopkins' letter actually revealed the very mentality of which Dartmouth was being accused.

⁴⁶ Cable from *World* to Hopkins, "Jewish Question, 1925-1926," April 28, 1926 (DP-11).

⁴⁷ Collect Cable from Hopkins to *World*, "Jewish Question, 1925-1926," April 29, 1926 (DP-11).

⁴⁸ Form Letter, "Jewish Question, 1925-1926," April 29, 1926 (DP-11).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

But Hopkins' view on the question of Jewish admittances was nothing if not complex. As he had written earlier to Bill, his instincts, practices, and theories pulled him in different directions altogether, and his varied correspondence demonstrated this feature. On the one hand, Hopkins felt that Lewisohn and Rogers' allegation as made "was practically a charge that we were violating our charter"—which bars discrimination on the basis of religion—at which prospect he revolted.⁵⁰ To be sure, Hopkins held Dartmouth's charter in extremely high estimation and invoked it passionately, for instance, to rebuke an anti-Semitic inquirer in the aftermath of Lewisohn and Rogers' allegation. The man in question wrote Hopkins asking why Dartmouth should not discriminate in admissions when it, like other institutions, was founded as a "Christian" school. In a stern reply, Hopkins declared that it was "a pretty positive sort of a Christian who wrote the charter ... and it was an outstanding lot of men of the Christian faith who adopted the charter and became the officers of the College."⁵¹ For his part, he had "swor[n] allegiance to the charter [when] inducted as president" and taken an "oath [to] enforce its provisions."⁵² Indeed, subscribing to the words of an elderly alumnus who wrote to him, Hopkins held fundamentally that Dartmouth was "neither a Jew, nor a Gentile institution [but] rather a college for best men."⁵³

And yet, contradictorily at best, Hopkins maintained at the same time that "[o]ne of the prime purposes of our Selective Process is to keep the College from falling into the hands of any group, professional, geographical or racial. Naturally, I should attempt to protect this principle if it were threatened."⁵⁴ So it was that Hopkins reiterated some of the remarks he had tendered previously to Bill and others regarding his personal conception of the selective process and its application. In effect, what Hopkins endorsed on paper at this time (as he had earlier) was "proportionate" or "representative" selection, a philosophy which held that the distribution of the College's student body should generally reflect that of the national population. Hopkins, then, viewed the selective process as a means of ensuring student diversity as defined roughly by national proportions. He also envisaged "race" and religion" as metrics that could come to be considered should divergences from those proportions develop.

Percentages Increase, Worries Develop

It was irony indeed that such divergences started to develop almost immediately. Case in point: Under Dartmouth's as-yet racially and religiously blind admissions process, the percentage of Jews in the entering Class saw marked increases. In 1925, the entering Class had been 2% Jewish. In 1926 and 1927, that figure more than doubled to 5.6%, and then increased to 6.9%.⁵⁵ Numerically, Jewish freshmen increased from 13 to 37, and then to 43.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Hopkins to Herman Feldman, "Jewish Question, 1925-1926," May 4, 1926 (DP-11).

⁵¹ Hopkins to C. Barclay, "Jewish Question, 1925-1926," May 3, 1926 (DP-11).

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ J.B. Lawrence '82 to Hopkins, "Jewish Question, 1925-1926," June 29, 1926 (DP-11).

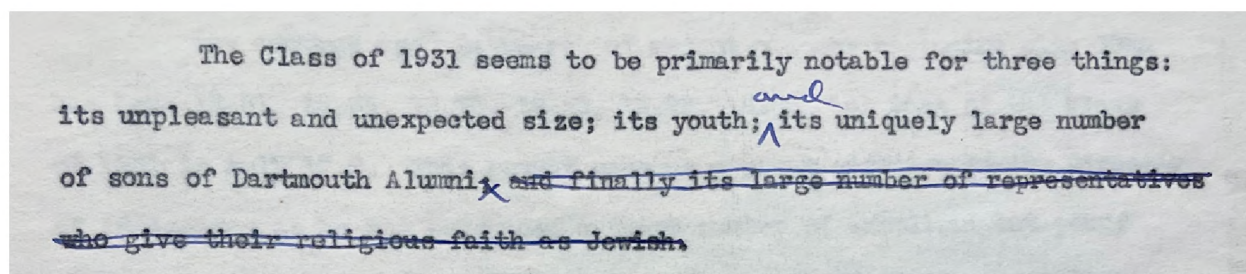
⁵⁴ Hopkins to Feldman, May 4.

⁵⁵ Committee on Admissions files (Box 5124, DA-82) & Nov/Dec editions of the Alumni Magazine.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

While Bill took note of these shifts, he did not propose to Hopkins any course of action to attenuate them. Apparently, he regarded them simply as notable developments emergent from the use of the selective process. As things stood, Bill had no means of learning whether applicants to the College were Jewish, nor did he propose to Hopkins any change in policy that would grant him such knowledge. Bill merely remarked on shifts that were already occurring, as observed via yearly surveys of the freshman class.

In October 1927, in a draft of his yearly report on the current freshman class for the *Aegis*, Dartmouth's alumni magazine, Bill included the increase in Jewish students as one of the key features of the Class of 1931. However, this line was edited out for publication, possibly by Hopkins:⁵⁷



The Class of 1931 seems to be primarily notable for three things:
its unpleasant and unexpected size; its youth; ^{and} its uniquely large number
of sons of Dartmouth Alumni; ~~and finally its large number of representatives~~
~~who give their religious faith as Jewish.~~

But Bill's report still went on to provide the customary figures concerning the religious distribution of the freshman class, and so the 6.9% figure was reported publicly. Even as it was no longer highlighted as one of the "primarily notable" features of the Class, it was acknowledged as an increase, albeit more so in the spirit of a factoid than anything else.

Another key feature of the Class of 1931 in Bill's estimation, and one which did ultimately receive mention in the published article, was "its youth." Indeed, the average age had dropped to 17.9 from 18.4 the year prior, and the youngest admittee was a 14-year-old boy.⁵⁸ Bill associated the Class's youth with its large number of Jewish students in particular⁵⁹ and presumably told Hopkins as much. To be sure, Bill maintained, it was not uncommon that academically minded Jewish boys, often from immigrant families, would advance quickly through their schooling and apply to college at younger ages than did other students.⁶⁰

Later in October, Hopkins might have tried to explain this trend when he sent Bill a memorandum regarding a conversation he had had with Major General John F. O'Ryan, late of the American Expeditionary Force, after a conference in White River Junction. O'Ryan had informed Hopkins of "a selective process as applied to Officers' Training Camps [and had] raised the question [of] why no college recognized and stated this fact in regard to the admission of Jews."⁶¹ His subsequent statement, in Hopkins' view, "seem[ed] worth ... considering."⁶² Wrote Hopkins of that statement:⁶³

⁵⁷ Bill to Hayward, with report appended, "Dean of Freshmen, 1927-1928," October 6, 1927 (DP-11).

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Bill to Hopkins, "Dean of Freshman 1931-1932," April 12, 1932 (DP-11).

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Hopkins to Bill, "Dean of Freshmen, 1927-1928," October 20, 1927 (DP-11).

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

In essence, his assertion was that the physical processes of metabolism, for one reason or another, were coming to be thought by scientific men to be different among those of Jewish blood and those of Anglo-Saxon, and that the Jewish mind flared more quickly, as most Oriental minds are wont to do, than does the mind of the Occidental.

He argued that there was no race prejudice in his conclusions because a lot of his friends and associates in business were Jews, but that everywhere except in the colleges it was tacitly understood that the Jewish mind developed enough more quickly than the European or American mind so that a boy of sixteen or seventeen years, of Jewish birth, ought to be compared with an Anglo-Saxon of three or four years greater age; while, on the other hand, in general, the Jewish youth's mind came to a dead stop very much more quickly than the slower developing or continuing mind of the Anglo-Saxon.

General O'Ryan, who is a Princeton man, was very scornful of the colleges made up, as he stated, of men presumably of scientific training who, nevertheless, never looked beyond the abstract fact of whether a man had scholastic attainments at a given period or not, and who ignored completely the probabilities in regard to this developing, maturing, and becoming responsible.

Of course we cannot quote General O'Ryan in this matter, but I think the whole matter raises an interesting speculation.

In a sense, Hopkins' memorandum is ruminative, as was customary for him, but it also reveals, again, his readiness to subscribe to pseudo-science of the racist variety.

And thus it is incredible—not to say strikingly dichotomic, while not out of the ordinary for Hopkins—that only three months later he gave advice to Bill in the name of prudence, of all things, when discussing the recent increases seen in Jewish enrollment. Specifically, Hopkins told Bill not to mention the increase in any way while addressing a meeting of New York alumni, so as to avoid potentially offending any distinguished Jewish attendees.⁶⁴ But of course, such was the ebb and flow of Hopkins' contradictory views and inclinations towards Jews.

The years 1928, 1929, and 1930 saw still larger enrollment figures of Jewish students in the entering Class: 7.8%, 7.1%, and 8%, respectively.⁶⁵ In those Classes, of 1932, 1933, and 1934, Jewish students numbered 46, 44, and finally 53.⁶⁶ For Hopkins and Bill, this presented most assuredly what they started to call a "Jewish problem":⁶⁷ a marked divergence from the ideal proportions in the student body, and therefore a situation which was unsustainable and had to be rectified.

⁶⁴ Hopkins to Bill, "Dean of Freshmen, 1927-1928," January 20, 1928 (DP-11).

⁶⁵ Committee on Admissions files (Box 5124, DA-82) & Nov/Dec editions of the Alumni Magazine.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ "Dean of Freshmen, 1929-1930": Bill to Cate, March 11 & Bill to Hopkins, March 12 (1930), etc. (DP-11).

Hence Hopkins and Bill saw fit to enter into close communication with the chairmen of Dartmouth alumni committees across the country. It was the yearly job of these men to organize the interviewing of applicants in their regions as well as the deliberation of their respective committees in ranking and reporting on those applicants. But Bill and Hopkins now sought to involve these chairmen in the admissions process all the more fully, undertaking to explain to them—especially those in metropolitan areas—“the situation in which the Admissions office is placed” regarding Jewish students.⁶⁸ Specifically, Bill and Hopkins sought to standardize across committees the “attitude taken towards applicants of [the Jewish] race”⁶⁹ and secured promises that only the “better Jews” would receive recommendations.⁷⁰ Chairmen whom Bill and Hopkins contacted agreed to recommend Jews well fit for Hanover and to decline to recommend those who were not well fit, in favor of lesser (Gentile) candidates who indicated “greater poise and future promise.”⁷¹

At the administrative level, Hopkins also held steadfast to the belief that Jewish youths matured more quickly in intellect than did their Gentile counterparts, and for this reason he now advocated the admission of lesser, verifiably Gentile students over superior young applicants known or presumed to be Jewish. Wrote Hopkins to Bill: “[T]here is something in the metabolism of the Jew which brings him to the peak of his intellectual maturity much earlier than is the case with other races without in most cases the possibility of a potential development equal to that of many men whose school records will not compare...”⁷² Importantly, Hopkins’ statement was less an avowal or instruction to begin a new practice in admissions than a reaffirmation of a practice which Bill had already begun to employ. Indeed, it was increasingly common for Bill to deny young, academically talented, and apparently Jewish applicants ostensibly due their age.⁷³ He would advise them to reapply after pursuing other means of college preparation, such as a job, for at least an additional year.

So it was that, although Dartmouth’s percentage of Jewish students continued to increase, the College was actively seeking to counteract the trend—just with little success. To be sure, Hopkins privately expressed his doubts that such action would truly succeed in mitigating the “proposition of ... an increasing number of Jewish applicants” each year, much less actually reduce the percentage of Jewish enrollment.⁷⁴ To this end, several alumni committees were reporting to Hopkins that “the College is beginning to have a very great attraction for a social and economic class among the Jews to which our attractions have not been much evident in the past.”⁷⁵ And the percentage of Jewish students itself continued to rise.

For his part, Dean Bill saw a cleaner, sure-to-succeed solution to the “Jewish

⁶⁸ Hopkins to Bill, “Dean of Freshmen, 1929-1930,” March 10, 1930 (DP-11).

⁶⁹ Bill to Allan M. Cate, “Dean of Freshmen, 1929-1930,” March 11, 1930 (DP-11).

⁷⁰ Hopkins to Bill, March 10.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Bill to Hopkins, “Dean of Freshman, 1931-1932,” April 12, 1932 (DP-11).

⁷⁴ Hopkins to Bill, March 10.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

problem” at hand—that Dartmouth use the selective process in the very way of which it had been accused in years prior: as a screen for an anti-Semitic quota on Jewish admittees. Bill wrote to Hopkins expounding on this proposal:

I have been tremendously interested in your memorandum ... concerning the Jewish problem and have eagerly awaited its receipt. [...] I personally think that the setup of our Selective Process and the general philosophy which has always been back of it puts us in a position where we can be open in stating that we are going to preserve the atmosphere which has made Dartmouth, even if in so doing we find it necessary to cut down on certain intellectual elements which bring with them personalities and points of view inimical to our own worth while [sic] traditions.⁷⁶

Of course, the “atmosphere” in question was one with a prescribed racial and religious distribution of students—one in which Jews were present in far smaller a percentage.

However, Hopkins did not subscribe to Bill’s proposal of a quota. He wrote:⁷⁷

I have never had any question, and have less question at the present moment that at any time in the past, that we could make ourselves distinctive and popular in regulations which excluded the Jews, to an extent that would not operate in any other way. I think such an action would be bad in social theory; I think it would be unfair to the great group of Jews who are contributors to the best elements in present-day civilization; and I think it would be a genuine loss to eliminate the influence of some of them from the undergraduate body. As a popularity breeder, however, I think that positive action at this point would greatly increase our number of applications for every individual who was eliminated. There are parents all over the country who are avowedly and definitely looking for colleges for their sons with the smallest proportion of the Semitic element therein; and some of these, economically at least, are among the most influential families in America.

In the large I think that this is to be said: that no attitude ought to be definitely defined and announced without the most careful sort of consideration in advance. To be very specific, I know of two alumni devotions to the College which would be hurt probably to the point of extinction and large financial loss, as well as loss in genuine spiritual support, if we were to attack this problem in anything except the most considerate way. Moreover, when we have defined our policy it becomes about as necessary that we should look to our phrasing and manner of expression in any publicity. The fact, for instance, that the Pennsylvania Railroad at the present time is a source of worry to the financiers because of the loss of freight since President Atterbury made his statement for the Wets in Congress is an illustration of what apparently remote factors can affect prosperity.

⁷⁶ Bill to Hopkins, “Dean of Freshmen, 1929-1930,” March 12, 1930 (DP-11).

⁷⁷ Hopkins to Bill, “Dean of Freshmen, 1929-1930,” March 24, 1930 (DP-11).

In effect, Hopkins' rationale for rejecting a Jewish quota at this time was twofold: he took issue with it as a matter of theory (in spite of his conflicting views on Jews), and he did not wish to lose certain financial commitments made by alumni, certainly Jewish alumni in particular.⁷⁸ Hopkins' rather decisive response led a deferential Bill, in his words, to "drop the Jewish question"⁷⁹—for the time being.

Thus, in spring 1930 the status quo was set to remain largely intact. Although Hopkins was disturbed by the percentage of Jews enrolling per Class, he was not as yet prepared to substantively, and artificially, modify the operation of the selective process by imposing a quota. He desired, rather, to work within existing practices, such as by more deeply involving alumni committee chairs, and increasingly denying academically qualified but young Jewish applicants by reason of their youth.

The Jewish Quota

Not a little incredibly, it was at this juncture that, of all things, Dean Bill went on sabbatical. A sufferer of physical and mental ailments for much of his life,⁸⁰ Bill had, in spring 1929, requested a year's sabbatical for the 1930-1931 academic year. And, despite Bill's offer to postpone the sabbatical in light of his having regained some degree of his health, Hopkins was not one to stand in the way of Bill's plans.⁸¹

So in the summer of 1930 Bill left for France, and in his stead was appointed one Charles R. Lingley, Professor of History. It was during Lingley's tenure as Interim Dean of Freshmen and Director of Admissions, overseeing admissions in 1930 and 1931 for the Class of 1935, that Hopkins decided to try to address what he saw as the burgeoning "New York problem." Namely, it had been observed that students from metropolitan New York had begun to comprise an increasingly large portion of the student body, and Hopkins desired to see their proportion cut down. Intensifying this issue for Hopkins, naturally, was growth in the percentage of students from New York who were Jewish, which growth was contributing to Dartmouth's increased percentage of Jewish students overall. It was this premise that led Hopkins to comment rather archly to Lingley that, in pursuing a pet project to increase Dartmouth's student representation from northern New England, he "would be willing if necessary to swap a few New York Jews for some North Country Yankees!"⁸²

To this end, Hopkins and Lingley undertook to devise a strategy by which to "ration" the number of students—and effectively, then, Jews—coming from the New York metropolitan area. This rationing (or restriction) was to be effectuated (or excused) within the contours set by the existing suite of practices under the selective process, as Hopkins preferred to be done. Specifically, the feat was to be performed in accordance with the "geographical diversity" metric, in much the same way that an abundant

⁷⁸ So Bill interpreted it in a memorandum of April 30, 1930. "Dean of Freshmen, 1929-1930" (DP-11).

⁷⁹ Bill to Hopkins, "Dean of Freshmen, 1929-1930," March 27, 1930 (DP-11).

⁸⁰ Inactive at the College due to ill health starting January 1946, Bill committed suicide in November 1947.

⁸¹ Bill to Hopkins, "Dean of Freshmen, 1929-1930," May 2, 1930 (DP-11).

⁸² Hopkins to Charles Lingley, "Dean of Freshmen, 1930-1931," October 22, 1930 (DP-11). Punctuation his.

student population from metropolitan Boston had been reduced some fifteen years earlier.⁸³ Effused Hopkins: “If now I can only beat the Jews!”⁸⁴

The best-laid plans . . ., Hopkins likely came to feel, for coincident with discussions to cut down the population of New York admittees came the onset of great uncertainty as to Dartmouth’s prospective “yield rate”: the percentage of students admitted who would ultimately matriculate. Indeed, as the Depression became progressively worse, concerns arose that Dartmouth might suffer a low yield rate and be underenrolled for the Class of 1935.⁸⁵ It was thus that, come the spring, Lingley—seeking the best remaining applicants—felt compelled to accept students from New York in a far higher proportion than he and Hopkins had planned, and in a manner that produced figures which closely resembled the previous year’s all-time highs from New York.⁸⁶ Of this development, however, they seemed to care minimally, devoting their attention instead to frenetic estimations of yield—or, as they called it, “shrinkage”—and of likely increases in demand for scholarship aid.⁸⁷

Preoccupied as he and Lingley were during the spring with these other matters, “struggling along with the uncertainties of a situation about which nobody seems to know much of anything,”⁸⁸ Hopkins did not much consider the question of Jewish enrollment. If he thought about it at all, perhaps he resigned himself simply to addressing it upon Dean Bill’s return in the fall. Whatever the case, in spring 1931 Hopkins was dealt a brief reminder of the question—and a flashback to Paul Hexter’s proposal seven years earlier—at the initiative of a Jewish student. Edward Marks ’32, a well-regarded campus leader and managing editor of *The Dartmouth*, secured a meeting with Hopkins to discuss the number and quality of Jewish students at the College. Marks informed the president “that he had talked with other Jewish boys who felt definitely that [in admitting] Jewish boys of lesser qualifications in character and in personality ... the College was destroying the very condition [of liberalism and tolerance] which it had sought to preserve.”⁸⁹ Marks asked Hopkins as well if, “in justice to the [admitted] Jewish boys, [Dartmouth] ought not greatly to reduce the number of acceptances and to exercise a still greater [discernment] in regard to those whom [it] did accept?”⁹⁰ At this proposition Hopkins apparently demurred, but the meeting doubtless affected him. For his part, Marks offered to meet and discuss the subject further with Hopkins and Dean Bill, once the latter returned from abroad, should the two men so desire.⁹¹

⁸³ Lingley to Hopkins, “Dean of Freshmen, 1930-1931,” October 24, 1930 (DP-11). Hopkins to Herbert A. Wolff, “Selective Process, 1931-1932,” May 5, 1932 (DP-11).

⁸⁴ Hopkins to Lingley, “Dean of Freshmen, 1930-1931,” November 10, 1930 (DP-11).

⁸⁵ Hopkins to Lingley, “Dean of Freshmen, 1931-1932,” June 2, 1931 (DP-11). Hopkins to Lingley, “Dean of Freshmen, 1931-1932,” July 21, 1931 (DP-11). Hopkins to Bill, “Dean of Freshmen, 1931-1932,” August 2, 1931 (DP-11).

⁸⁶ Acceptance figures estimated per *Aegis* figures of student enrollment from Nov. 1930 and 1931 issues regarding the Classes of 1934 and 1935. The 153 matriculants from New York constituted 23% of the Class of 1934. The 148 matriculants from New York constituted 21.3% of the Class of 1935.

⁸⁷ Hopkins to Lingley, June 2. Hopkins to Lingley, July 21.

⁸⁸ Hopkins to Bill, August 2.

⁸⁹ Hopkins to Arthur J. Cohen, Esq., “Selective Process, 1931-1932,” March 16, 1932 (DP-11).

⁹⁰ Hopkins to Hon. William N. Cohen, “Selective Process, 1931-1932,” February 1, 1932 (DP-11).

⁹¹ Hopkins to Bill, “Dean of Freshman, 1931-1932,” March 7, 1932 (DP-11).

Formulating the Quota

Both the proportion and number of students from New York who matriculated in fall 1931 corresponded closely with those figures from fall 1930.⁹² Within that New York delegation, the Jewish contingent continued its previous trend and increased in proportion—and thus in number—once again. So Bill calculated upon his return, in surveying admitted students and preparing his yearly report on freshmen for the *Aegis*. On October 13, Bill wrote to Hopkins:⁹³

TO THE PRESIDENT

FROM MR. BILL

I have been figuring out for my own amusement a few percentages in connection with the Hebrews in the Freshman Class which may or may not be of interest to you. The percentage of such men in the Freshman Class is 10.8. The percentage in the Massachusetts delegation is 13.6, and in that of New York State 16.2. When we consider simply New York City and Brooklyn, the percentage is 27.

Edward Bill

10.8% Jewish students in the Class of 1935 meant an increase of 2.8% from the Class of 1934. This figure translated to a substantial uptick in the number of Jews in the freshman class—from 53 to 75 students,⁹⁴ or more than a 40% increase. As for the large figures which Bill calculated for New York State and for Manhattan and Brooklyn, they doubtless were keenly felt, displaying as they did Hopkins and Lingley's failure to reduce the impact wrought by New York applicants on the Class of 1935.⁹⁵ Making prompt reply to Bill one day later, Hopkins, newly aggrieved about Jewish admittances, wrote:⁹⁶

In re: Percentage of Hebrews

I know we have necessity upon us to do something drastic. A little later I hope to clarify my own mind in consultation with some of our fine alumni of Hebrew blood.

E. M. H.

⁹² See footnote 86. In the November edition of the *Aegis*, Dean Bill's report showed that New York's student numbers—as with the year prior—far exceeded an average set by the cumulation of earlier years' numbers.

⁹³ Bill to Hopkins, "Dean of Freshmen, 1931-1932," October 13, 1931 (DP-11).

⁹⁴ Committee on Admissions files (Box 5124, DA-82) & Nov/Dec editions of the Alumni Magazine.

⁹⁵ Knowing that 16.2% of 148 students from New York were Jews yields the calculation that 24 of the 75 Jewish freshmen in the Class of 1935, just shy of a third, came from New York alone.

⁹⁶ Hopkins to Bill, "Dean of Freshmen, 1931-1932," October 14, 1931 (DP-11).

Apparently, the notable increases in number and percentage which Bill outlined had convinced Hopkins to allow for the pursuit of far more direct, practical action than he had been comfortable taking before. And thus Hopkins and Bill set themselves on a path towards doing “something drastic” regarding Jewish admittances to Dartmouth. Perhaps it was not entirely in sarcasm that—in highlighting for the November edition of the *Aegis* the increases in the number of freshmen who identified as Jewish or as having “no preference” in religion⁹⁷—Bill proclaimed the “triumph of the chosen and the heathen peoples” in the Class of 1935.⁹⁸

This comment in the *Aegis* prompted a letter to be written to Hopkins by Judge William N. Cohen, a Jewish alumnus (Class of 1879), prominent New York attorney, Republican political figure, and megadonor to the College who, at age 74, remained very active in Dartmouth affairs.⁹⁹ In a letter of November 13, after providing information as to one of his forthcoming yearly contributions to Dartmouth, Cohen criticized Bill’s comment as “rather flippant in tone and lacking in the dignity and seriousness which should mark such a contribution.”¹⁰⁰

Upon receiving Judge Cohen’s letter, Hopkins took the time to respond to him graciously and at length—in the fashion which befit a man of Cohen’s stature—and then undertook to alert Bill of the offense that his comment had apparently induced.¹⁰¹ In response to Hopkins, Bill said he could not comprehend such an effect.¹⁰² But in any event, thus was begun a correspondence between Judge Cohen and President Hopkins on the matter of Jewish admittances, a correspondence which would go on to prove greatly advantageous to Hopkins and Bill in realizing their desire to take substantive action on the matter. This correspondence was resumed early the next year, shortly after Judge Cohen attended a meeting of Dartmouth alumni in New York, from which meeting he apparently drew inspiration. To Hopkins, Cohen wrote:

[Regarding] the number and quality of Jews who are entering Dartmouth[:] I receive applications from individuals who press their cause for entrance[,] and, judging from the character of these individuals for the most part, I think they are of a rather inferior class, and with their home training would not be helpful to the College. I was going to ask you about them and to suggest that possibly some Jewish alumnus might serve in some capacity in wholesome elimination of the undesirables. Of course, I am too old to serve, but I have a nephew, Arthur J. Cohen of the Class of 1903, who, I think, would be willing and able to help. His judgment is very sound.¹⁰³

⁹⁷ In the November edition of the *Aegis*, Bill continued his yearly custom of comparing numbers of freshmen from different groups in the Class of 1935 to cumulated “averages” of numbers in those groups in prior Classes. For Jews, this meant a stark comparison of 75 students in the current freshman class to an “average” of 31.8 students.

⁹⁸ E. Gordon Bill, “The Class of Nineteen Thirty-five,” *Aegis*, November 1931, pg. 100.

⁹⁹ Judge Cohen made large annual donations to Dartmouth during his lifetime and left Dartmouth \$1.4 million (nearly \$30 million today), half of his residuary estate, upon his death in 1938. The other half of the estate was left to the judge’s nephew, Arthur J. Cohen.

¹⁰⁰ Wm. Cohen to Hopkins, “Selective Process, 1931-1932,” November 13, 1931 (DP-11).

¹⁰¹ Hopkins to Wm. Cohen, “Selective Process, 1931-1932,” November 20, 1931 (DP-11). Hopkins to Bill, “Dean of Freshmen, 1931-1932,” November 21, 1931 (DP-11).

¹⁰² Bill to Hopkins, “Dean of Freshmen, 1931-1932,” November 23, 1931 (DP-11).

¹⁰³ Wm. Cohen to Hopkins, “Selective Process, 1931-1932,” January 29, 1932 (DP-11).

The thought process undergirding Judge Cohen's keenness to prevent "undesirable" Jewish students from attending Dartmouth derived undoubtedly in large part from his particular social standing. Born to the first wave of Jewish immigrants to the United States, who came from Germany, Cohen had become a prominent and wealthy man over the course of his life. His dissociation with the newer Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe was, therefore, assuredly an emanation of his developed conception of class.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, Cohen and his siblings had assimilated eagerly and decidedly into American society and, like the progeny of many German-Jewish immigrants, attended preparatory schools. Cohen's criticism, then, of the "home training" of the new Eastern-European Jewish applicants to Dartmouth seems emphatically a rejection of these boys' apparent lack of refinement—or indeed their lack of acculturation in the sense of that afforded by preparatory education.

From Hopkins' perspective, Judge Cohen's letter offered a potentially perfect remedy to the so-called "Jewish problem." The letter extended an invitation, an encouragement, even, to consult the judge and his nephew—esteemed, amenable Jewish alumni, or indeed in Hopkins' idiom "fine alumni of Hebrew blood"—as to what restrictive action the College should take against Jewish applicants. In so availing himself, also, Hopkins would safeguard the continued generosity of the Cohens and perhaps that of like-minded Jewish alumni, thereby removing the concern which he had expressed to Bill two years prior. Therefore, Hopkins was nothing short of delighted upon his receipt of this letter. He wrote to Judge Cohen:

I have a deeper appreciation of your having been willing to raise this inquiry than I can possibly express. The background of this whole matter lies, of course, in the administration of our selective process. [To date] I have never been willing to give consideration to any plan to restrict the number of acceptances of Jewish boys for admission to Dartmouth College.

Within the past two years, however, I have become increasingly conscious of the fact that in foregoing to do [regarding Jews] what we were doing [regarding] practically every[one] else ... namely, making careful selection ... I was perhaps doing very definitely what I most wanted to avoid doing, that is, building up some definite race prejudice within the College. In other words, in talking with some of our best Jewish boys I have come to see their point of view... [Namely,] in allowing the percentage of Jews to increase rapidly, and in not being as exacting in regard to qualities of character and personality among Jewish boys as we were among others, we really were not doing justice to those Jewish boys whom we did accept nor to such alumni as yourself...

Up to the present moment ... we have never in any single case allowed ourselves to [use the selective process] on a racial basis, and the net result of this has been, I think, ... that we have leaned over so far backwards in the matter that the ultimate disadvantage is beginning to be visited upon the Jewish boys themselves.¹⁰⁵

Hopkins forwarded his response and Judge Cohen's letter to Dean Bill. To Bill, Hopkins also articulated his desired outcome following conferences that he wished to

¹⁰⁴ Gerald Sorin, "Mutual Contempt, Mutual Benefit," *American Jewish History* 81, no. 1 (1993): 34-59.

¹⁰⁵ Hopkins to Wm. Cohen, "Selective Process, 1931-1932," February 1, 1932 (DP-11).

hold with Arthur Cohen and the Dartmouth '32 who had taken an interest in the matter, Edward Marks, in the coming months: to impose "largely a moratorium on Jews for the next year or two."¹⁰⁶ Wrote Hopkins:¹⁰⁷

One of our most generous alumni is Judge William N. Cohen of the class of 1879, one of Mr. Thayer's intimate friends and an outstanding representative of the virtues and merits of the Jewish race. I should hesitate to estimate the extent of Judge Cohen's personal gifts to the College through the years, but it has been his money among other things that has enabled us to carry through the full schedule of lectureships, concerts, and one thing and another with which we have been so liberally endowed in recent years.

I have been very hesitant to do anything in regard to the limitation of our Jewish representation until I should have had the opportunity of talking this over in detail with Judge Cohen, and this likewise has been the feeling of the Board of Trustees,—that whether from the point of view of sanity of judgment and intelligence of mind or whether from the point of view of material support of the College we ought to be very sure that whatever course we take is fully discussed with Judge Cohen and if possible in conformity with his judgment.

I attach his letter, just received, and a copy of my reply to it. I should like these back when you have read them.

He is entirely right about the intelligence and discretion of his nephew, who was a prominent Alpha Delt here in College during his undergraduate course. Very soon now I should like to sit down some time with you and Ed Marks, and later I am inclined to think that we should make an appointment in New York with the younger Cohen, and try if possible to have Judge Cohen sit in with us, working this thing down to a principle on which all of us shall agree but the immediate outcome of which shall be pretty largely a moratorium on Jews for the next year or two.

Evidently, Hopkins attached substantial importance to Judge Cohen's approbation of new practices concerning Jewish admissions. Hopkins strongly desired to obtain this from the judge by undertaking the meeting in question with his nephew, Arthur.

While Hopkins had originally sought to arrange a conference at which he and Judge Cohen could be in attendance, he ultimately changed this plan owing to scheduling conflicts, instead instructing Bill to travel to New York to meet one-on-one with Arthur Cohen.¹⁰⁸ But Hopkins remained heavily involved, arranging the meeting's rough timing, and he served as an intermediary, corresponding repeatedly about the subject matter with both Bill and Arthur Cohen in the weeks before the meeting was to

¹⁰⁶ Hopkins to Bill, "Selective Process, 1931-1932," February 1, 1932 (DP-11).

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. Memorandum follows in full.

¹⁰⁸ Hopkins to Bill, "Dean of Freshmen, 1931-1932," March 7, 1932 (DP-11).

be held.¹⁰⁹ To Bill, Hopkins instructed: “[W]e very promptly [must] put the curtailment [of Jews] into effect. I shrink from and abhor the whole necessity [of an artificial quota], but I have no question but what it exists[,] and I suppose in the last analysis there is no more reason why we should withhold from doing this than from letting the College become exclusively a rich man’s college or exclusively a Massachusetts institution.”¹¹⁰ To Arthur Cohen, Hopkins conveyed a sentiment, whose origin he ascribed to Edward Marks and likeminded Jewish peers at Dartmouth, that the “oldtime balance” of “approximately 5%” Jews per Class was when “conditions [were] best.”¹¹¹ It is unknown whether this was really Marks’ sentiment as expressed to Hopkins the preceding spring or simply a figure upon which Hopkins and perhaps Bill had decided and of which they wished to convince Cohen. However, as for the proposed meeting which Hopkins and Bill were to have with Edward Marks before he graduated, it apparently was never held.¹¹² Hopkins and Bill viewed the meeting with Arthur Cohen as potentially crucial to addressing the problem with which they were faced¹¹³ and would have had no great need or interest to speak with Marks. In late March, Bill’s meeting with Arthur Cohen and concomitant trip to New York were planned for early April,¹¹⁴ a prompt turnaround of only about two weeks thereafter.

To this end, Hopkins believed that rectifying the “Jewish problem” was a matter of considerable urgency. Ever since the publication of Dean Bill’s statistical article in the November edition of the *Aegis*, alumni had been speaking unfavorably to Hopkins and other Dartmouth officials of the high percentage of Jews in the College overall and particularly in the Class of 1935. Summarizing, Hopkins wrote to Bill in March: “I have found this year the solicitude and anxiety of [alumni] expressed at two very different points[:] one in the feeling that there is not enough human understanding and judgment shown in the distribution of the football tickets, and the other and more significant concern being expressed in regard to the percentage of Jews.”¹¹⁵ Later that month, he added: “The preponderance of those of strongly demonstrated Hebrew physiognomy in the present freshman class is having a cumulative effect, apparently, not only upon our alumni but upon visitors to town. [A] Harvard overseer[] was here last week [and] said that he had always heard Dartmouth admired as one of the few institutions in the country in which the Anglo-Saxon remained conspicuous, but he said that he had seen more Jews on the street and on the campus even than he met in Cambridge.”¹¹⁶ The inflow of criticism was such that Hopkins was led to characterize numerous Trustees and important alumni as having become “pretty near violent on th[e] subject” of Jewish admissions; only his promise that action was being taken by the admissions office to rectify the matter prevented “something in the way of an open demonstration.”¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁹ Hopkins to Bill, “Selective Process, 1931-1932,” March 7, 1932 (DP-11). Hopkins to Bill & Hopkins to Cohen, “Dean of Freshmen, 1931-1932,” March 16 & March 21, 1932 (DP-11).

¹¹⁰ Hopkins to Bill, March 7.

¹¹¹ Hopkins to Arthur Cohen, “Selective Process, 1931-1932,” March 16, 1932 (DP-11).

¹¹² Bill to Hopkins, “Selective Process, 1931-1932,” March 8, 1932 (DP-11).

¹¹³ Hopkins to Bill, “Selective Process, 1931-1932,” March 21, 1932 (DP-11).

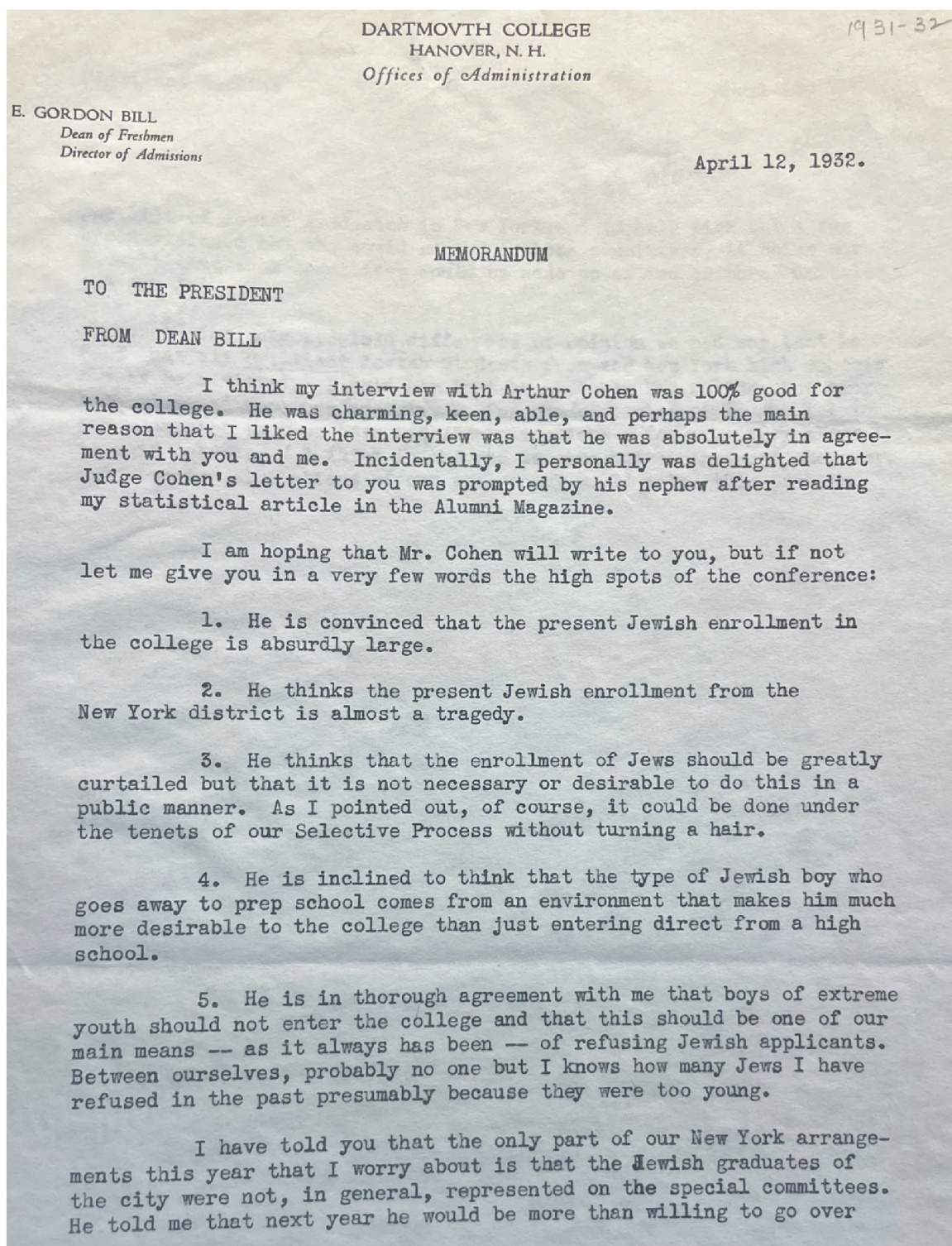
¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Hopkins to Bill, March 7.

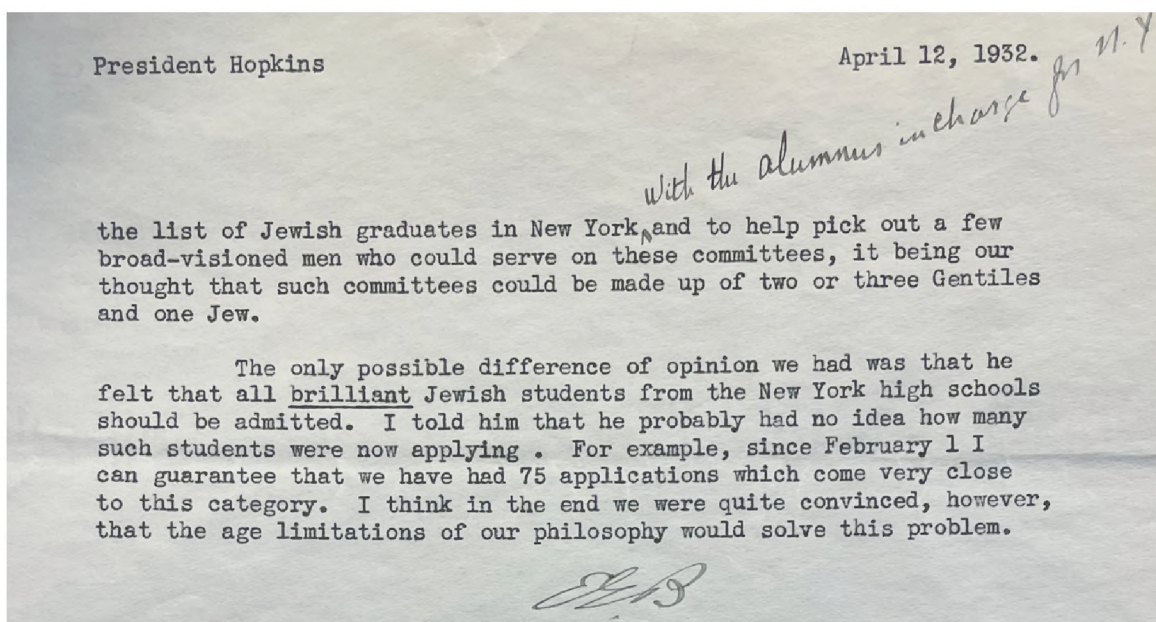
¹¹⁶ Hopkins to Bill, March 16.

¹¹⁷ Hopkins to Bill, “Dean of Freshmen, 1931-1932,” April 25, 1932 (DP-11).

It was thus that, after having met with Arthur Cohen in early April, Bill was quite enthusiastic to report swiftly to Hopkins that the meeting was as great a success as they had hoped it would be:¹¹⁸



¹¹⁸ Bill to Hopkins, "Dean of Freshmen, 1931-1932," April 12, 1932 (DP-11).



Arthur Cohen apparently needed little convincing, subscribing quite willingly and nearly fully to the particulars of a Jewish quota as Bill described it to him. In accordance with Cohen's stated desire, Bill emphasized that the quota would be implemented silently "under the tenets of our Selective Process without turning a hair."¹¹⁹ Furthermore, in the meeting, Bill noted, Cohen extolled the virtues of "the type of Jewish boy who goes away to prep school," as opposed to the sort of Jewish student who enters "direct from a high school."¹²⁰ Therefore, Arthur's position, relevant to "types" of Jews, directly echoed that bespoken in the letter of January 29 from his uncle to Hopkins. It aligned as well with the views espoused by Edward Marks (and earlier Paul Hexter), for instance, that it was best for all concerned that a certain "type" of Jewish student—one insufficiently integrated and adjusted culturally—be denied admission.¹²¹

Implementing the Quota

Undeniably, the success of Bill's meeting with Arthur Cohen encouraged President Hopkins and Dean Bill to proceed with formalizing and institutionalizing a Jewish quota, set at roughly 5% of students per entering Class, under the auspices of the selective process. Nonetheless, it is difficult to imagine what they would have done differently had either Cohen objected to their proposals. The fact is, Hopkins and Bill firmly believed, and had good reason to believe, that Judge Cohen and Arthur Cohen

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ It is also notable that, in this memorandum, Bill discussed his tendency to deny young Jewish applicants due to their youth. For instance, he admitted that this was one of the "main means—as it always has been—of refusing Jewish applicants." He continued: "Probably no one but I knows how many Jews I have refused in the past presumably because they were too young." So, while a quota *proper* was implemented in 1931, Dean Bill's blanket flexibility under the selective process had enabled a precursor to the quota by which Jews could be unfairly refused.

would support a quota and most of its attendant features, in the vein of Hexter and Marks. The meeting with Arthur Cohen, then, was more a means of securing his and thus his uncle's approbation than it was anything else. To be sure, Hopkins and Bill had *already* begun to discuss some of the formalizing, or institutionalizing, features with which the quota would be employed starting in the 1932-1933 admissions cycle for the Class of 1937.¹²² Still more critically, Hopkins and Bill had been planning since November 1931 to impose a Jewish quota of 5% to 6% in admitting the Class of 1936.

Of course, this first Jewish quota at Dartmouth had to be imposed innovatively—and roughly—because there was not yet any formalized or institutionalized means by which to do so. But Bill had long known this, and hence he undertook to impose a quota on the Class of 1936 by “hewing with an ax rather than fashioning with any tool of finer temper.”¹²³ Indeed, one of the first things Bill did upon his return from Europe in fall 1931 regarding admissions for the Class of 1936 was to seek to *directly* address the so-called “New York problem,” whose numbers Hopkins and Lingley had failed to reduce the year prior—in line with Hopkins’ memorandum imploring “drastic” action. Specifically, Bill worked to assemble entirely new alumni committees in New York, comprised of non-Jewish alumni whom he deemed “outstandingly sane,” to interview “all the applicants from that district with Jewish names.”¹²⁴ As a result, Bill was, rather incredibly, provided with uniformity of ratings regarding these applicants, and thus for the first time ever he took the receipt of unfavorable reports as final. It was in this way that Bill came to deny such applicants as a matter of routine. Coupled with his wariness to admit applicants from metropolitan New York in general, New York Jews applying to Dartmouth fell subject to two counts of reduced desirability—and, therefore, they were admitted in substantially low proportions to the Class of 1936.¹²⁵

This trend was very observable and even induced a letter from a Jewish alumnus, Herbert A. Wolff '10, a prominent New York attorney, to Hopkins. Wrote Wolff:

[T]he Selective Process system at Dartmouth seems to be well conceived and apparently has contributed to the development of the [C]ollege. [...] But what does trouble me is that all nine Jewish boys from one school, generally recognized to be one of the leading progressive secondary schools of the Metropolis, are rejected and that ... all but one of the Jewish boys from another New York outstanding school also failed of admission. [...] A particularly outstanding boy (also a Jew) [from still another school] whom I personally endorsed and whom I consider an exceptional lad ... shared a like fate.¹²⁶

In a lengthy response, Hopkins reiterated many of his thoughts regarding a prospective increase in campus prejudice, much as he had relayed them to the Cohens, and overall he defended the selective process. But he confirmed to Wolff as well that “I haven’t any question that ... there has been what can easily be held to be virtual discrimination against the Jewish applicants this year ... [especially] from the New York area.”¹²⁷

¹²² Hopkins to Bill, March 16.

¹²³ Hopkins to Wolff, “Selective Process, 1931-1932,” May 5, 1932 (DP-11).

¹²⁴ Bill to Hopkins, March 8.

¹²⁵ Hopkins to Wolff, May 5.

¹²⁶ Wolff to Hopkins, “Selective Process, 1931-1932,” April 14, 1932 (DP-11).

¹²⁷ Hopkins to Wolff, May 5.

By the summer, in light of large projected “shrinkage” in the freshman class before it was due to arrive on campus in the fall, Hopkins instructed Bill to admit anyone “reasonably capable of doing the work ... not of Jewish ancestry.”¹²⁸ While Hopkins wanted to have as full a Class as possible, he commented: “Neither the Trustees nor I would wish to safeguard our numbers at the expense of all of the hard work which has been done in admitting the ... well-chosen group already on our lists.”¹²⁹ Ultimately, Bill did admit a number of less-than-qualified non-Jewish candidates over the summer, and even then the final tally was just under the high benchmark of 6% for Jews in the Class of 1936: 5.8%. So it was that, given a low yield, even the broad denial of and substantive reduction in New York Jews barely yielded the sought-after quota.¹³⁰ But although his efforts were often more ad hoc than not, Bill successfully met the quota.

In order to fully institutionalize the quota as an admissions practice for the subsequent admissions cycle, that of 1932-1933 (Class of 1937), two key changes had to be undertaken. First, race and religion had to be added as metrics considered under the selective process, as Hopkins had long said he was willing to do. Second, a mechanism had to be implemented by which the admissions office could actually learn, for the first time, which applicants were in fact Jewish. Previously, statistics on religion had been obtained in the annual survey of the freshman class conducted by Dean Bill. This was a survey of matriculated freshmen on many topics, including religion, for fall-term publication in the *Aegis*. From this point on, however, Dean Bill would need to learn the religion of applicants rather than that of matriculated students.

The process by which he would be able to do so was to take two forms: First, in the admissions blanks which applicants had to complete, there were two new items added: “Describe briefly your racial inheritance” and “Describe briefly your religious background.”¹³¹

What vocations have you considered?		
What subject of study have you liked best?		
What <i>type</i> of reading do you most enjoy?		
Describe briefly your racial inheritance.		
Describe briefly your religious background.		
To what organizations outside of school have you belonged recently?		

Admissions blank first used in 1932; highlighting by the author (Admissions Vertical File #2)

¹²⁸ Hopkins to Bill, “Dean of Freshmen, 1932-1933,” August 6, 1932 (DP-11).

¹²⁹ Hopkins to Bill, “Dean of Freshmen, 1931-1932,” June 24, 1932 (DP-11).

¹³⁰ Bill suggested in his March 8 memorandum that, in this admissions cycle, Jews from places other than New York would have a greater admittance rate than would Jews from New York.

¹³¹ In a report that he presented on admissions practices to the faculty, Dean Bill effectively admitted that his use of this newfound racial and religious information was to discriminatory ends. He commented: “This additional information seemed desirable if the traditional flavor of an old New England college campus was to be permanently preserved.” Committee on Admissions files (Box 5124, DA-82), 1932-1933.

Alumni interviewers were asked to make an *evaluation* along the same lines:

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE
ALUMNI COUNCIL RATING BLANK

4. Comment on his degree of maturity.

5. Describe his racial and physical type.

Interviewer blank first used in 1932; highlighting by the author (Admissions Vertical File #2)

Second, it became mandatory for all applicants to submit photographs of themselves. Dean Bill was inspired, apparently, by studying the Green Book (at the time Dartmouth's freshman guide), to discover "how many prominent types of various races might be disclosed by the pictures" and especially the "Jewish faces."¹³² After a short review, he "picked out ... 91 in this category, i.e., about 13%"—in excess, even, of the 10.8% figure officially recorded.¹³³

While ostensibly added to the application requirements purely for the "amusement" of Bill and his staff,¹³⁴ these photographs were actively used alongside the newly provided racial and religious information to study faces and make a determination as to how Jewish applicants, if admitted, might look on campus. While Bill, not Hopkins, was the instigator of the policy, Hopkins certainly subscribed swiftly to its underlying theories. For instance, in December 1932, when the Class of 1936 (the first subject to the quota) was the freshman class, Hopkins wrote a memorandum to Bill, saying: "Life is so much pleasanter in Hanover, the physical appearance of the place is so greatly benefited, and friends of the College visiting us are so much happier with the decreased [share] of the Hebraic element."¹³⁵

For his part, Bill seemed to derive something of a thrill from studying the photographs submitted to his office. In a status report he sent to Hopkins in January 1933, in reviewing photographs of applicants to the Class of 1937, Bill revealed a subscription to what might be termed "racial anti-Semitism," according to which Jews are characterized as a "race," contrary to anthropological science:¹³⁶

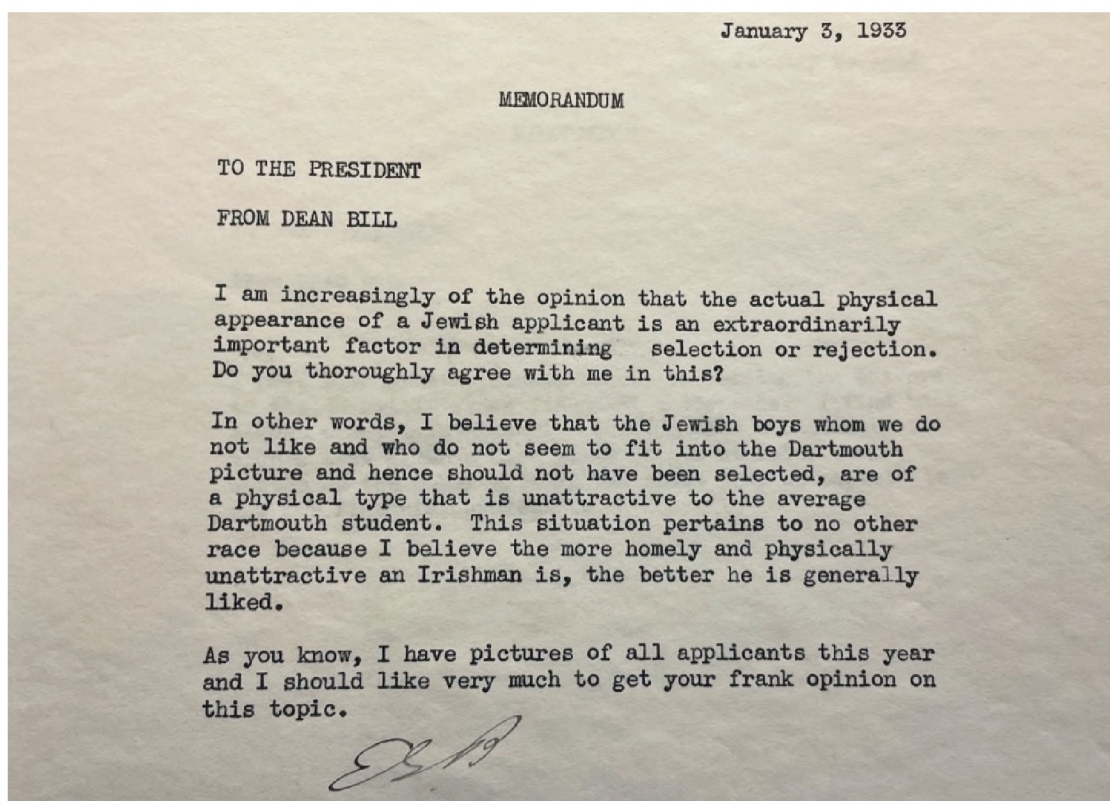
¹³² Bill to Hopkins, "Dean of Freshmen, 1931-1932," April 27, 1932 (DP-11).

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ 1932 Report, Committee on Admissions files (Box 5124, DA-82).

¹³⁵ Hopkins to Bill, "Dean of Freshmen, 1932-1933," December 7, 1932 (DP-11).

¹³⁶ Bill to Hopkins, "Dean of Freshmen, 1932-1933," January 3, 1933 (DP-11).



Under the Quota

Dartmouth's Jewish quota, formalized in implementation via the aforementioned metrics and mechanisms, quickly became an entrenched, institutionalized part of Dartmouth's admissions practices. But even so, in no year was the quota simple or straightforward for the admissions office to impose.

For instance, in the 1932-1933 cycle, admitting the Class of 1937, applicant numbers were such that Bill found it difficult to fill a scholastically qualified class without admitting many more Jewish boys than he had the previous year.¹³⁷ However, Hopkins maintained that he could not sanction any increase in Jewish students' proportion: "As long as we were doing no discriminating, that was one thing, but in view of the fact now that we are ... I am in favor of making the exclusion more and the acceptance 1% less."¹³⁸ Indeed, Hopkins told Bill that "he should rather not accept a [full] class" than allow an increased percentage in Jewish students, adding that the College would not be "greatly injured" if it were instead to accept less qualified Gentile students—what one alumnus referred to as "the plain, ordinary bohunks" of the past.¹³⁹ Bill apparently did just that, yielding 5.6% Jewish students in the Class of 1937.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Bill to Hopkins, "Dean of Freshmen, 1932-1933," March 24, 1933 (DP-11).

¹³⁸ Hopkins to Bill, December 7.

¹³⁹ Hopkins to Bill, "Dean of Freshmen, 1932-1933," March 25, 1933 (DP-11).

¹⁴⁰ Committee on Admissions files (Box 5124, DA-82) & Nov/Dec editions of the Alumni Magazine.

So it was that, by the summer of 1933—when Bill was made the first Dean of the Faculty and Robert C. Strong was appointed the new Dean of Freshmen and Director of Admissions—the quota had become a key and perhaps defining practice under the purview of the admissions office. It is of considerable historical regret that records, statistics, and communications were not apparently preserved during Strong’s tenure to the extent which they were under Dean Bill. Indeed, from the perspective of the evolving “paper trail” concerning the quota, Dean Strong’s tenure runs relatively dry. Presumably, also, Dean Strong had fewer discussions with President Hopkins regarding admissions than did his loquacious predecessor. This would have been in part born of personal preference but also a product of there being less to discuss in terms of the quota now that it had been so firmly institutionalized.

It is doubly significant, then, that Dean Strong soon either brought to an end or condensed the freshman surveys which had long defined and informed Bill’s reign at the admissions office. Those surveys, of course, were the source of published statistics as to the proportions of, among other things, religious affiliation in the freshman class. In all likelihood, Strong made this decision because, of course, he already knew the student body’s racial and religious distribution from the application stage. (And he had applicants’ photographs to peruse.) Why would Strong bother to conduct a survey to obtain statistics which he already had? It is thus that Dartmouth’s 5%-6% Jewish quota can be seen statistically, per publication in the *Aegis* and enumeration in corresponding files, for its two years of existence during Dean Bill’s tenure and in only the first year of that of Dean Strong (the 1933-1934 admissions cycle):

**Jewish enrollment at Dartmouth under the
selective process, 1921-1922 to 1933-1934**

Cycle Admitted	Class Year	Number of Jewish Students	Number of Students	Percent of Jewish Students
1921-1922	1926	11	552	2.0
1922-1923	1927	21	595	3.5
1923-1924	1928	18	673	2.7
1924-1925	1929	13	638	2.0
1925-1926	1930	37	663	5.6
1926-1927	1931	43	626	6.9
1927-1928	1932	46	586	7.8
1928-1929	1933	44	624	7.1
1929-1930	1934	53	664	8.0
1930-1931	1935	75	696	10.8
*1931-1932	1936	37	637	5.8
*1932-1933	1937	38	670	5.6
*1933-1934	1938	37	705	5.2

*Statistics from Committee on Admissions files (Box 5124, DA-82)
& Nov/Dec editions of the Alumni Magazine*

*Subject to the use of a Jewish quota
(The “1930-1931” cycle is in bold because it marks a turning point as the last before a quota was imposed on Jews)

Under Strong's tenure, the involvement and input of alumni committees relative to Jewish applicants was enhanced.¹⁴¹ Presumably, it was hoped that the close cooperation of these committees with the admissions office might facilitate the quota's yearly operation. Certainly, from Strong's perspective a number of difficulties remained built into the practice, including a yearly variability of application numbers and yield rate, which had the potential to impede the quota's precision.

Much along these lines, in June 1934, Ford Whelden '25—the overseer of alumni committees for Michigan—wrote to Strong about the possibility that the Dean's calculations regarding Jews prove incorrect:¹⁴²

Relative to the Jewish problem, I will see that you get as complete information as possible on any applicants for next year. I think the alumni committees must do more thorough work for you in this regard. Personally, I believe that your 5% or 6% is O. K. but not 8% or 9% which I'm afraid this Fall's class will turn out to be. It certainly is a very serious problem. The campus seems more Jewish each time I arrive in Hanover. And unfortunately many of them (on quick judgment) seem to be the "hike" type. I will be glad to help you in any way I can as long as the problem lasts.

In reply, Strong wrote:¹⁴³

I am glad to have your comments on the Jewish problem, and I shall appreciate your help along this line in the future. If we go beyond the 5% or 6% in the Class of 1938, I shall be grieved beyond words, for at the present time the group is only 5% of the total that has been selected. It may be that all of the Jewish boys will come, in which case we may get up to 6%, but I do not see how it can climb as high as 8% or 9%.

And indeed, ultimately the Class of 1938 proved to be 5.2% Jewish.

Although hard statistics do not exist, it is known that Dean Strong, at Hopkins' behest, continued imposing a Jewish quota on each year's entering Class through at least the end of the decade.¹⁴⁴ The inherent problems and uncertainties in its use led Strong to describe his effort as an "annual battle with the Hebrew children."¹⁴⁵ Indeed, numbers fluctuated yearly. In admitting the Class of 1943, for instance, he noted

¹⁴¹ Ford H. Whelden to Strong, June 26, 1934 (Whelden Personal).

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Strong to Whelden, July 20, 1934 (Whelden Personal).

¹⁴⁴ Strong to Hopkins, "Dean of Freshmen, 1938-1939," April 4, 1939 (DP-11).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

a reduced number of Jewish applications but that, even so, there were “more than 200 ... of these birds ... clamoring for admission,” on which number he would have to cut down considerably.¹⁴⁶

Statistics and information as to the use of a quota are especially murky relative to the 1940s and the war years in particular, likely at least in part because Dartmouth’s V-12 program was dominating Hopkins and Strong’s attention. However, at some point it would seem Dartmouth’s 5% to 6% quota lapsed—that is, was no longer enforced. Indeed, in later correspondence Hopkins recalled percentages well above such a figure for the Classes of 1946 and 1947: 7.5% Jews and 12.4% Jews, respectively.¹⁴⁷ Whether these higher percentages were unavoidable from the perspective of application numbers or came at Hopkins’ specific instruction that no quota be used is unknown. However, these higher percentages do indicate that by the 1941-1942 admissions cycle, admitting the Class of 1946, a 5% to 6% Jewish quota was no longer active. To this end, in 1945, Hopkins reflected that Dartmouth had not had any quota “in recent years.”¹⁴⁸

The End of the Quota

The premise, if not the practice, of the Jewish quota continued to be accepted and endorsed by Hopkins, and thus Dartmouth, throughout the Second World War.¹⁴⁹ By 1945, Hopkins still very much subscribed to the philosophy of proportionate, or representative, selection,¹⁵⁰ which had inspired his foundational willingness to implement a Jewish quota. Therefore, Hopkins must have still firmly believed that he had been fully justified in imposing the quota in 1931. Indeed, Hopkins still fundamentally maintained that, by way of his practices through the years, he had been able to preserve what he saw as Dartmouth’s fundamental tolerance and absence of prejudice towards Jews, which conditions he genuinely wanted to protect.¹⁵¹ Ultimately, Hopkins’ continued support of the principles undergirding quotas came to a head in 1945 when divulged and censured by the national media.

The “Jewish Controversy”

By 1945, Hopkins had served as Dartmouth’s president for nearly three decades, his tenure having begun in 1916—from the First World War, through the interwar period, and through the Second World War. Although he had expressed an interest in retiring as early as 1940, the United States’ entry into the war the next year

¹⁴⁶ Strong to Hopkins, April 4.

¹⁴⁷ Hopkins to J. Richard Pick, “Admissions Policy,” September 25, 1945 (MS-1359).

¹⁴⁸ Hopkins to Leonard S. Florsheim, “Leonard Florsheim,” August 30, 1945 (MS-1359).

¹⁴⁹ Likewise, the means and mechanisms by which Dartmouth had enforced its quota remained in place: the admissions blanks’ questions as to race and religion as well as the required photograph.

¹⁵⁰ Statement Concerning Story in *New York Post*, “Criticism, 1944-1945,” August 9, 1945 (DP-11).

¹⁵¹ Hopkins to Arthur Schulzberger, “Criticism and Suggestions (Jewish Controversy),” August 22, 1945 (DP-12).

convinced him to stay the course through the end of the conflict.¹⁵² He felt that, once the war ended, he would be able to gracefully turn the helm over to whomever the Trustees elected as his successor, a new leader for a new era. Despite these plans, the run-up to Hopkins' ultimate retirement in October 1945 proved to be anything but graceful.

On February 10 of that year, the Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions sent a telegram to some 300 educators across the country.¹⁵³ The cable decried an effort by the American Dental Association urging Columbia and New York Universities to adopt firm quotas against Jewish applicants to their medical schools.¹⁵⁴ The cable asked the educators to join with the Committee in condemning the restriction of any religious or racial group's enrollment in schools.¹⁵⁵ In a response sent that same day, Hopkins declined the Committee's request, and, in a genuine spirit of forthrightness, wired back:

Understand complexity of problem and am sympathetic with purposes you have in mind. Cannot join with you however if your protest is against proportionate selection[,] for I believe nothing would so increase intolerance and focus racial and religious prejudice as to allow any racial group to gain virtual monopoly of educational advantages offered by any institution of higher education.¹⁵⁶

Hopkins doubtless considered the matter closed there and then, insofar as he had long held the view which he expressed, a view that undergirded his conception of how college admissions should be practiced. However, Herman Shumlin, a Director of the Independent Citizens Committee and a New York theatrical producer, was substantially upset by the president's reply and took note of it. On March 26, Shumlin, who was Jewish, sent a letter declaring his refusal to purchase a subscription to Americans United for World Organization, an internationalist organization of which Hopkins was Chairman of the Board and which had apparently solicited Shumlin's membership.¹⁵⁷ He wrote to the Executive Vice President of the organization, Ulric Bell, that he failed to see how "such an organization can do good when the Chairman ... is, himself, a prejudiced man."¹⁵⁸ Shumlin cited as evidence Hopkins' declination to condemn quotas. In turn, Bell forwarded this letter to Hopkins.

Somewhat incredibly, upon his receipt of the letter, the 67-year-old Hopkins then took it upon himself on April 2 to write to Shumlin, unprompted, to elaborate on and explain his position:¹⁵⁹

¹⁵² Board of Trustees Minutes, page 75, August 24, 1945.

¹⁵³ "Education: Sense or Nonsense?" *Time Magazine*, August 20, 1945.

¹⁵⁴ Statement Concerning Story..., August 9.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Herman Shumlin to Ulric Bell (Copy forwarded from Ulric Bell to Hopkins), "Criticism, 1944-1945," March 26, 1945 (DP-11).

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Hopkins to Shumlin, "Criticism, 1944-1945," April 2, 1945 (DP-11).

April second
1945

Dear Mr. Shumlin:

In the mail just received Ulric Bell has sent me a copy of your letter of March 26th in which you accuse me of anti-Jewish prejudice because of the statement I made declining to sign a protest that from my point of view was wholly prejudicial to the interests of our Jewish population.

I presume it is difficult for one with Jewish blood to understand that some of us who deeply believe that racial prejudice is one of the greatest dangers that threaten the country may consider the Jews their own worst enemy, and wish to use such influence as we have to withhold them from making antagonisms greater than already exist. Oscar Wilde, in the Ballad of Reading Gaol, has a recurring line that applies to all ultra-partisans, I think, whether in industrial management, in labor, in ultra-reactionary Republicans or purely theoretical New Dealers, or unrealistic proponents for the disregarding of all racial bias. This is his refrain: "All men kill the things they love". So, it seems to me, will be the case if, in the vehemence of agitation on the part of the Jews of the country for a conferring of rights which, if granted, would really constitute special privilege, aggressiveness continues to be carried to the extent that in the present day it is being carried. The fact cannot safely be ignored that some things cannot be done by violence but require persuasion. Those who do ignore it are killing the thing they love and are raising anti-Jewish prejudice to a level that it has never before reached in this country and which is a source of deepest concern and very great alarm to many of us who deplore every aspect of the present situation.

I was in Europe almost immediately after the last war, and practically all with whom I talked were discussing the danger of the racial antagonisms which had been so accentuated in Germany by the soldiers on their return finding all of their institutions and all of their professions dominated by a race which numbered only one percent of the population.

If you care to refer to Stephen Roberts' The House That Hitler Built, published by Harpers in 1938, you will find this situation described in detail by him in his chapter, "The Present Place of the Jews". Roberts himself is a distinguished scholar, an Australian and a professor at the University of Sidney who spent a year and a half, as I recall, in Germany studying the new Germany and making an historic

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resume of the conditions which had brought Hitler to office and given him his power. Professor Roberts leaves nothing to be desired in his own hatred and fear of race prejudice, but nevertheless, he feels that the ill-advised concentration of Jews in the cities of Germany and their utilization of the war to take over all of the important posts in the cities created the discontent which gave Hitler a nucleus around which to build his structure of hatred and of evil. There are some very striking analogies to that situation in the situation of the Jews in the United States at the present time. Roberts says:

"Almost half of the Jews in Prussia congregated in Berlin, where they proceeded to obtain an unduly large share of good professional positions. They showed no disposition to work on the land or at hard manual jobs. Whereas a third of the Prussians were farmers, not one Jew in fifty was to be found on the land, according to the vocational census taken eight years before the Nazis came to power. Practically two-thirds of them went to trade or commerce. But it was not this fact, so much as their undue hold on the professions, that hurt the Germans. In Berlin, for example, 50.2 per cent of the lawyers were Jews, and it was a truism that the barristers' room in any Berlin State Court was a Jewish club. In medicine 48 per cent of the doctors were Jews, and it was said that their influence was greater than this, owing to their systematic seizure of the principal posts, especially in the hospitals. More than two-thirds of the school and welfare doctors in Berlin were Jews; so, too, were half the teachers in the medical faculty in the University of Berlin. While the Jews claimed that this predominance was due to their natural ability, the Aryans attributed it mostly to illicit Jewish combinations and influence."

Roberts goes on to say that one of the factors in particular which helped to enhance the growing resentment of the native Germans was this:

"The Jews had also made great inroads on the educational system. . . . In some universities such as Breslau and Gottingen, it was a drawback not to be a Jew. In 1914, taking the whole country, 30 per cent of the professors were Jews. On a numerical basis they should have been 1 per cent. They were particularly strong in the medical and philosophical faculties."

It is against a background of scores of conversations and discussions subsequent to the World War concerning these matters with men whose instincts warned them of great danger in the situation, not only

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to Germany but also to the world, that my own convictions have been formed. I would not for anything forgo the representation of Jewish boys that enroll year by year at Dartmouth. Some of our outstanding alumni are Jews, as are some of the foremost benefactors of the College. They are exceedingly welcome in the Dartmouth family, whether as undergraduates or as alumni, and I personally number some of my most intimate friends among them. However, I know definitely that this would all be changed overnight in Dartmouth, or in any other college, if Dartmouth were to disregard the fact that it would become an urban college, which it does not want to become, and would lose its racial tolerance, which it is desperately anxious not to lose, were we to accept unexamined the great blocks of Jewish applications which come in, for instance, from the New York high schools and other great metropolitan centers.

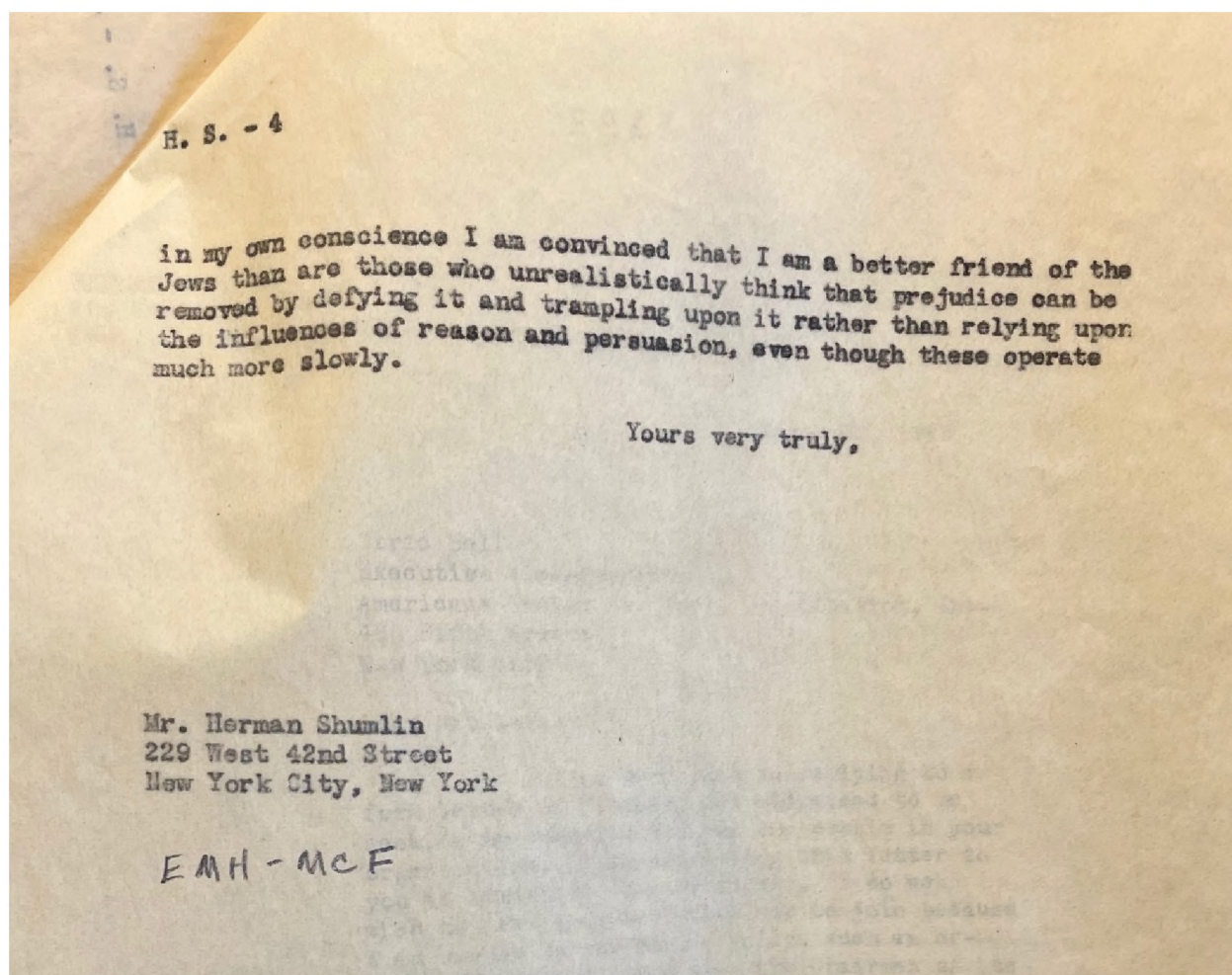
Under normal circumstances, Dartmouth accepts a freshman class of 700 men, and restricts its total enrollment to 2500. The number of applications for admission from year to year will run from three to four times the number that we can accept, and we have, consequently, each year a large quota of disappointed applicants for admission, the great majority of whom, Jew or Gentile, feel that some discrimination has been shown against them. Our admission requirements are based not only on scholastic ranking but on geographical distribution, on qualities of character, personality and variety of interest, and upon that spirit of cooperation which makes a man capable of living and working harmoniously in a social environment.

In the large, our selection of students is based upon such specifications, and the system was never set up nor has it ever been operated, as some disappointed Jewish parents have argued, as a smoke screen to conceal racial prejudice.

However, in the desire to be completely honest, I have never been willing to deny that in the interest of avoiding racial prejudice and in the desire to maintain the age-long compatibility here at Dartmouth among boys of different races, I should not be willing to see the proportion of Jews in the College so greatly increased as to arouse widespread resentment and develop widespread prejudice in our own family.

It was upon the basis of my own reasoning in regard to our conditions here and my certain knowledge of the original sparks that led to the later conflagration of anti-Jewish feeling in Germany that made me unwilling to sign the protest which was sent to me.

If all of this in your mind constitutes the evidence of prejudice which you cite in your letter to Ulric Bell of March 26th, I can add no other comment which would influence your judgment. Nevertheless,



Hopkins' letter went unacknowledged for nearly two months, until, on June 2, Shumlin made his reply, in which he assailed Hopkins' proffered explanations and justifications. He wrote: "I am filled with anger against you and shame..."¹⁶⁰ By August 7, Shumlin had turned his correspondence with Hopkins over to the press, for on that day the *New York Post* and on the next day *P.M.* ran articles which blasted Hopkins' letter to Shumlin as bespeaking clear anti-Semitism in Dartmouth's admissions. Hopkins did not help his case with what he later conceded privately was an unnecessarily facetious remark to a *New York Post* interviewer, which remark was transcribed and reported widely as "Dartmouth is a Christian college founded for the Christianization of its students."¹⁶¹

Thus began a maelstrom in the national news for the next several weeks. Hopkins' letter to Shumlin instantly received wide exposure—even as the first atomic bomb had been dropped only a day earlier and the second was to follow on August 9. In his letter, Hopkins expressed the same notion that he had long embraced and espoused: that restricting the number of Jews at the College would preserve religious

¹⁶⁰ Shumlin to Hopkins, "Criticism, 1944-1945," June 2, 1945 (DP-11).

¹⁶¹ Hopkins to Pick, September 25.

tolerance. Shockingly, in arguing this point, Hopkins cited (fallacious) statistics given by Australian sociologist Stephen Roberts in his book *The House That Hitler Built* (1938).¹⁶² As *P.M.* was quick to point out, German institutions were not, in fact, dominated by Jews “in 1919 or 1933 or any other time. Hopkins got his figures from Roberts. Roberts got his figures from an article by Alfred Rosenberg in the *Voelkischer Beobachter* for Aug. 20, 1933. One would think that the president of an American college would be a little embarrassed about spouting the Hitler-Rosenberg line ... that anti-Semitism is the fault of the Jews.”¹⁶³ Shumlin had earlier observed the same in his reply to Hopkins: “It is fantastic to me that a man in your position can, at this date, make use of the very allegations which were used by Hitler and his accomplices.”¹⁶⁴ To be sure, Hopkins argued in his letter that, in their “aggressiveness,” those advocating increased Jewish admittance to schools were “raising anti-Jewish prejudice to a level that it has never before reached in this country.”¹⁶⁵ In rather incendiary fashion, *P.M.* thus decided to run, with its article, adjacent graphics of Hopkins and Rosenberg. *P.M.*’s hostile implication: the two were exponents of something similar.



Graphic in *P.M.*,
Wednesday, August 8, 1945,
Jews Vertical File.

The New Republic highlighted in an editorial the important detail that, in his letter, Hopkins conflated race and religion. Specifically, Hopkins “appear[ed] to assume, flying in the face of all anthropological science, that the Jews are a race, that there are psychological differences between races, and that cultural patterns are inheritable.”¹⁶⁶ Hopkins’ suggestion that admitting more Jewish students would make Dartmouth an “urban college” also carried with it racial undertones. Of course, it was the Nazis who

¹⁶² Andrew G. Bonnell, “Stephen H. Roberts’ *The House That Hitler Built* as a Source on Nazi Germany,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 46, no. 1 (2000).

¹⁶³ “The Dartmouth Recipe for Suicide,” *P.M.*, August 8, 1945.

¹⁶⁴ Shumlin to Hopkins, June 2.

¹⁶⁵ Hopkins to Shumlin, April 2.

¹⁶⁶ “Anti-Semitism at Dartmouth,” *The New Republic*, August 20, 1945.

suggested that Jews were a separate, and inferior, “race,” and hence Hopkins’ phrasing may be said to have echoed the idea of racial anti-Semitism.

Dartmouth released a mimeographed form letter on August 9 to make public all of the correspondence which had ensued and to provide some commentary. This letter ascribed Hopkins’ original telegram reply to information he was given by professional schools that “Jewish youth often mature more rapidly intellectually” (for Hopkins, a longstanding belief); defended the general principle of proportionate or otherwise representative selection; suggested Hopkins’ “Christianization” comment was an historical reference; and again referred to the Jews as a “race.”¹⁶⁷

It was not until President Hopkins’ retirement was announced on August 30 that the media onslaught began to subside (the war, it should be noted, ended three days later, dominating coverage). Among the telling headlines which had prevailed en masse to that time were: “Dartmouth Limits Jews to Stop Anti-Semitism, Says Its Prexy” (*New York Post*, Aug. 7); “The Dartmouth Recipe for Suicide” (*P.M.*, Aug. 8); “Dartmouth College Admits ‘Quota’ On Jews” (*P.M.*, Aug. 8); “Disservice to Democracy” (*New York Post*, Aug. 8); “Dartmouth in Darkness” (*Bridgeport Herald*, Aug. 12); “Quota’ Repudiates Anti-Bias Clause in 1769 Charter” (*The Nation*, Aug. 20); “Education: Sense or Nonsense?” (*Time Magazine*, Aug. 20); and “Dartmouth Gives Official Sanction to Anti-Semitism” (*Cleveland Press*, Aug. 24).

Dartmouth, President Hopkins, and his ultimate successor President Dickey continued to receive a voluminous quantity of letters from concerned alumni and other parties regarding Dartmouth’s admissions procedures.¹⁶⁸ In his replies, Hopkins backtracked from his subscription to the Roberts book’s statistics but cited them as “commonly accepted” and thus dangerous even if inaccurate.¹⁶⁹ He also continued to deny that Dartmouth’s practices amounted to the imposition of a true “quota.”

To be sure, Dartmouth’s Jewish quota had been instituted as a practice that was, in a sense, ancillary to the College’s broader selective process. For Hopkins, then, the quota represented not a policy so much as a natural practice derived from the selective process. While this was perhaps somewhat a matter of semantics, Hopkins genuinely saw a distinction to be made. He resented, for instance, any equation of Dartmouth’s practice of limiting Jewish representation to the use of a prescriptive policy that did so inflexibly—or, for that matter, to what he described disdainfully as the nearly outright ban on Jews that was policy at Princeton at the time.¹⁷⁰

For his part, Hopkins clearly felt that his own views, as he had expressed them to Shumlin, were being sensationalized. However, the simple fact was that, after having fought and won a war against a regime that exemplified oppression, tyranny, and racism, it was no longer publicly acceptable in the United States to ardently classify

¹⁶⁷ Statement Concerning Story..., August 9.

¹⁶⁸ See the many “Criticism” folders from 1944-1945 in DP-11 and 1945-1946 in DP-12.

¹⁶⁹ (Form) letter to Jewish alumnus from Ernest M. Hopkins, “Jewish Controversy, 1944-1945,” September 10, 1945 (MS-1359).

¹⁷⁰ Hopkins to Pick, September 25.

people by groupings, as Hopkins advocated, rather than as individuals. Still more importantly, following revelations of the horror of the Holocaust, it had simply become unfathomable that anti-Semitism would go unignored to the extent that it long had. It was certainly Hopkins' use of the Rosenberg statistics, facilitating direct comparisons to the Nazis' malign dogma, that made his letter so appalling and open to such vehement attack in the media.

Repudiating the Quota

Upon learning of it in the national media, among those especially horrified by Hopkins' effective endorsement of a Jewish quota were members of Dartmouth's faculty. One such faculty member, Alexander Laing, later a professor of *belles lettres* but in 1945 an assistant librarian, was a noted champion of liberal causes and resolved to take what action he could. He and a likeminded professor of comparative literature, Vernon Hall, discussed the matter and decided to present a resolution, at the next faculty meeting, condemning the use of quotas based on religion or race.¹⁷¹

Upon the announcement of President Hopkins' forthcoming retirement, which was to occur on November 1, Laing and Hall realized that they would be presenting their resolution at President John Sloan Dickey's first-ever faculty meeting on November 26. Owing to this development, other faculty urged the men to delay their presentation, but they felt so "ashamed" by way of association with a Jewish quota that they sought out President Dickey to apprise him of their plans.¹⁷² In turn, Dickey "merely nodded and said, 'You have to do what you have to do.'"¹⁷³

So it was that Laing and Hall proceeded with their plan. Laing was to introduce the resolution, and Hall would second it.¹⁷⁴ The men devoted time to writing at least six drafts of the resolution, before settling on a final, tripartite version:¹⁷⁵

Resolved, that this faculty reaffirms its respect for that portion of the Charter of Dartmouth College which forbids the exclusion, by the Trustees of the College, of "...any Person of any religious denomination whatsoever from free and equal liberty and advantage of Education or from any of the liberties and privileges or immunities of the said College on account of his or their speculative sentiments in Religion and of his or their being of a religious profession different from the said Trustees of the said Dartmouth College..."

Resolved, also, that in the further study of admissions procedure, the opinion of this Faculty as a whole upon any important aspect or change of policy ought to be secured.

Resolved, further, that these resolutions are not intended to be inconsistent with the establishment of favored categories of applicants, such as sons of alumni, or of

¹⁷¹ Memorandum from Laing (11/27/45), "Faculty Resolution," November 2, 1946 (Laing Personal).

¹⁷² Laing to Kenneth Kramer, "Faculty Resolution," February 3, 1976 (Laing Personal).

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ See handwritten and typed drafts, with final version on top. "Faculty Resolution" (Laing Personal).

geographical or other quotas designed to maintain diversity in the student body, provided that applicants within any such category shall be given preference solely upon evidence of character and of aptitude for scholarship, without regard to race, nationality, or color.

Out of courtesy to the new president, Laing had given him a draft of the resolution in advance and sent him the final version once it was completed.¹⁷⁶ Two days before the faculty meeting, Laing also corresponded with Dickey about matters of procedure and concluded that he would introduce the resolution as “new business.”¹⁷⁷ Further, Laing acceded to Dickey’s request that he amend the script of his planned introduction, or “preamble,” to the resolution so that, if passed, the resolution would “leave any public notice of the faculty’s action entirely to the discretion of the administration.”¹⁷⁸ In this way, Dickey would have the power to control publicity about the resolution, which power he doubtless sought in light of Dartmouth’s recent quota controversy under Hopkins.

And so, having suitably involved Dickey and having additionally “sought advice of about twenty-five or thirty members of the faculty,”¹⁷⁹ Laing and Hall gave formal notice to the secretary and submitted a copy of their resolution in advance of the faculty meeting.¹⁸⁰ Their objective, after getting the resolution in the minutes, would be to “recommend postponement of debate until the next full faculty meeting,” so as to avoid criticism of “precipitate action.”¹⁸¹

On November 26, the meeting lasted to a very late hour, but Laing and Hall still presented their resolution at the very end as “new business.”¹⁸² However, Laing and a cooperative President Dickey both proceeded to stumble with parliamentary procedure, to such an extent that Laing was unable to give remarks that he had prepared explaining the resolution in detail.¹⁸³ So it was that Leon Burr Richardson, a professor of chemistry, quickly proposed that the resolution be referred to the Committee on Admissions.¹⁸⁴ Laing was quick to point out that the Committee on Admission was “the last place” to which the resolution ought to be referred, as it was the committee being criticized in the resolution,¹⁸⁵ but the faculty—anxious to leave the late meeting—voted to do so nonetheless.¹⁸⁶

Laing was later to recall that, as he was leaving the meeting, Francis Neef, a professor of German, approached him and remarked: “Alex, I’m very sorry you’ve done this. I have many Jewish friends, and they’ve often besought me, ‘Francis, don’t get too

¹⁷⁶ Laing to J.S. Dickey, “Criticism and Suggestions (Jewish Controversy),” November 26, 1945 (DP-12).

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Laing to L.B. Richardson, “Faculty Resolution,” November 28, 1945 (Laing Personal).

¹⁸⁰ Oral History Interview With Alexander Laing. Conducted by Arthur Wilson, 1974. DOH-236.

¹⁸¹ Laing to Dickey, November 26.

¹⁸² Oral History.

¹⁸³ Laing to Richardson, November 28.

¹⁸⁴ Oral History.

¹⁸⁵ Oral History.

¹⁸⁶ Oral History. See also Minutes of Faculty Meeting, November 26, 1945.

many of us at the College. It will spoil everything.”¹⁸⁷ In response to Neef, Laing said curtly: “I’m sorry the snobs and the renegades are your friends.”¹⁸⁸

In the aftermath of the November 26 meeting, Laing wrote hurriedly to Dean Strong, to whose Committee the resolution had been unexpectedly referred. Laing undertook to explain his failure to consult with Strong in drafting or planning the resolution. Wrote Laing, rather diplomatically: “There seemed to be little use in doing so because I was fully convinced, long ago, that you were doing your human best to interpret orders properly received from the right source of authority. My [r]esolution raises the question whether that source of authority ought ... to consult with the faculty before establishing rules and procedures.”¹⁸⁹ Laing also sought to promptly dispatch to the faculty mimeographed copies of the resolution along with a memorandum featuring the explanatory remarks he had intended to give at the meeting.¹⁹⁰ However, several colleagues urged him not to do so, fearing that a copy would leak to the press, and he relented.¹⁹¹

The Committee on Admissions took no action on the resolution referred to it until early January 1946, when Dean Strong organized a meeting with Laing.¹⁹² This meeting was largely an opportunity for Laing to articulate the sentiments of the memorandum which he ultimately had not sent and hence to explain the three parts of his resolution. Accordingly, he underlined the Charter’s “inviolable nature” as well as faculty members’ “Corporate Consciousness”—that is, their personal investment in and attachment to the College and its policies.¹⁹³ Ultimately, he emphasized as well that: “[D]iversity in the undergraduate College is desirable, and ... the general means hitherto used to assure diversity in practice appear to be satisfactory with the exception of those regarding race.”¹⁹⁴ Laing argued that admissions should not be “a matter of groups or categories, but of individuals ... the basic dignity of the human individual.”¹⁹⁵

Several days prior to the next faculty meeting of March 15, 1946, Laing and twenty or so colleagues who had taken an interest in the pending resolution gathered informally to discuss admissions practices at Dartmouth and at colleges overall.¹⁹⁶ Prior to this gathering, the Committee on Admissions had advised Laing that it wanted “more time”—that is, beyond March 15—to study the resolution, “in connection with a reexamination of other aspects of admissions policy.”¹⁹⁷ To this, neither Laing nor any other faculty member present at the gathering objected.¹⁹⁸ The outcome of this gathering, then, was primarily to unite a group of faculty behind a shared desire to see

¹⁸⁷ Oral History.

¹⁸⁸ Oral History.

¹⁸⁹ Laing to Strong, “Faculty Resolution,” November 27, 1945 (Laing Personal).

¹⁹⁰ Laing to Richardson, November 28.

¹⁹¹ Laing to J.S. Dickey, “Criticism and Suggestions (Jewish Controversy),” March 10, 1946 (DP-12).

¹⁹² Strong to Laing, “Faculty Resolution,” January 2, 1946 (Laing Personal).

¹⁹³ Memorandum from Laing, November 2.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Laing to Dickey, March 10.

¹⁹⁶ Laing to J.S. Dickey, “Criticism and Suggestions (Jewish Controversy),” March 13, 1946 (DP-12).

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

the College repudiate discrimination.¹⁹⁹ By the early fall, a number of these faculty members, led by Laing and Hall, had drafted and sent to Dickey a detailed, alternative policy for admission to Dartmouth that emphasized individual merit.²⁰⁰ Soon thereafter, and prior to the fall faculty meeting on November 4, 1946, Dickey asked Laing and Hall to meet with him and discuss the resolution, whereupon he gave them a preview of what he would say, criticizing Dartmouth's previous use of a Jewish quota under the selective process, at the faculty meeting.²⁰¹

At that meeting, almost one full year after Laing and Hall had presented their resolution, the Committee on Admissions finally issued its report on that resolution.²⁰² The report was noncommittal to any change and was primarily an exercise in denialism—denying, that is, that there was ever a true Jewish quota at Dartmouth.²⁰³ However, Dickey spoke at length after the Committee's report was read aloud: Although he defended the selective process itself, he criticized the use of the process towards discriminatory ends in the past. He pledged that he would work to ensure such discrimination never happened again.²⁰⁴ While not fully satisfied with the mediated nature of President Dickey's speech, Laing was impressed with the president's thoughtfulness and honesty.²⁰⁵ Laing withdrew the resolution at that meeting.

. . .

Dickey kept his word. In the 1946-1947 admissions cycle, the questions regarding race and religion were removed from Dartmouth's admissions blanks.²⁰⁶

In a confidential memorandum to Dartmouth's Trustees in 1954, President Dickey wrote that Dean Strong had approached him in late 1945 or early 1946 (shortly after Laing and Hall had presented their resolution before the faculty). Strong had advised Dickey that he did not feel he could continue previous admissions practices regarding Jews in light of the controversy that had erupted at the end of President Hopkins' tenure and a new atmosphere in the post-war world.²⁰⁷ Strong was clear, said Dickey, that it would be necessary "to re-examine the whole question and that more Jewish boys would be admitted"; Dickey had expressed his agreement to Strong.²⁰⁸ Dickey told the Trustees that he and Strong's successor, Albert Dickerson, had imposed no restrictions whatsoever on Jewish applicants, preferring to watch what happened.²⁰⁹ Dickey commented that, through the 1950s, the percentage of Jewish students per Class was usually around 15%, with a high of 17.1% in the Class of 1955.²¹⁰

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Hall and Laing to Dickey, "Faculty Resolution," October 4, 1946 (Laing Personal).

²⁰¹ Oral History.

²⁰² This faculty meeting was the first to follow the death of Dean Strong in June 1945 from a heart attack.

²⁰³ Report Re: November 26, 1945 Resolution(s), Committee on Admissions files (Box 5125).

²⁰⁴ Oral History.

²⁰⁵ Laing to Dickey, "Faculty Meetings, 1946-1947" November 5, 1946 (DP-12).

²⁰⁶ Per (completed) admissions blanks in alumni files. Interestingly, photographs remained mandatory.

²⁰⁷ Dickey to Dartmouth Trustees, October 15, 1954 (Jews Vertical File).

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

Conclusion

Dartmouth's Jewish quota was a practice of considerable variability and evolution, and its irregular features render it largely irreducible in the course of explanation. This circumstance stems in part from the fact that Dartmouth's quota was not a prescribed administrative policy but rather an administrative practice, employed under the auspices of Dartmouth's "selective process for admission" (est. 1921). Moreover, substantive complications arise in assigning a timeline to the quota. 1931 and 1946 present effective boundaries to the practice insofar as they signify the dates of its imposition and ultimate repudiation. Even so, it is assuredly difficult to set precise start and end dates: On the one hand, qualified but youthful Jewish applicants were rejected well before the quota was devised. On the other hand, the 5%-6% restriction appears not to have been enforced during the Second World War.

In developing a chronological "paper trail" of memoranda and correspondence, this monograph also decidedly foregrounds the personalities of the individuals who played so integral a part in the history of the quota. The perspectives of alumni, students, and administrators—as articulated in their own words—combine to produce a fascinating, if shocking, tale. Of course, from the perspective of Dartmouth's history as an institution, undoubtedly the most prominent figure considered is its legendary President Ernest Martin Hopkins

Hopkins had considerably vacillating and conflicting opinions on Jews, and he truly seemed to believe in his outrageous explanation that Dartmouth's anti-Semitic quota served to prevent anti-Semitism. (He also did not believe that Dartmouth actually used a "quota" proper.) Of course, Hopkins was himself not above clearly anti-Semitic comments and judgments. Nonetheless, he was repelled by President Lowell's declaration of his desire to limit Jewish enrollment at Harvard and by Princeton's extremely restrictive policy towards Jews. Hopkins also had a reputation for liberal-mindedness, with which he often seemed to struggle. To this end, Hopkins seems to have employed a good deal of "self-deception."

However challenging the implications of the quota's history may be for Dartmouth as an institution, the College is to be commended for having retained and made discoverable the documentation in which that history survives. The premise of this monograph and the project of which it is part is that new life must be breathed into that history, so that it may inform and instruct today and in the future.

While the quota was itself repudiated in 1946, the notion of "crafting a Class" according to a preferred distribution across various metrics was itself never rejected. Therefore, this chapter of history leaves off in large part where current admissions policy begins.

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