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# SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

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# Southern Jewish History

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*COVER PICTURE: Rabbi Edward L. Israel of Baltimore's Har Sinai Congregation, 1930s. Rabbi Israel's career as a social activist is examined by Charles L. Chavis, Jr., in the article on pp. 43–87. (Courtesy of the Jewish Museum of Maryland, Baltimore. 2012.108.140.)*

*From the Editor . . .*

**D**iversity and the vitality of the field remain hallmarks of *Southern Jewish History*. The authors in this issue range in position from a gifted graduate student to a distinguished retired professor. They reside in Connecticut, Florida, New Jersey, Virginia, and Japan. Their subject matter spans from the Civil War into the 1960s; Louisiana, Maryland, Texas, and other southern states; and politics, religion, war, acculturation, civil rights, values, and identity. Previous journal volumes have included articles on rabbis, but this is the first featuring three such pieces. A second recurring topic is black-Jewish positive and negative interaction across time and amid changing circumstances. The articles by Miyuki Kita, Edward S. Shapiro, and Kyle Stanton derive from Southern Jewish Historical Society conference presentations.

Jacob Morrow-Spitzer delves into Jews in the quagmire of Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction politics in Louisiana. He identifies several Jewish mayors during this era, suggesting the degree to which Jews were accepted and integrated into society. Like other politicians, these men represented both sides of the issues. Yet Morrow-Spitzer concentrates on Edouard Weil of Alexandria, a man who advocated Democratic home rule and rejected Reconstruction. The author uses Weil as a case study of those who accepted and supported southern mores.

Charles Chavis, Jr., provides the case study of a rabbi who came into his own while in the pulpit of Baltimore's historic congregation Har Sinai. Between the two World Wars, Edward L. Israel began with labor reform and was pressured by African Americans also to recognize their just claims. His actions and those with whom he associated demonstrate the black-Jewish relationship during the early phase of the civil rights movement. Israel moved from rhetoric to social action and brought the Reform organizations that he represented along the same path. His ecumenical interaction also reflected his era and future Jewish policies.

Edward S. Shapiro traces the actions and beliefs of four rabbis associated with the South who served as military chaplains during World War II. These men became symbols of American values, and their images promoted greater tolerance and pluralism in succeeding decades. For the three who survived the war, their military experience informed their future rabbinate and the causes that they pursued.

Much has been written about the Houston, Texas, Congregation Beth Israel's 1943 Basic Principles, a litmus test for membership in alignment with the ideas of the American Council for Judaism. Kyle Stanton traces the story through later decades and demonstrates that the incident and resulting schism was not an isolated or southern-specific phenomenon. Rather congregations elsewhere in the region and country supported and emulated the Houston model. Thus Stanton provides an example of southern national leadership, much as does Chavis.

Evaluating whether Houston served as a positive or negative model is a subjective question. If one opposes Zionism, supports Classical Reform, and accepts regulations on membership based on an individual's beliefs, then the temple leadership and majority acted correctly. Those who reject any or all of these positions would tend to view this model negatively, ultimately as did Rabbi Hyman Judah Schachtel. Such determination is the reader's prerogative but that should not negate the need to record the historical events. Nonetheless, the Basic Principles and ACJ were clearly on the wrong side of history. The vast majority of even Reform Jews welcomed the creation of Israel. Most Reform temples moved almost inexorably toward more traditional practices. The Holocaust, creation of Israel, and Israel's development and wars, among other things, fostered stronger senses of ethnic pride and identity beyond religion.

The primary source article is not about southern Jews but rather about Jews who venture south. Miyuki Kita provides an introduction to and excerpts from the diary of Lynn Goldsmith, who ventured with other Brandeis University students in behalf of SCLC-SCOPE during the summer of 1965 to help register African Americans to vote. Goldsmith describes limited but positive interaction with members of the local Jewish community in a town near Columbia, South Carolina. When placed in relationship to Edward K. Kaplan's "Two Civil Rights Testimonies" (v. 17, 2014), Kita's contribution offers history from the bottom up.



With this volume we welcome new editorial board members Paul Finkelman (Gratz College), Joshua Furman (Houston Jewish History Archive, Rice University), Allison Schottenstein (University of Cincinnati), Marcia Synott (University of South Carolina), and Diane Vecchio (Furman University) to the editorial board. They, along with the other board members, have already proved their worth in developing a journal policy on material previously appearing online. We also owe a debt of gratitude to the section editors, anonymous peer reviewers, and proofreaders Rachel Heimovics Braun, Karen Franklin, Bernie Wax, Dan Weinfeld, and Hollace Ava Weiner.

As I rack up the years, I depend more and more on Bryan Edward Stone beyond his “normal” duties as managing editor. His judgment has been unerring as has his ability to identify errors in articles that I miss and to help revise manuscripts to meet the highest journal standards.

Mark K. Bauman



## In Memoriam Leonard Dinnerstein (1934–2019)

Leonard Dinnerstein passed away at his home at age eighty-four on January 22, 2019. Dinnerstein pioneered in the modern study of southern Jewish history. His Columbia University dissertation, revised and published in 1968, served as the standard work on the Leo Frank case until the publication of Steve Oney's *And the Dead Shall Rise* in 2003. As Stephen J. Whitfield observes, "With the assistance of a coeditor (Mary Dale Palsson), Dinnerstein then activated the scholarly study of the southern Jewish past with an anthology, *Jews in the South* (1973). It is by far the best of the early anthologies, a base camp from which others could depart to write not only articles but books about the Jewish experience in the region." Dinnerstein's numerous articles and chapters in anthologies included "A Note on Southern Attitudes Toward Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 32 (January 1970); "A Neglected Aspect of Southern Jewish History," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 62 (September 1971); and "Jews and the Desegregation Crisis in the South," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 62 (March 1973).

Yet, like so many of his cohort, southern Jewish history was a part of broader interests. He became known for *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust* (1982), *Uneasy at Home* (1987), and *Anti-Semitism in America* (1994), which won the National Jewish Book Award, as well as a series of anthologies dealing with immigration and ethnicity, often coedited with fellow graduate students who remained friends through life. Still, unlike numerous books on national phenomena that largely ignore the South, Dinnerstein integrated southern Jewish experiences into his studies of prejudice. He gave the banquet presentation at the SJHS meeting in 1988,

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*Leonard Dinnerstein, left, at the 1988 SJHS conference in Birmingham with  
SJHS president Samuel Proctor and president-elect Rachel Heimovics.  
(Photo by Beryl Weiner, courtesy of Rachel Heimovics Braun.)*

served on a panel in 1998, and attended other society conferences besides reviewing a book and manuscripts for *Southern Jewish History*.\*

Dinnerstein spent most of his career at the University of Arizona (1970–2004), where he taught courses in American history and directed the university's Center for Judaic Studies (1993–2000). Historians often explore the elusive concept of southern identity. Although Dinnerstein spent most of his adult life in Arizona, he considered himself a son of the Bronx.

The brief summary of a distinguished academic career fails to account fully for a person's life. Leonard was a friend and mentor, a humble person always with a smile and a good word to encourage others. I first met him at the SJHS conference in Atlanta in 1993, and my wife, Sandy, and I spent substantial time with him at the Hot Springs conference in 1997. As program chair of the Pacific branch of the Organization of American Historians, he invited me to comment on a session that he had developed and in which he served as a presenter (2003). Always generous, he remarked that my comment was better than his presentation.

Bryan Stone reminisces:

Leonard played a pivotal role in my early scholarly career and provided crucial guidance and moral support as I stumbled through my first attempts at research in southern Jewish history. I met Leonard at the SJHS meeting in Hot Springs, where I presented a paper about Kinky Friedman. It wasn't my first conference presentation but very nearly so, and it *was* my first on the research I had only recently begun for my dissertation. I read much too quickly from a text that was much too long, and the moderator had to shut me down before I finished. Leonard pulled me aside after the panel, sat me down out of the hearing of the other attendees, and told me it was a good paper. I was stunned. I was a graduate student, unpublished and unprepared, and he was Leonard Dinnerstein.

He didn't mince words, telling me bluntly that I had tried to read too much too fast. "Don't ever read your papers," he instructed. "Speak from an outline only, or from memory, extemporaneously. No one wants to hear you read." Nonetheless, he said, he had heard every

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\* For more on Dinnerstein and his career, see Clive Webb, "'What Was on Your Mind Was on Your Tongue': A Profile of Leonard Dinnerstein," *Southern Jewish History* 7 (2004): 27–45.

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word—“not everyone is a good listener, but I’m a good listener”—and he could tell I was “a comer.” He said this intently, a finger pointed right at me. He asked about my dissertation plans, recommended some reading (pretending to be impressed when I told him I had already read the books he named), and offered to read anything of mine I wanted to send him. That conversation—which I remember nearly word-for-word more than twenty years later—was one of the high points of my career and gave me a boost I badly needed.

When an opportunity arose, I invited Leonard to join my dissertation committee, which he agreed to do despite being a faculty member at a different university. For several years as I wrote we sent manuscript pages back and forth by mail, and he generously read and commented on many miserable early drafts. It was Leonard who first told me about the research fellowships available at the American Jewish Archives, and he insisted I apply for one. I had taken a job by this time in Montana, putting me far from sources and colleagues I needed; the AJA’s fellowship program was a lifeline. The research, conversation, and time to think I gained in the four weeks I was awarded in Cincinnati, on Leonard’s recommendation, led directly to the completion of my dissertation and the book that followed it.

There is certainly no shortage of scholars whose work and careers were strengthened by contact with Leonard Dinnerstein. I was not his student, not his advisee, not a mentee in any official capacity. I don’t believe we ever met in person again after Hot Springs. But as no one more than a guy he once met at a conference, Leonard reached out to me when he didn’t have to, offered advice as sound as any I’ve ever received, and changed the course of my life.

Leonard is survived by his wife Myra Rosenberg Dinnerstein and his son, daughter, and granddaughter. May his memory be a blessing to all who respected, knew, and loved him.

Mark K. Bauman

# “Free From Proscription and Prejudice”: Politics and Race in the Election of One Jewish Mayor in Late Reconstruction Louisiana

by

Jacob Morrow-Spitzer\*

**A**fter the Civil War, much of Louisiana’s economy was left in ruins. Dealing with the loss of the war and the end of slavery, white Democrats in the Gulf South looked toward political leaders to reinstate a racial hierarchy and bring prosperity to their emptying coffers. Municipal politicians, charged with maintaining a balanced treasury and scheming new ways to bring wealth to their towns during an age of railroads and Gilded Age technologies and resources, became rallying figures of success. Local constituents challenged mayors to bring new industry and economic growth to their towns as well as uphold a racial hierarchy to which many white southerners desperately clung. The Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction South saw a surprising trend of Jewish municipal politicians in office and, in particular, an exceptionally long and mostly unstudied list of Jewish mayors who governed municipalities in the former Confederate states. Between 1865 and 1890, at least thirty Jewish mayors served in the former slave states (including Kentucky), with a particularly dense grouping of these civic leaders elected in Louisiana, which boasted at least ten during this era.<sup>1</sup> As a preliminary study, this essay will delve into the election story of one Jewish mayor, Edouard Weil of Alexandria, Louisiana, in Rapides Parish, who governed from 1875 through 1876.

Several studies have been written concerning Jews who immigrated to the United States in the wake of the 1848–49 revolutions in the German states. Most of these Jews had no political standing before the Civil War

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*John Langdon Ward, "View Above the Falls at Alexandria," c. 1880.*

*(Courtesy of the John Langdon Ward Magic Lantern Slides collection, mss. 4875, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, LA.)*

but nonetheless ended up in local offices in a region undergoing economic and political turmoil.<sup>2</sup> This essay expands on these earlier works with the study of another individual and further analysis. First, it examines the southern Jewish social and political place in the black and white press as a basis for understanding the level of Jewish acceptance in the early years of postbellum Louisiana. Then, through the example of Edouard Weil, a Bavarian immigrant, it investigates the Jewish involvement in municipal Reconstruction and early Redemption politics and challenges their allegiance to commonly held prescriptions of the Jewish place in the post-Civil War South. In doing so, it offers insight into the central southern issue of race relations as Reconstruction ended and the Republican Party lost political power to a party of white men that used unchecked power, violence, and intimidation to suppress black enfranchisement and opportunity.

Further, studying the relationship between Jewish mayors and local Reconstruction and Redemption politics adds a new layer of importance



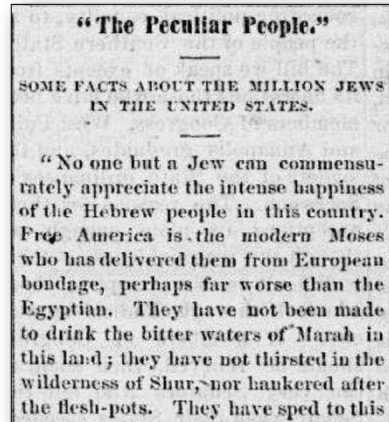
to our understanding of the era and the Jewish communities of the Deep South. In his discussion of the situation just three years before the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Brown v. the Board of Education*, C. Van Woodward argued that the return to white southern rule in the decades surrounding Reconstruction's failure had "laid the lasting foundations in matters of race, politics, economics, and law for the modern South."<sup>3</sup> By looking at one particular group during this era, we can supplement the narrative of the Jewish role in society during the foundational days of the New South. Moreover, we can better understand regional Reconstruction as a whole. Although dozens of books and articles have been written on politics from a macro perspective, studying the actions of a minority group on a local scale can provide a richer understanding of how Reconstruction transpired in towns across one of the most contested and tempestuous states in postbellum America. While federal and state politics—which in Louisiana remained in the hands of Republicans until the 1876 presidential election—controlled broader-reaching policies, the rhetoric surrounding municipal politics can spotlight the popularity of groups within a locality and among the citizens who make up the voting body for higher political offices.<sup>4</sup> Further, in the case of Louisiana, Reconstruction transpired differently—and failed earlier—at the local level than in most other states.

#### *Southern Perceptions of Jewish Louisianans*

In 1871, four years before a Jewish mayor was elected in the city of Alexandria, Louisiana, the local paper made particular note of Jewish attentiveness to local politics, commenting that "the Hebrews . . . carefully note and give countenance to every species of legislation, every doctrine of political economy, and every public act calling to extend liberty."<sup>5</sup> This sentiment demonstrates the Jewish interest in the politics of liberty and exemplifies the way Jews were depicted in the southern press.

As Jews moved into the Deep South in the years surrounding the Civil War, local and regional newspapers took great interest in branding the Jewish differentness. Just as credit agents often noted when their subject was a Jew, newspapers also commonly pointed out—often unrelated to the context of the article—if a person was Jewish.<sup>6</sup> In an article noting that a new tenant was moving into a store building in Alexandria, for example, the city's *Town Talk* specified that the new space "will be occupied

"The Peculiar People," Louisiana Democrat, April 19, 1871.  
(*Chronicling America, Library of Congress.*)



by Mr. Sam Iker, an Israelite." The article does not mention the landlord's religion.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, "jokes" with a Jew as the punchline or stories with a Jew as the antagonist were not uncommon in local town newspapers. As historian Anton Hieke points out, "daily conversation, literature, anti-Jewish charms, aphorisms, hymns, ballads, songs, tales, and other folklore . . . demonized Jews and Judaism" in the American South.<sup>8</sup> The front page of an 1875 issue of the *Louisiana Democrat*, the largest newspaper in Alexandria, published a poem with the first couplet reading "Old Neptune, who knew her, began to pursue her / In order to woo her — the wicked old Jew."<sup>9</sup> Other papers published more derogatory content directed at illiterate or uneducated Jews. A likely fictitious conversation on the cover of the newspaper of a nearby town, the *Donaldsonville Chief*, read: "'Did you know,' said a cunning Gentile to a Jew, 'that they hang Jews and jackasses together in Portland?' 'Indeed,' retorted Solomon, 'den it ish vell dat you and I ish not dere.'"<sup>10</sup> Regardless of any underlying anti-Jewish sentiment in these quips, they prove that the press differentiated the Jewish residents of southern towns from their non-Jewish neighbors.

More striking is that journalists often pointed to Protestants viewing Jews not necessarily as their peers, but instead as anachronisms residing in an unfamiliar landscape. In some instances, articles described Jews not

as modern Americans, but akin to biblical characters. In a column discussing whether the Jews would move to Palestine if the state guaranteed their protection, a Christian from Kentucky and Texas theorized that "they would go by the millions, for it is the essence of their faith and of their ambitious hopes again to be reunited there under the Messiah." His argument further drew on the Bible: "Ezekiel foretold, 'They shall say, this land that was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden—I the Lord have spoken it and I will do it.'"<sup>11</sup>

In the black press, the theoretical or biblical Jew was used for a popular comparison to the African American situation, particularly within a framework of slavery. As slaves, blacks incorporated the Exodus story as part of their historical narrative to give hope for a similar future as the Jews in Israel and, as one historian put it, to "[create] meaning and purpose out of the chaotic and senseless experience of slavery."<sup>12</sup> The front page of the May 18, 1872, edition of the *Weekly Louisianan*, a black Republican newspaper published in New Orleans, compared the liberation of the Jewish slaves in Egypt to "the brightest jewel in the crown of the Republic . . . the majority which secured the adoption of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments."<sup>13</sup> Three years later, the same newspaper compared the ongoing black struggle during Reconstruction to the Israelites who "were kept in a wilderness forty years" after the biblical emancipation.<sup>14</sup> The *Christian Recorder*, a black periodical headquartered in Philadelphia but distributed around the nation, observed in 1876 that "it is impossible to read the Jew's characteristics . . . and not recognize their counterparts in the American Colored people."<sup>15</sup>

In practice, no singular black narrative of southern Jews existed, and the relationship between the two groups remained complex. Historian Clive Webb suggests that Jews and blacks were overtly welcoming toward one another due to a mutual understanding that both groups were "scraping an existence on the margins of southern society."<sup>16</sup> Yet in many instances, a significant dichotomy existed between the black perception of Jews and the groups' actual interactions. By the end of Reconstruction, some blacks resented southern Jews for perceived economic ill-treatment and blamed the group for propelling them into perpetual debt. In an article in the April 1884 edition of the *Southern Workman*, a black writer remarking on Jews in Louisiana expressed deep animosity toward the

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Jewish community, which he believed was corrupting the former slaves and helping to sustain a power imbalance in the South:

The Jews have a grip upon the South of amazing strength, which has never here been shown, that makes masses of the ex-slaves worse off than ever, from the cruel "grind" and extortion under which they live. Food and clothing are sold them at a profit of two and three hundred per cent and their crops are swallowed up by ravenous traders who leave their victims in hopeless debt. Hundreds of [thousands] of the slaves in the Gulf States are, we believe, worse off, physically and morally, than when in slavery.<sup>17</sup>

The author's motive here is to blame Jewish merchants for selling whiskey to African Americans, inflaming the "curse" of alcoholism that sabotaged black communities and forced them to be "in debt and . . . not long before they are working on that 'store-keeper's' land, at his own price."<sup>18</sup> Others blamed Jews for alcohol and gambling addiction.<sup>19</sup> Booker T. Washington later worried that "we are getting our trade too much centered in the hands of a few Jews."<sup>20</sup> As we will see, a similar sentiment may have existed in the political sphere as well. While many blacks may have trusted the Jewish population to be a better alternative to non-Jewish local politicians, it became apparent during the Redemption era that not all Jewish mayors bolstered black advancement.

How did Jews transform from the anachronistic characters represented in the southern press into very real and controversial economic forces? In a recent groundbreaking study, historian Michael R. Cohen uncovers a complex niche economy that burgeoned after the Civil War and elevated Jews who formerly were merchants and peddlers into an affluent class of credit lenders. Although some Jewish firms faltered during an era of economic instability and natural disasters, Cohen demonstrates that ethnic networks to less affected financial centers including New York or London protected many Jewish lines of credit. Through the example of Lehman Brothers, he argues that international Jewish-run banks "brought European investment to America through largely Jewish networks," while Jewish wholesalers distributed products and extended their credit to smaller Jewish storeowners. With this financial stability from secure sources, Jewish merchants had the resources to sell credited goods to planters and sharecroppers alike, and, in doing so, became "the lifeblood" of southern capitalism.<sup>21</sup> While Cohen's important study provides a clear

link to Jewish advancement in the economic sector, further research is required to understand why many Jews became involved in local government and were accepted as municipal politicians.

*Louisiana's Jewish Mayors*

Although this study focuses on the election of Edouard Weil, he was not the first Jewish mayor to serve in Louisiana. Many of these early Reconstruction Jewish mayors sympathized with the Republican Party, although their commitment to black rights is not entirely clear. After Vidalia in Concordia Parish officially incorporated in 1870, its first mayor was Lewis Arnheim, a Jew.<sup>22</sup> Donaldsonville elected two Jewish mayors during Reconstruction, Marx Schoenberg in 1870 and Solomon Weinschenck in 1872 and 1874. Schoenberg's short and tragic term in office has been documented by Stuart Rockoff, who posits that he was a Republican who "reject[ed] the racial ideology of southern whiteness." Schoenberg had been appointed by Governor Henry C. Warmouth earlier that year and belonged to a Radical group composed of "strong supporters of black political rights in the parish." In the election of 1870, he endorsed a northern-born Republican lawyer for state senate who was unpopular among many whites of the town. After an election-night skirmish between an all-black militia and a local white mob, Schoenberg allegedly made a fatal mistake by removing the ballot box in an attempt to quell the angry crowd. The clash turned on him, and he was shot and brutally disfigured. According to Rockoff, the group responsible for his murder remains unknown.<sup>23</sup>

Death was not avoided during Shreveport Mayor Samuel Levy's short time in office either. In early 1873, Levy served as administrator of finance under a different Republican mayor. Following accusations of embezzlement and a violent courthouse scene, the previous mayor resigned, and Governor William Kellogg replaced him with Levy. Nearly a quarter of the city's population perished in ensuing months when yellow fever struck just days after his inauguration.<sup>24</sup> Previously, Levy had run for office on a Radical Republican ticket, but, like most of Shreveport's Jews, he had fought for the Confederacy a decade earlier.<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, because of his affiliation with the Republican Party, the city's white Democratic majority criticized him as "notoriously incompetent," and a columnist remarked, "his election would be a grave calamity to the city."<sup>26</sup> Moreover,

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because of the timing of his appointment and the yellow fever outbreak, Levy only held office for a few months. During his term, the federal government evacuated its remaining soldiers and Reconstruction officials stationed in Shreveport. Consequently, white Democrats easily reclaimed the city's municipal offices after the end of his term, marking the beginning of the Redemption era some four years before Democrats retook the governor's office.<sup>27</sup>

These early 1870s mayors governed during the last years of the short era of Republican influence in municipal Louisiana. Although the state retained a Republican governor until the Hayes-Tilden agreement of 1877, the Democratic Party controlled many municipal offices much earlier through acts of voter suppression and intimidation. In Shreveport, for example, the year after federal troops abandoned the region in 1873 was one of the bloodiest on record for Caddo Parish. Homicides increased over 300 percent from the previous year, with nearly 86 percent targeting blacks. That year Caddo Parish had over a quarter of all homicides in Louisiana. Blacks were repeatedly "taken from their homes and either killed or forced to leave their homes, crops and everything they possessed," with many choosing to camp out in swamps or nearby woods to "escape the white fury."<sup>28</sup> Across the South in the 1874 midterm elections, Democrats walked away with overwhelming victories, securing two-thirds of the southern seats in Congress for their party.

At the local level, Levy was among the last documented Jewish Republican office holders in the state. By the mid-1870s, and particularly after the election of 1874, Jewish affiliation with the Democratic Party had become evident. In August 1876, the *Shreveport Times* reprinted sections of an *American Israelite* article explaining why Jews should vote for Democratic presidential candidate Samuel J. Tilden in the upcoming presidential election:

It is not in our power to organize a new and pure Democratic party, and nominate ideal candidates for the highest offices; hence we are left but one choice, viz., to defeat the Republican party by voting for the Democratic party. . . . You say the Democratic party in power will also steal, rob and annex; well, then, in four years we will change again, and change so long till honesty will be the policy also of politicians.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the fact that the *Israelite* did not consider itself a political paper, its editor, Isaac Mayer Wise, represented those Jewish leaders in

America who focused on policies rather than committing to party lines if parties abandoned their political platforms.<sup>30</sup> Regarding politics, Wise largely noted concern for government decentralization: "[If] Democrats are true to their principles they must, whenever in power, decentralize down to the original conceptions of State, municipal and personal rights, with the exception of the right of secession."<sup>31</sup> Although this manifesto had far different implications for northern Jews, in the South it meant that being accepted into the greater community was akin to aligning with white Democrats—even if Jews dissented on individual party platforms. At the time of its reprint in Shreveport, the *Times* even commented that "not a half dozen" Jews in the town would vote for the Republican ticket.<sup>32</sup> Yet as shall be demonstrated, Jews in other cities across Louisiana—whether with racist intent or not—became involved in the new political

**Town Election.**—The regular election for officers of the Corporation of Alexandria, which occurs by law every second year and is fixed for the 1st Monday in January, took place on Monday. The election was, like all ones here, conducted quietly and peaceably, not an unpleasant word or remark being heard to mar the harmony and good feeling exhibited on the occasion.

The following were the persons elected to fill the respective offices of the Town for the next two years:

Mayor:  
**EDOUARD WEIL.**

Treasurer:  
**B. C. DUKE.**

Comptroller:  
**A. HILTON.**

Councilmen:

Ward No. 1 ..... Jos. Boullotte  
 .. 2 ..... E. R. Blossat  
 .. 3 ..... Moses Rosenthal  
 .. 4 ..... M. Legras  
 .. 2 ..... W. W. Whittington, Jr.

*The Louisiana Democrat's  
 announcement of the Alexandria  
 elections of Edouard Weil and Moses  
 Rosenthal, January 6, 1875.  
 (Chronicling America, Library  
 of Congress.)*

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era of Redemption, taking politics back from the Republican Party and re-instituting white supremacy in government. One such mayor was Edouard Weil, who governed Alexandria from 1875 through 1876. Weil's election came during a major turning point in the Reconstruction South when many Republican and black officeholders were voted or forced out of office and replaced with Democrats. Although Reconstruction had not officially ended, the federal government's commitment to Reconstruction was faltering. In local elections, Redeemers pounced on the opportunity to reclaim white control. In the following pages, we take a step back to the years leading up to the election of 1874 and recount the campaign of Edouard Weil, bringing to light a case of Jewish involvement in the politics of a complex and crucial era in American history.

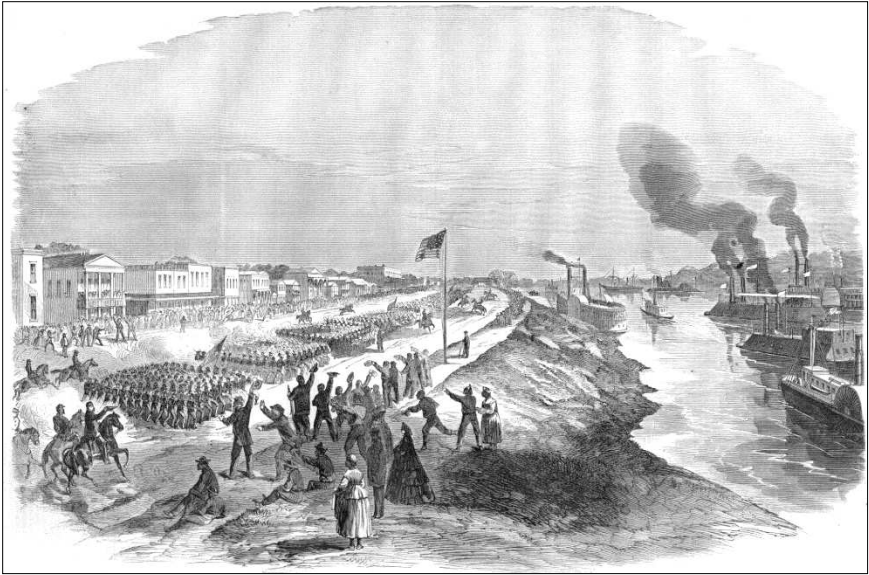
### *Postbellum Alexandria, Louisiana*

Nearly a decade after the end of the Civil War, much of central Louisiana remained deeply wounded by the structural, economic, and political upheaval brought on by the bloody sectional conflict. Although most towns needed considerable repair after 1865, Alexandria's landscape was particularly decimated by the destruction caused by the war. Not only were the nearly 15,400 enslaved blacks in Rapides Parish—over 60 percent of the parish's population—freed from captivity, but the Red River campaign in spring 1864, which attempted to cut off Confederate access to its late capital in Shreveport and the inland route to Texas, left the city substantially damaged.<sup>33</sup> The fighting left nine-tenths of the downtown burned and nearly every public record destroyed. The damage was so extensive that the city had to be given a new formal charter by the state of Louisiana in 1868.<sup>34</sup>

Before the fighting commenced, Alexandria and Rapides Parish housed some of the wealthiest plantations in the state and acted as a vital shipping hub for the region. According to Martin Hinchin's history of the Jewish community of Alexandria,

[the] prime advantages that made Alexandria develop over the years were: first, it was railroad center; second, it offered the possibility of becoming a manufacturing center since cotton was readily available; third, sugar refining was prevalent due to the abundance of cane grown; fourth, lumber mills were abundant due to the cutting and shipping of millions of board feet of the cut trees.<sup>35</sup>





*"Triumphal entry of the army of Major-General Banks into Alexandria, Louisiana, May 4, 1863," from a sketch by J. R. Hamilton. (Harper's Weekly, June 20, 1863).*

In the 1840s and 1850s, more than two dozen Jews settled in the Red River town in a pattern resembling similar Jewish migration across the region. Most emigrated from France and the German states, worked as peddlers and later as merchants, and often operated dry-goods and clothing stores. Members of the Jewish community enlisted and fought on the front lines for the Confederacy during the Civil War and returned to Alexandria after the conflict, creating a vibrant and closely knit community. Additionally, they began to establish themselves politically and opened businesses that helped recreate Alexandria as an important interior city during the Reconstruction era and beyond.<sup>36</sup> The first synagogue in the city, which housed Congregation Gemiluth Chassodim, was built in 1866. That same year, a rabbi from New Orleans officiated at Alexandria's first Jewish wedding. Eleven years later the Jewish citizens raised funds to build the first religious school, which enrolled thirty children.<sup>37</sup> Jews in

the town opened shops and wholesale warehouses, and they became vitally important to the town's economic well-being. By 1873, Jews owned nearly three-quarters of the commercial businesses in the city despite comprising just one-sixth of its two-thousand-person population.<sup>38</sup> By the mid-1870s, most of the area's Jews were either first- or second-generation Americans. A visitor who spoke to thirty members of a B'nai B'rith lodge in 1875 gave the lecture entirely in his native German, because "all members were of German extraction except for one."<sup>39</sup>

The Jews' status as foreigners did not seem to impede their economic ambitions in the postbellum South. Because many Louisiana towns were extensively damaged during the Civil War, Jews generally found open markets and a fertile economic climate. Many opened shops and embarked on new business ventures in the years after the war. Julius Levin, a Prussian immigrant who served in the Confederate army, established a mercantile business and then became heavily involved in the lumber industry. Benjamin Pressburg opened a small hotel that grew into a popular spot for traveling salesmen. Many invested in grocery and dry-goods stores and flourished as merchants in the town's downtown district.<sup>40</sup>

Despite this growth, Alexandria's Jewish community still encountered difficulty. Speaking for the Jewish population of Rapides Parish, Edouard Weil, a forty-four-year-old businessman, civic leader, prominent figure in the Jewish community, and Alexandria's first and only Jewish mayor, wrote in a letter to the *American Israelite*, "We have not yet recovered from the ravages of the war, and since its close, successive failures of our crops have shut us off from anything like prosperity." Yet, he added, "we are not discouraged and are still looking to a bright future."<sup>41</sup>

For Weil, the situation for the Jewish community during Reconstruction exemplified his personal and business misfortunes. Born in Ingenheim, Bavaria, in 1829, he was likely one of the earliest Jews in Rapides Parish. After migrating to America in 1849 in the wake of the German revolutions, he and his two brothers, Benjamin and John, ventured to the Red River town, purchased a wagon and a pair of horses, and traveled as peddlers like many other prewar Jews in the American South and nation. Using capital borrowed from Jewish-owned companies in New Orleans and New York, the brothers opened B. Weil & Bro., which sold, according to one newspaper advertisement, "clothing of all kinds, makes and shapes; Hosiery, French and English prints; boots, shoes, slippers,

*Advertisement for  
B. Weil & Bro., Louisiana  
Democrat, August 25, 1869.  
(Chronicling America,  
Library of Congress.)*

**TAKE NOTICE**  
—THAT—  
**B. Weil & Bro.,**  
Have just returned from New Orleans, where they have selected and purchased with great care, expressly for the Rapides market, a full stock of  
**FALL AND WINTER GOODS,**  
comprising—  
Clothing of all kinds, makes and shapes;  
**Hosiery,**  
**FRENCH and ENGLISH PRINTS;**  
**BOOTS,**  
**SHOES,**  
**SLIPPERS,**  
Gaiters, a truly fine lot.  
**GROCERIES,**  
**A FINE AND CHOICE LOT.**  
**CALL AND SEE!!**  
All these they are selling at reduced rates for cash only. No more CREDIT, so be sure to bring your gold and greenbacks with you.  
**WALK IN LADIES AND GENTLE MEN.**  
oct 24, 1866, tf.

gaiters, a truly fine lot."<sup>42</sup> Like numerous similar establishments, the Weil enterprise linked the residents of the small isolated town and rural hinterland to national and even international marketplaces. The store closed briefly during the Civil War, during which Weil enlisted to fight for the Confederacy in the Third Regiment of the Louisiana Cavalry, reaching the rank of sergeant by the war's end.<sup>43</sup> In November 1865, the three brothers reopened B. Weil & Bro., which, according to R. G. Dun & Company records, contained a "good stock" worth between fifteen and twenty thousand dollars.<sup>44</sup> As farmers struggled with crop harvests in the late 1860s, the Weil brothers chiefly offered cash advances and traveled often to New

Orleans to purchase merchandise. Yet despite backing by out-of-town Jewish creditors, the firm fell into debt. By 1869, the store no longer sold merchandise on credit, and the following year it was “in bad repute” and was eventually sold.<sup>45</sup> In the 1870 census, Weil is listed as a retired dry-goods merchant with a personal estate valued at three thousand dollars and real estate valued at a considerable twelve thousand dollars.<sup>46</sup>

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*Weil, Edward*

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Co. *K*, 3 (Harrison's)  
**Louisiana Cavalry.**

The 3d (Harrison's) Regiment Louisiana Cavalry was first organized as a battalion about January, 1863, and was recognized as the 15 Battalion Louisiana Cavalry by the A. & I. G. O. in May, 1863. It was increased to a regiment in July or August, 1863, and was known in the Trans-Mississippi Department as the 3 Regiment Louisiana Cavalry. It appears to have been finally paroled, as the 3 and as Harrison's Regiment Louisiana Cavalry, at various places in West Louisiana.

(CONFEDERATE.)

---

*Private Sergeant*

REFERENCE SLIP.

Cards filed with

*Weil, Edward*

*Confederate service record  
 for Edouard Weil.  
 (National Archives  
 via Fold3.com.)*

Weil engaged heavily in organized Jewish life after the war and became a prominent leader of Alexandria's Jewish community. He was devoted to the betterment of Congregation Gemiluth Chassodim, serving as its president from 1871 until 1882. During his tenure, the congregation—like many in 1870s America—switched from identifying as traditional to joining the new Reform movement that was sweeping across the nation. In addition to advocating for the temple, Weil served on the board of multiple Jewish organizations including at least two terms as president of the B'nai B'rith Rebecca Lodge No. 240 in 1875 and 1876 and

later as president of the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Rapides. He acted as the spokesperson for the Jewish community, announcing in the city's newspaper when all Jewish businesses closed for a Jewish holiday.<sup>47</sup> He also hosted Jewish visitors to the city including Charles Wessolowsky, a prominent journalist who traveled to cities across the South in 1879 to compile information on Jewish residents and communities.<sup>48</sup>

Many Jews were also active in secular political and civic organizations in Alexandria. Some volunteered as firefighters at multiple fire stations across town, and many others served as officers of Masonic lodges. Weil served twice as master (the first Jew in Alexandria to hold this position) and once as treasurer of the Masons' Oliver Lodge No. 84. He also was active in the formation of the Rapides Agriculture Fair Association, served as head of arrangements for the Grand May-Day Ball at the

*The Jewish Temple, Congregation Gemiluth Chassodim, Alexandria, Louisiana, 1911. This is the congregation's second building, not the original one Edouard Weil attended. (Courtesy of the Louisiana Postcard Collection, Mss. 3645, 3754, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, LA.)*

courthouse in 1872, and later on the Committee of Invitation for a Masonic Ball. Weil chaired the reception committee at a public ball organized by the Jewish community at the Town Hall to promote improvements for the temple.

After the war, several area Jews, almost all of whom supported the Democratic Party, became involved in local and state politics. In 1867, two of the four councilmen elected in Alexandria were Jews.<sup>49</sup> One was Weil; the other was Mires Rosenthal, who, besides Weil, was arguably the most active Jew in the city's politics.<sup>50</sup> In 1872, Weil was sent as a delegate to the state Democratic convention and later elected secretary of the city council. He sat on the police jury and served as the city wharfinger, overseeing day-to-day commerce at the city wharf. Simultaneously, he networked with prominent people in other sectors in Alexandria, providing connections that would help him become a public figure in the town during the ensuing years. In a letter in a March 1875 edition of the *American Israelite*, Weil was described as being "active in all charitable enterprises . . . an officer in several benevolent societies, has a host of friends in our community, among both Jews and Gentiles and is the right man in the right place" [in reference to his being mayor].<sup>51</sup> As shall be demonstrated, strategic networking led to support from the Democratic press, which in turn provided him with civic and economic endorsements during and after his run for office.<sup>52</sup>

Unlike in Mississippi, where the representatives of the national government initially barred most southern-sympathizing whites from voting, former Confederates in Louisiana found it relatively easy to regain voting privileges. Although the Republican government disenfranchised many southern white rebels in Louisiana after the war—"from newspaper editors and ministers who had advocated disunion to those who had voted for the secession ordinance"—any man willing to swear under oath that he supported radical reconstruction was reinstated. Additionally, to gain white support in the state, Republican governors eased the strictness of disenfranchisement. Governors appointed Democrats to local and state positions in attempts "to create an image of moderation and defuse fears of black or carpetbagger domination."<sup>53</sup> The reinstatement of white Democrats turned out to be a fatal blow to the livelihoods of black Republicans and resulted in an attack on the freedoms and rights granted them under the Reconstruction amendments.

Newspapers that closely covered political events provide the easiest way to follow Alexandria's elections. Nonetheless, as in most Gulf South towns, the surviving accessible newspapers from the mid-1870s in Alexandria all fervently opposed Reconstruction and therefore offer just one side to the election—a side that generally favored Democrats like Weil. One of the most widely distributed papers was the *Louisiana Democrat*, a partisan and politically focused publication with the slogan "The World is Governed Too Much." The paper's editor, Eugene Rene Biossat, opposed black voting rights and strongly disapproved of President Ulysses Grant's reconstruction policies.<sup>54</sup> Like many other



"The World is Governed Too Much," *Louisiana Democrat*, April 19, 1871;

"Truth Crushed to Earth Will Rise Again," *Caucasian*, April 4, 1874.

(*Chronicling America, Library of Congress; Newspapers.com.*)

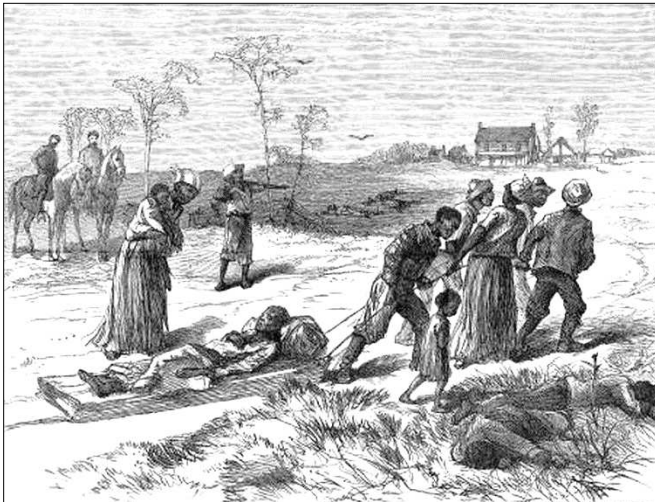
conservative Democratic papers during Reconstruction, nearly every issue overflowed with fervent objections, complaints, and hostility toward federal or Republican policies in the state. Biossat published opinions lamenting Radicals, even declaring that Democratic tickets for office were "better than any radical that ever lived," and he rebutted nearly every move by "carpetbagger" Republican governor William Pitt Kellogg.<sup>55</sup> The *Democrat* openly espoused racist ideologies and its support for secession, reminiscing on the utopian "Louisiana of 1861" in direct opposition to "her present degraded and abject condition."<sup>56</sup>

The other Alexandria paper that survived from the time of Weil's term in office was even more partisan than the *Democrat*. The *Caucasian*,

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rooted in white-supremacist and extremist anti-Republican ideology, was founded in 1874 as a direct response to the 1873 Colfax Massacre, a brutal and bloody conflict in which white Democrats murdered 150 African Americans protecting a courthouse a few miles upriver of Alexandria in Grant Parish.<sup>57</sup> The paper “reported on the prosecution of the massacre’s white participants” – some of whom lived in Alexandria – during its two years of publication and advocated for the White League and the city’s White Man’s Party.<sup>58</sup> W. F. Blackman and George W. Stafford, coeditors of the *Caucasian* and staunch Democrats and White Leaguers, advocated “the murdering of the republican candidates for the legislature . . . advising prompt action,” with Blackman volunteering to lead a mob to “carry out his proposition.”<sup>59</sup>

Beyond resisting civil rights for the millions of emancipated African Americans in the decades after the war, the Democratic newspapers also “devoted their energies to financial criticisms of Republican rule.” Despite the Republican leaders inheriting the southern states with “substantial public debts and empty treasuries,” many believed that they could fix a “backward South” and transform the region into a prosperous “society of booming factories, bustling towns, [and] diversified agriculture,” thereby



*Etching from Harper's Weekly, May 10, 1873, of black families gathering the dead after the Colfax Massacre in Grant Parish.*

*(Wikimedia Commons.)*



providing "abundant employment opportunities for black and white alike." Although some cooperation occurred at the local level between southern conservatives and Republicans, including efforts for railroad expansion, the local leaders generally pushed for a return to self-rule and warned against the dishonesty and corruption of Republican leadership.<sup>60</sup> The *Louisiana Democrat* ran a tongue-in-cheek article titled "The Kellogg Ballot Box," which insisted that the vote depository had to be "one of the most ingenious inventions of the age. The exterior looks like any ballot box, but after the votes have once been deposited you can open that box and bring out a majority for whichever side you please."<sup>61</sup> Similar sentiments appeared daily in the *Democrat* and the *Caucasian*, underscoring the press's strong position on Reconstruction politics.

With the clarity of the newspapers' ideologies and targeted audience in mind, we turn back to Edouard Weil's run for office in fall 1874. The two newspapers lightly covered the local vote itself, but more prominent was their endorsement and acclaim of Weil before and during the election. Weil fostered a personal relationship with the editors of the *Democrat*, all but guaranteeing him favorable press and likely bolstering his popularity among the voting public. In 1873, the paper thanked "our neighbor" Edouard Weil, who donated "several fine messes of ripe and juicy pears . . . grown on his famous two-crop bearing tree."<sup>62</sup> The paper's editors later recognized Weil for sending them "a package of the latest morning and evening papers" from New Orleans while he was on a business trip. They further informed their readers that they "drank a glass of sweet cider to [Weil's] health, with a fond wish that his shadow may never be dimmed."<sup>63</sup> Other Jews, including Jonas Weil (no known relation to Edouard), received the same commendation from the *Caucasian*, which called him "our and everybody's friend" and specifically endorsed his grocery store.<sup>64</sup> The paper complimented Mires Rosenthal's son, who seemed to hold a friendship with the *Democrat's* editor Biossat.<sup>65</sup> From the perspective of the newspapers, the men would run for office on the Democratic ticket under the assumption that they would fight for the reinstatement of home rule in the Red River city.

Sitting in office at the time of Weil's election was Robert L. Fox, a self-declared Independent. Contemporary partisan politics in Reconstruction-era Louisiana were more complicated than Republicans pitted

against Democrats when Fox was elected mayor of Alexandria in 1872.<sup>66</sup> A third faction, referred to as the "Fusion Party," consisted of a blend of sympathies between the two major parties. The *Democrat* described the new party's makeup in Rapides Parish two months before the 1872 election as a compromise to Radical control in the city: "the Liberals, Democrats and Reformers have agreed on a ticket which all Conservative citizens can support." The new party combined the more conservative Republicans, many of whom were disappointed with the party's leadership, with Democrats.<sup>67</sup> The *Democrat* enthusiastically remarked on the new ticket in its signature cynical manner: "We did not believe that honorable men would trifle in such a crisis as this. Hence we have refrained from abusing men who had opinions differing from ours as to the best means of saving the State."<sup>68</sup>

Despite this optimism about future politics, the Fusion Party merely represented a compromise ticket. It provided a step toward regaining home rule for conservative white Democrats and a catalyst for interest in local elections. The paper remarked, "if a single Conservative failed to register or to vote, we do know where he lives."<sup>69</sup> Confident that the compromise would be an avenue to allow conservative Democrats to regain control of parish and state offices in future elections, the *Democrat* optimistically declared, "the remainder of the journey will be easy indeed."<sup>70</sup> After the Fusion Party's victory in November 1872, the paper observed that if the rest of Louisiana voted as favorably for the ticket in other elections, then "our poor old State [would be] already ransomed, redeemed and disenthralled" from Radical rule.<sup>71</sup>

The *Louisiana Democrat* only half-heartedly endorsed Fox before he entered office in 1873. "We are almost sure he will come up to public estimation," the paper's columnist wrote, "[and] we give his incoming administration the *Democrat's* blessing, with a sincere good wish for the fulfillment of our Town's good rule and government."<sup>72</sup> However, Alexandria Democrats soon learned that their sanguine attitude was misguided, as redemption for the disgruntled whites would not come so easily. In the state election, the Fusion ticket lost, and Republican William Pitt Kellogg was sworn in as governor.

In 1874, members of the Democratic Party showed greater excitement than in 1872 and perhaps the most since the end of the war. As in the previous election, the race for mayor went largely unreported because

**¶** There is something noble, grand, patriotic, patient in the status of a people, who for seven long years have been crushed, ground to the dust and persecuted all around, and yet are clinging to hope, are watching for the silver lining to the dark cloud, and above all are yet possessed of their manhood! Such a people right now, are we of Louisiana, 'of Rapides, and proud indeed are our thoughts and aspirations to know we are of that people, and that our fate is linked with theirs. Next Monday's sitting sun will decide whether we shall all be free together and enjoy the unmeasured blessing of that freedom. We believe, we know, that our people are prepared for the final issue, and it will be no fault of theirs if we fail. Courage, men, courage to the last, and at your work on Monday.

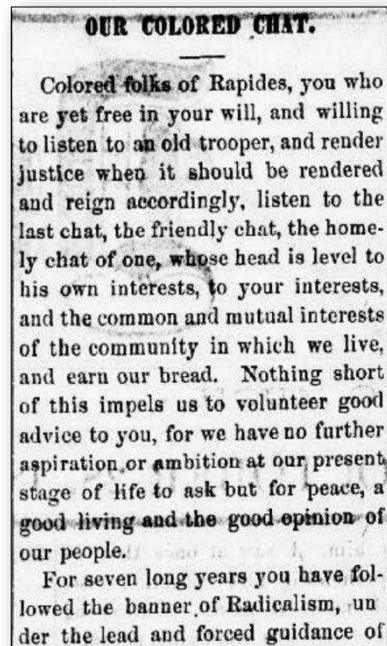
Louisiana Democrat,  
 October 28, 1874.  
 (*Chronicling America*,  
 Library of Congress.)

parish and state matters overshadowed the local vote. The highly contested elections, however, offer an important look at the political climate in Alexandria in late 1874 and 1875. To the city's readers, this election was a projection of principles: voting for the right candidate, according to the *Democrat*, meant voting for "the silver lining to the dark cloud" of Reconstruction.<sup>73</sup> In the municipal election, which occurred a few months after the parish and state elections, Edouard Weil would be the Democratic nominee for mayor. In the parish and state elections, Democrats pitted themselves against Republican and Republican spin-off parties. Somewhat ironically given the high volume of voter intimidation in this election, the newspaper spent considerable effort campaigning to black Alexandrians, who made up more than 55 percent of the population:

Colored folks of Rapides, you who are yet free in your will . . . for seven long years you have followed the banner of Radicalism, under the lead and forced guidance of the very men, white and black, who in the present campaign are again to the front as your leaders, your masters. . . . [Have] you not all the time hit your real friends, the white people, the land owners, many hard and undeserved blows? We believe you have, and in proportion as the bad you have helped have prospered and fattened, the good ones have staggered and suffered. . . . [You] are worse off than when you started in your new birthright, and in many regards, you have chilled the good feelings of the white people for you and your race. . . . [You] have nothing to risk, nothing to lose, but everything to gain.<sup>74</sup>

The article taunted, threatened, and pressured the black population to vote for the white conservative ticket, tacitly implying that the extrajudicial result of another Radical term would have a more toxic result than a Democratic victory.

Louisiana Democrat,  
 October 28, 1874.  
 (*Chronicling America, Library  
 of Congress.*)





Thomas Nast, "Worse than slavery," Harper's Weekly, October 24, 1874.

*In the image, the White League joins with the Ku Klux Klan to suppress the rights of former slaves. On the left, a lynching victim; on the right, a burning freedmen's school.*

*(Library of Congress.)*

Newspaper threats notwithstanding, a new organization was of increasing concern to the black voters of Rapides Parish. After the Colfax Massacre, branches of the White League formed across Louisiana and grew into "a substantial statewide operation." Differing from the Ku Klux Klan, which acted locally and unsystematically during this era, the White League, as described by historian Nicholas Lemann, "was something more: it was less secret, better organized, and more explicitly political in its aims. Its purpose was to use extralegal violence to remove the Republican Party from power, and then to disenfranchise black people."<sup>75</sup> An 1875 congressional report found that in almost every parish in Louisiana in the previous year, the White League was successful in intimidating and

terrorizing Republican voters. Beginning that summer, the White House received an unprecedented number of letters from across the southern states that white violence targeting blacks had become more rampant.<sup>76</sup> In fact, the report concluded that Rapides Parish operated on a tier far worse than most of the region: "There was never a greater reign of terror in any country or in any of the parishes of the State than that which existed in Rapides Parish." Further, it noted, "Since the massacre at Colfax . . . it became more intensified as time brought near the coming off of the election, the republicans avoiding all political gatherings, and scarcely feeling safe in the public highways passing from neighbor to neighbor."<sup>77</sup>

In an attempt to guard against ubiquitous voter intimidation, the Reconstruction government sent armed officers to Alexandria on the day of the 1874 election, and a voting commissioner and a federal supervisor manned the ballot boxes.<sup>78</sup> This proved to be insufficient, however, since White Leaguers went to every polling station in the city, armed with bowie knives and revolvers, and violently silenced Republican candidates from speaking publicly, and all but ensured that only White League votes were placed in ballot boxes. More likely out of fear than complicity, none of the election officers present attempted to stop the voter intimidation. In the words of one eyewitness to the violence: "It was worth a man's life to have given a protest."<sup>79</sup> Whites threatened that if a black man voted for any candidate in opposition to the White League ticket, he would lose his job, and black voters were reminded of the fate of the 150 men massacred at Colfax just a few years previously with little repercussion for the whites who carried out the attack.<sup>80</sup>

After the 1874 election, and despite a sizable black population advantage and an upward trend toward more black representation in state offices, nearly every position in the Rapides Parish government shifted to Democratic control largely due to White League intimidation.<sup>81</sup> Conservatives walked away with a convincing win, and the *Democrat* rejoiced with a sweeping victory against the Radical Party in the parish and Alexandria proper. The results pleased the paper's editor so greatly that he exclaimed in the first article of the local section that "this local feels so bully, that what's in him must come out or he will burst—so home folk just consider this copy [of the *Democrat*] to stop the leisure of our jubilant typos! More anon!! Let her rip!!!"<sup>82</sup> A *Caucasian* columnist wrote:

The campaign is over and Rapides has nobly done her duty. To-day there is general rejoicing all over the parish among colored people as well as the whites at our glorious success. The downfall of Radicalism in this parish is a terrible blow to the leaders of that party here but they had better give it up with as good grace as possible. No power on earth can help them now for the next two years to come. Hurrah, for Rapides!<sup>83</sup>

Both Democratic papers reported that "our friend" Edouard Weil was put on the Radical ticket as a Republican office seeker for the ward of Alexandria without his consent. According to the *Caucasian*, the soon-to-be mayor, "whose name the Radicals put on their ticket for Magistrate as a bait for the gudgeons, never authorized the use of his name by them for that or any other position" until the day of the election.<sup>84</sup> Although this oddity is not further reported on or elaborated by either paper, Weil's popularity among Democrats may have been seen as a motivating point for Republicans and a way to fool unsuspecting Democrats into voting for the Republican ticket.

A second article more clearly demonstrates Weil's popularity within the Democratic Party—as well as that of Alexandria's other Jews. Directly below the election results, the *Caucasian* noted that Jews actively

☞ The campaign is over and Rapides has nobly done her duty. To-day there is general rejoicing all over the parish among the colored people as well as the whites at our glorious success. The downfall of Radicalism in this parish is a terrible blow to the leaders of that party here but they had better give it up with as good grace as possible. No power on earth can help them now for the next two years to come. Hurrah, for Rapides! All honor to the colored people who threw off their shackles and voted with us!

☞ Our Town merchants of the Israelite faith deserve and they have the thanks of our whole people for their affective services in canvassing for our ticket on Monday. They did good, noble work and have endeared themselves to all our people in such a manner as that they will not soon forget the obligations they owe to them. All honor to them!

campaigning for the Democratic Party and recognized the work of the Jewish community: "Our Town merchants of the Israelite faith deserve and they have the thanks of our whole people for their [effective] services in canvassing for our ticket on Monday. They did good, noble work and have endeared themselves to all our people in such a manner as that they will not soon forget the obligations they owe to them. All honor to them!"<sup>85</sup>

Although it is unclear how the Jewish merchants of Alexandria helped the Democratic Party aside from voting, this article demonstrates their significance to the outcome of the election and their recognition by those committed to the pro-white party. Jewish ties to the Democratic Party were evident in the results of the local election, which took place on January 4, 1875. Following a Democratic victory a few months prior in the parish and state elections, the white-man's party again gained seats in municipal offices. Weil won election as mayor "by a large majority," and Moses Rosenthal, Mires's brother, was elected alderman.<sup>86</sup> Both began their two-year term of "arduous and non-paying duties" on the twenty-fifth of the same month.<sup>87</sup>

Weil did not disappoint the local Democrats during his tenure in office. In at least one instance in his first year as mayor, his commitment to the extrajudicial actions of the Democratic Party was blatantly apparent, notably over a controversy involving the destruction of the Republican *Rapides Gazette* printing press in the city. On August 21, 1875, a group of individuals acted "with a premeditated determination" to destroy the *Gazette*, which congressional reports referred to as "the official organ of the Republican party in Rapides Parish."<sup>88</sup> The *Weekly Louisianan*, a New Orleans-based, African American-run Republican newspaper founded by former Governor P. B. S. Pinchback, reported that a group broke into the Alexandria press at night and pillaged the building, damaging at least ten thousand dollars' worth of equipment. The act was clearly partisan, as the *Gazette's* editor reported after the break-in that the newspaper was "warned [of] the coming of this villainous outrage through a newspaper in the interest of the Democratic Party a few weeks anterior to this wanton destruction of our property." The paper's editor further indicated that Democratic violence and "their habituated villainy" occurred "with as little fear of receiving the rewards of justice, as did they under Confederate rule." To add insult to injury, the *Gazette* had to rent space from the



staunchly Democratic and white supremacist *Caucasian* to keep the Republican press running.<sup>89</sup>

The Republican news editor proved correct in predicting that the criminals would be spared from the law. Attached to the *Louisianan* article is correspondence between the paper's editor and Mayor Weil. The *Gazette's* editor threatened legal action against the municipality for not protecting his press. Three days later, the mayor responded with a statement of denial, advising the editor that he is "badly informed in the matter. . . . [No] such destruction ever occurred here at the hands of any 'lawless persons' within our corporate limits."<sup>90</sup> Weil's denial of the significant damage to the *Gazette* marks a clear act of partisan collusion and misconduct, a trend that was becoming commonplace among southern Democrats as Reconstruction ended.

In this incident, as well as throughout the 1874 election, Weil acquiesced to racially charged Reconstruction-era politics. Despite this, the local Jewish history ignores Weil's participation in unjust municipal government in a parish filled with intimidation and white supremacist ideologies. Although it is unclear if Weil (or any Jew in the town) was directly involved in the White League, the Klan, or any of the other extrajudicial terrorist organizations that plagued southern towns through the waning years of Reconstruction, his support for the Democratic Party and the white Democratic press, at the very least, exhibits his complicity with dirty party politics.

After leaving office, Weil returned to his business ventures through the purchase of a wholesale warehouse.<sup>91</sup> The *Louisiana Democrat* wrote favorably about the ex-mayor, in the same month he left office, as "withal a good business man."<sup>92</sup> He remained in local politics, serving as police juror from 1879 to 1880 and in a second term as councilman from 1885 to 1887. He continued in his commitment to the Jewish community as well, housing visitors and serving as president of Gemiluth Chassodim congregation until 1882. He held executive positions in the Oliver and Rebecca Lodges of B'nai B'rith and remained active in both until his death in September 1891. In an obituary published in the *Weekly Town Talk*, members of the Oliver Lodge wrote that the community lost "a useful, quiet and law-a[b]iding citizen . . . a man of strong convictions, firmly attached to his friends, charitable to a fault."<sup>93</sup>

*The Jewish Place in Post-Civil War Southern Politics*

In his study of Franklin J. Moses, a Reconstruction-era Republican “scalawag” governor in South Carolina of Jewish descent, political scientist Benjamin Ginsberg argues that Moses sought out a partnership with southern blacks “because he believed that such a relationship would serve his political interests,” even though “it would require him to seek and win black support and to alienate himself from white society.” In doing so, Moses became “a star” for the black community of South Carolina, pushing for a politically equal playing field in the wake of the dissolution of slavery. Although Ginsberg asserts that predominantly, “Jews do not view blacks merely instrumentally,” as “victims of oppression and even slavery themselves, Jews cannot help but have a certain sympathy for blacks.” Closer examination shows that, by the end of Reconstruction, blacks in Louisiana could evaluate this relationship entirely differently.<sup>94</sup>

Like most members of the Democratic Party who were elected into power at the end of Reconstruction, there is little doubt that Edouard Weil benefited from the well-documented oppression of Alexandria’s black community. As is clear throughout the election of 1874, the Democratic press was unabashed in its commitment to suppressing black mobility in politics, and, during the years that followed, a special Congressional Report in the U.S. House of Representatives condemned the local government of Alexandria and Rapides Parish as notoriously unjust.<sup>95</sup>

Through the lens of the larger Jewish community, however, Weil’s election should be examined with careful nuance. While Jewish leaders like Weil may have espoused a commitment to the fraudulent suppression of the Republican vote, it is less clear if other Jews did as well. In fact, the same *Weekly Louisianan* article that criticized Weil for his indifference to the destruction of the Republican press admits: “Four-fifths of the business citizens of Alexandria are opposed to these lawless acts. The Israelites, who are a majority of the business men of the town, although Democrats in politics, abhor such lawlessness, and unhesitatingly condemn it.”<sup>96</sup>

Does this prove that Weil was an outlier from the Jewish community—a community of which he was the cultural spokesperson and president of the temple? Perhaps this may be a testament to internal differences within a Jewish community that, despite containing ideological

similarities, naturally did not always act in uniform fashion. Although "four-fifths" of the exceptionally large Jewish population of Alexandria may have maintained benevolent relationships with their black customers, Jews likely still benefited substantially from the racially partisan political climate at the end of Reconstruction. Louisianan Jews as a whole likely supported the Democratic Party, and Alexandria's Jews were active in canvassing for the party in the 1874 election. In turn, the white-supremacist press reveled in Weil's success.

As Reconstruction officially ended, evidence suggests that the Jewish commitment to the unjust actions of the Democratic Party only intensified. During an 1879 Republican convention in Waterproof, Louisiana, a small town situated on the Mississippi River some eighty miles northeast of Alexandria, a black candidate for Louisiana secretary of state, James D. Kennedy, wrote to the *New York Tribune* to inform the public that the town's Jewish mayor, a Democrat named A. S. Yamer, was not letting him speak to a crowd of black Republicans during his campaign for office. After the event, Kennedy asked the following questions:

When the white men of Waterproof and the surrounding country permit a Jew . . . to guide and direct them in a crusade against free speech and fair play, I think it is time for me to halt and ask the question. . . . When did the Jew free himself from proscription and prejudice? How long has it been since his race has had the right to disturb and agitate labor by more prejudice on account of color or of political faith?<sup>97</sup>

Kennedy's questions are ones that historians continue to grapple with today. As evidenced earlier in the *Southern Workman's* harsh denunciation of Jewish merchants who were believed to be at fault for the deep debt experienced by black customers, a far different narrative exists in the closing years of Reconstruction in the Deep South state of Louisiana, and one that starkly contrasts with Ginsberg's "certain sympathy" assertion.

In other nearby cities including Shreveport, Louisiana, and Natchez, Mississippi, Jewish Democrats continued to be elected to the office of mayor into the new century, albeit less frequently, in part due to the shrinking Jewish populations in the rural South.<sup>98</sup> Again, while a thorough examination of each election is the only way to draw complete conclusions, one can assume that in the deeply studied Jim Crow-era South,

alignment with white Democratic policies was all but necessary to remain popular among voting constituents.

However, as we saw in the early years of Reconstruction, this was not uniformly true. Jews, like other white southerners, could be found on both sides of the political landscape during Reconstruction. In Louisiana alone, at least a few Republican Jewish mayors presided in towns like Shreveport and Donaldsonville in the early 1870s. In other places, such as the Carolinas, Jewish Republicans remained in office until later.<sup>99</sup> Yet as Redemption took root, and as exemplified by Edouard Weil, many if not most Jews became a part of—or at least acquiescent to—the solidifying South dominated by a Democratic Party wedded to the disenfranchisement and continued suppression of blacks.

Whether turn-of-the-century policies and racial suppression reflected the actual beliefs of many southern Jews or were simply methods of “fitting in” remains to be determined. As has been demonstrated, Jews in the South were often treated in the press as social outsiders and biblical anachronisms. Some scholars have posited that southern Jews focused

*Edouard Weil's headstone in the Jewish Cemetery in Pineville, Louisiana. The caption reads, "Sacred to the memory of my beloved husband Edouard Weil. Born at Ingenheim, Germany, May 26, 1829. Departed this life at Alexandria, La., Sept. 14, 1891. God rest his soul." (User "trnsportr," FindaGrave.com.)*

their efforts more on personal and communal successes, regarding black rights as an afterthought (if at all). In Atlanta, for example, Mark K. Bauman demonstrates that urban Jews crafted their political sympathies as an expansion of their broader ethnic and economic interests, and their stance on black rights hinged on these sentiments.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, in his study of late-century antisemitic violence in rural Louisiana and Mississippi, Patrick Mason comments that Jews "generally had the support of community elites," because "their mercantile interests allied them with the southern middle class." To gain acceptance (and profitability), "Jews naturally gravitated toward the business elements of the New South which in turn showed affinity toward them."<sup>101</sup> In this case, the "affinity" shown by southern whites was likely contingent on an implicit agreement of upholding the racial status quo. In his study of the murder of Jewish mayor Marx Schoenberg in Donaldsonville, Stuart Rockoff more directly concludes that "the end of Reconstruction not only resulted in the failure of interracial democracy and the disfranchisement of the South's black population, but also narrowed the range of acceptable political views southern Jews could express."<sup>102</sup>

As the role of Jews in municipal politics becomes more apparent—as in the economic sphere—possibly no single narrative regarding the relationship to black voters and ties to white supremacy is sufficient to explain their role in the American South. Yet a burgeoning narrative of Jewish political alignment with the white man's Democratic Party at the crux of Reconstruction and Redemption points to a trend of complicity, if not participation, in perpetuating a deeply partisan and prejudicial society.

Even with a nuanced explanation of the Jewish involvement in Alexandria's politics, broader conclusions can be drawn with deeper significance concerning our understanding of the Jewish relationship to politics and power in the postbellum South. While the varying degrees of involvement with white supremacy and other forms of suppression may be limited to individual members of the Jewish community, this does not vindicate a community that, by the end of Reconstruction, was overwhelmingly affiliated with the Democratic Party. In Alexandria in particular, the Democratic press—particularly the *Caucasian*—did not hesitate to communicate its political and social motivations, and black and white Republicans openly expressed their disappointment with Jewish

leaders in Louisiana. To any involved citizen, there was no shadow of a doubt about the motives of southern Democrats.

The 1876 *American Israelite* article that implored Jews across the nation to vote for the party of “honesty” – which it concluded was the Democratic Party – overlooked any commitment to civil rights for southern blacks and instead suggested that anticorruption and government decentralization should take precedence over dispelling southern racism.<sup>103</sup> In doing so, it presented a nationwide acquiescence to Jews participating in the racially motivated elections that occurred just two years earlier in southern towns like Alexandria. Although more research into the municipal South is necessary to resolve these underlying questions of Jewish intent toward – and consideration of – blacks in the postbellum era, as well as the surprising level of Jewish political acceptance, a pattern of Jewish Democrats serving as mayors opens new doors for our understanding of the intersection of Jewish relationships with power and politics as southern democracy spiraled into nearly a century of racial oppression.

Like the stark contrast of Franklin Moses and Edouard Weil, individual examples may expose different Jewish sympathies. However a case like Weil’s – a successful merchant and a leading member of the local Jewish community – should not be overlooked when studying Jewish involvement in Reconstruction- and Redemption-era public life.

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## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> “Southern Jewish Mayors Throughout History,” Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL), accessed October 1, 2018, <http://www.isjl.org/jewish-mayors-in-the-south.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Historians have studied Jewish politicians in the late nineteenth-century South, albeit few in Louisiana. Most notably is Stuart Rockoff, “Carpetbaggers, Jacklegs, and Bolting Republicans: Jews in Reconstruction Politics in Ascension Parish, Louisiana,” *American Jewish History* 97 (March 2013): 39–65. Also see Leonard Rogoff, “A Tale of Two Cities: Race, Riots, and Religion in New Bern and Wilmington, North Carolina, 1898,” *Southern Jewish History*

14 (2011): 37–75; Scott M. Langston, "Being Jewish in Columbus, Georgia: The Business, Politics, and Religion of Jacob and Isaac Moses, 1828–1890," *Southern Jewish History* 18 (2015): 1–61; Daniel R. Weinfeld, "Samuel Fleishman: Tragedy in Reconstruction-Era Florida," *Southern Jewish History* 8 (2005): 31–76; Canter Brown, Jr., "Philip and Morris Dzialynski: Jewish Contributions to Rebuilding the South," in *Dixie Diaspora: An Anthology of Southern Jewish History*, ed. Mark K. Bauman (Tuscaloosa, 2006), 209–35; Benjamin Ginsberg, *Moses of South Carolina: A Jewish Scalawag During Radical Reconstruction* (Baltimore, 2010); Mark K. Bauman, "Factionalism and Ethnic Politics in Atlanta: German Jews from the Civil War through the Progressive Era," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 82 (Fall 1998): 533–58.

<sup>3</sup> C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877–1913* (Baton Rouge, 1971), 22.

<sup>4</sup> In other places in Louisiana, mayors often abused their powers in "mayor's court," through which mayors presided over trials for low-level violations of city ordinances. Small offenses such as noise complaints often resulted in the mayor handing out a minor fine or jail sentence. In southern cities before the Civil War and later when white Democrats regained control of the mayors' offices, these courts could be systematically used as tools to legally oppress blacks and maintain a white power structure within the town. See Floyd A. Buras III, *The Louisiana Mayor's Court: An Overview and Its Constitutional Problems* (Bloomington, IN, 2016); and "2011 Louisiana Laws, Revised Statutes, TITLE 33—Municipalities and parishes; RS 33:441—Mayor's court" *Justia US Law*, accessed February 26, 2018, <https://law.justia.com/codes/louisiana/2011/rs/title33/rs33-441/>.

<sup>5</sup> "The Peculiar People," *Louisiana Democrat* (Alexandria, LA), April 19, 1871.

<sup>6</sup> Anton Hieke, *Jewish Identity in the Reconstruction South: Ambivalence and Adaptation* (Berlin and Boston, 2013), 155.

<sup>7</sup> "To Remove Next Door," *Town Talk* (Alexandria, LA), September 29, 1896. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most newspapers referred to Jewish men using biblical terms such as *Israelites* and *Hebrew* while Jewish women were commonly referred to as *Jewesses*. Antiquated terms such as these, which Jews frequently used as well, were usually not meant to be offensive, but do offer insight into how the mainstream population perceived Jews as anachronisms in a heavily Protestant-dominated region.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Hieke, *Jewish Identity in the Reconstruction South*, 115.

<sup>9</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, June 30, 1875.

<sup>10</sup> *Donaldsonville (LA) Chief*, February 15, 1873.

<sup>11</sup> "The Jews," *Shreveport (LA) Times*, September 13, 1881.

<sup>12</sup> Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The 'Invisible Institution' in the Antebellum South* (New York, 2004), 311.

<sup>13</sup> *Weekly Louisianan* (New Orleans), May 18, 1872.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, May 22, 1875.

<sup>15</sup> "Unitarian Review: Feb.," *Christian Recorder* (Philadelphia), March 2, 1876.

<sup>16</sup> Clive Webb, "Jewish Merchants and Black Customers in the Age of Jim Crow," *Southern Jewish History* 2 (1999), 59.

<sup>17</sup> *Southern Workman* (Hampton, VA), April 1, 1884.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Koppel Von Vloomborg [Jacob Voorsanger], "Lone Star Flashes: The Roos-Froment Murder Case," *American Israelite* (Cincinnati), March 23, 1883.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in David Goldfield, "A Sense of Place: Jews, Blacks, and White Gentiles in the American South" *Southern Cultures* 3 (1997): 74.

<sup>21</sup> Michael R. Cohen, *Cotton Capitalists: American Jewish Entrepreneurship in the Reconstruction Era* (New York, 2017), 124, 21.

<sup>22</sup> "An Act No. 34," *New Orleans Republican*, April 2, 1870; "Southern Jewish Mayors Throughout History," accessed March 31, 2019.

<sup>23</sup> Rockoff, "Carpetbaggers, Jacklegs, and Bolting Republicans," 43–50.

<sup>24</sup> "Shreveport, Louisiana," ISJL, *Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities*, accessed March 31, 2019, <https://www.isjl.org/louisiana-shreveport-encyclopedia.html>. See also, Howard Association, "Report of the Committee on the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1873 at Shreveport, Louisiana" (Shreveport, 1874).

<sup>25</sup> Gary D. Joiner and Cheryl White, *Shreveport's Historic Oakland Cemetery: Spirits of Pioneers and Heroes* (Charleston, SC, 2015), 99.

<sup>26</sup> *Shreveport Times*, October 30, 1872.

<sup>27</sup> Gary Joiner, "1873 Shreveport Yellow Fever Epidemic," filmed February 2012, C-Span video, 5:50, accessed February 28, 2018, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?304647-1/1873-shreveport-yellow-fever-epidemic>. For more on the failure of state-level Reconstruction politics in Louisiana, see George Rable, "Republican Albatross: The Louisiana Question, National Politics, and the Failure of Reconstruction," *Louisiana History* 23 (Spring 1982): 109–130.

<sup>28</sup> Statewide homicides actually decreased in 1874. The number in 1873 was particularly high as a result of the Colfax Massacre, which left nearly 150 blacks dead in a single violent outrage at the courthouse in Colfax. Gilles Vandal, "'Bloody Caddo': White Violence Against Blacks in a Louisiana Parish, 1865–1876," *Journal of Social History* 25 (December 1991), 374, 379.

<sup>29</sup> "The Political Questions of the Day," *American Israelite*, August 4, 1876, reprinted as "Why Israelites Should Vote the Democratic Ticket," *Shreveport Times*, August 12, 1876. This article was reprinted in other newspapers in the South as well, including on the front page of the *Louisiana Democrat* in Alexandria on August 23, 1876.

<sup>30</sup> In the *Shreveport Times* reprint, Wise is referred to as a "Liberal Republican in sentiment." In fact, by the post-Civil War era Wise was more accurately a "fervent States' Rights Democrat." See Jacob Rader Marcus, *The Americanization of Isaac Mayer Wise* (Cincinnati, 1931), 6.

<sup>31</sup> "Why Israelites Should Vote the Democratic Ticket."

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Rapides Parish, Louisiana.

<sup>34</sup> "The Red River Campaign," City of Alexandria, Louisiana, accessed February 5, 2018, <https://www.cityofalexandriala.com/history/red-river-campaign>.

<sup>35</sup> Martin I. Hinchin, *Fourscore and Eleven: A History of the Jews of Rapides Parish, 1828–1919* (Alexandria, LA, 1984), Introduction. This local history of the Jewish population is celebratory and romantic. Accordingly, I use the book only to identify factual information such as Edouard Weil's involvement in various political or religious groups.



<sup>36</sup> "Alexandria, Louisiana," ISJL, *Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities*, accessed March 21, 2018, <http://www.isjl.org/louisiana-alexandria-encyclopedia.html>; Anny Bloch-Raymond, *From the Banks of the Rhine to the Banks of the Mississippi: A History of Jewish Immigrants and Their Individual Stories*, trans. Catherine Temerson (Santa Maria, CA, 2014), 165.

<sup>37</sup> Charles Bressler Jackson, "Mires Rosenthal: A Brief Biography," Alexandria folder, ISJL, Jackson, MS.

<sup>38</sup> Jackson, "Mires Rosenthal," 3. As one historian points out, "it is important to remember, however, that the census did not count the large quantity of transient Jewish peddlers who sold dry goods, clothing, and jewelry. Some of these peddlers, and especially those who recorded great profits, eventually settled down in Alexandria." "Alexandria, Louisiana," ISJL. The *Louisiana Democrat* estimated the Jewish population to be nearly one-half of the town's total the following year, a figure that is likely exaggerated. "The Jewish Holidays," *Louisiana Democrat*, September 30, 1874.

<sup>39</sup> Hinchin, *Fourscore and Eleven*, 21.

<sup>40</sup> "Alexandria Notes," Alexandria folder, ISJL.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Hinchin, *Fourscore and Eleven*, 18.

<sup>42</sup> Cohen, *Cotton Capitalists*, 179–80; *Louisiana Democrat*, August 25, 1869.

<sup>43</sup> "Soldier Details: Weil, Edouard," National Park Service, *The Civil War*, accessed February 14, 2018, <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers-detail.htm?soldierId=314ADDDD-DC7A-DF11-BF36-B8AC6F5D926A>.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Cohen, *Cotton Capitalists*, 180.

<sup>45</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, August 25, 1869; Cohen, *Cotton Capitalists*, 180.

<sup>46</sup> Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Rapides Parish, Louisiana.

<sup>47</sup> For examples, see *Louisiana Democrat*, September 8, 1880, and September 7, 1881. Despite acculturating and affiliating with the Reform movement, the closing of Jewish stores remained a common practice across the South in the postbellum years. A contemporary sociologist studying Jewish storekeepers noted that southerners would remark, "if there is a Jewish holiday, you cannot buy a pair of socks in this whole country." Quoted in Webb, "Jewish Merchants and Black Customers," 56.

<sup>48</sup> Louis Schmier, ed., *Reflections of Southern Jewry: The Letters of Charles Wessolowsky, 1878–1879* (Macon, GA, 1982), 129.

<sup>49</sup> Hinchin, *Fourscore and Eleven*, 11.

<sup>50</sup> Rosenthal was also a charter member of Gemiluth Chassodim. See Jackson, "Mires Rosenthal."

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Hinchin, *Fourscore and Eleven*, 20.

<sup>52</sup> While sources such as Hinchin's *Fourscore and Eleven* make passing note that Weil was elected mayor, his tenure in local politics has largely gone unexamined. Charles Wessolowsky simply noted that Weil served "to the satisfaction of all." Schmier, *Reflections of Southern Jewry*, 130. No known sources examine his election in the political climate of Alexandria in the 1870s, his ties to white supremacy or the larger Democratic Party, or the rampant violence that occurred during his time in office.

<sup>53</sup> Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York, 1988), 333, 324, 347.

<sup>54</sup> "About the Louisiana Democrat. (Alexandria, La.) 1845-1918," *Chronicling America: Historical American Newspapers*, Library of Congress, accessed February 7, 2018, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82003389/>.

<sup>55</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, November 15, 1876.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, January 27, 1875. The newspaper continued to refer to the South in 1874 as "the old sixteen slave States." *Ibid.*, December 30, 1874.

<sup>57</sup> See Charles Lane, *The Day Freedom Died: The Colfax Massacre, the Supreme Court, and the Betrayal of Reconstruction* (New York, 2008).

<sup>58</sup> "About The Caucasian. (Shreveport, La.) 1900-1922," *Chronicling America: Historical American Newspapers*, Library of Congress, accessed May 15, 2019, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88064469/>. The *Louisiana Democrat* shared an equally blunt and inhumane sentiment regarding the massacre in Colfax. The newspaper vilified the "riotous, turbulent and bad negroes" who tormented the white "Colfax Prisoners" in 1873 and called for a violent uprising against the African Americans who were involved. Rather unequivocally, the newspaper wrote, "What is still better, the young men of our Town, whose sympathies are always in the right direction, propose giving a Theatrical performance for [the white "Colfax Prisoners"] benefit, which in due time will be made known. . . . Action, instant action in behalf of our persecuted citizens is what we urge and we hope never again to have to all due to their neglect." "The Colfax Prisoners," *Louisiana Democrat*, January 28, 1874.

<sup>59</sup> "Index to Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives for the Second Session of the Forty-Third Congress. 1874-1875" (Washington, DC, 1875), 91.

<sup>60</sup> Foner, *Reconstruction*, 399, 383, 379, 381.

<sup>61</sup> "The Kellogg Ballot Box," *Louisiana Democrat*, December 27, 1876.

<sup>62</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, July 30, 1873.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, February 13, 1878.

<sup>64</sup> *Caucasian* (Shreveport, LA), May 23, 1874.

<sup>65</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, January 6, 1875.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, October 30, 1872.

<sup>67</sup> Rockoff, "Carpetbaggers, Jacklegs, and Bolting Republicans," 46. This was perhaps the first stepping-stone to the "color-line" becoming the dividing factor between the two major parties during the postbellum era. See Foner, *Reconstruction*, 550. For more on the breakdown of "biracial coalition politics," see Armstead L. Robinson, "Beyond the Realm of Social Consensus: New Meanings of Reconstruction for American History," *Journal of American History* 68 (September 1981): 276-97.

<sup>68</sup> "The Fusion Ticket," *Louisiana Democrat*, September 4, 1872.

<sup>69</sup> "The Result in Rapides," *Louisiana Democrat*, November 8, 1872.

<sup>70</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, September 4, 1872.

<sup>71</sup> "The Result in Rapides," *Louisiana Democrat*, November 8, 1872.

<sup>72</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, January 29, 1873.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, October 28, 1874.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Nicholas Lemann, *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War* (New York, 2006), 76.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> "Index to Reports of Committees of the House," 90–91.

<sup>78</sup> *Caucasian*, November 7, 1874.

<sup>79</sup> "Index to Reports of Committees of the House," 97–98.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>81</sup> Foner, *Reconstruction*, 354.

<sup>82</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, November 4, 1874.

<sup>83</sup> *Caucasian*, November 7, 1874.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Hinchin, *Fourscore and Eleven*, 20.

<sup>87</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, January 27, 1875.

<sup>88</sup> "Miscellaneous Documents of the House of Representatives for the Third Session of the Forty-Fifth Congress, 1878–79," 4:31, Part 1 (Washington, DC, 1879), 955.

<sup>89</sup> "Peculiarity of the Cotton Kingdom," *Weekly Louisianan*, September 25, 1875.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> The 1880 census lists Weil's occupation as "Keeping Warehouse." Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Rapides Parish, Louisiana.

<sup>92</sup> *Louisiana Democrat*, January 24, 1877.

<sup>93</sup> "Resolutions of Respect," *Weekly Town Talk*, September 19, 1891.

<sup>94</sup> Ginsberg, *Moses of South Carolina*, 8, 67, 7.

<sup>95</sup> "Index to Reports of Committees of the House."

<sup>96</sup> "Peculiarity of the Cotton Kingdom," *Weekly Louisianan*, September 25, 1875.

<sup>97</sup> "Yazooing in Louisiana," *New York Tribune*, November 21, 1879.

<sup>98</sup> "Southern Jewish Mayors Throughout History." In Natchez, wealthy business owner Isaac Lowenberg was elected as a popular Democrat in 1882. In Shreveport, Ben Holzman and Ernest Bernstein were elected in 1900 and 1906, respectively.

<sup>99</sup> Again, these cases were generally anomalies. In his essay on the Jewish connection to race and politics in New Bern and Wilmington, North Carolina, Leonard Rogoff notes that "North Carolina Jews involved in politics generally identified with the Democratic Party . . . sharing their neighbors' disdain for what they regarded as Republican radicalism." However, in the 1880s, some Jews were elected to Republican offices (and in some cases, with "overwhelming African American support"). See Rogoff, "A Tale of Two Cities," 42.

<sup>100</sup> "Race was as much a constant in these issues of factionalism," Bauman writes. For example, "circumstantial evidence points to the conservative side – and Jews – as far more benign (or arguably, paternalistic) than the Progressives." See Bauman, "Factionalism and Ethnic Politics," 554.

<sup>101</sup> Patrick Q. Mason, "Anti-Jewish Violence in the New South," *Southern Jewish History* 8 (2005): 99–100.

<sup>102</sup> Rockoff, "Carpetbaggers, Jacklegs, and Bolting Republicans," 64.

<sup>103</sup> "The Political Questions of the Day."



Rabbi Edward L. Israel:  
The Making of a Progressive Interracialist,  
1923–1941

by

Charles L. Chavis, Jr.\*

**W**ithin a few years into his appointment as rabbi of Baltimore's historic Har Sinai Congregation, Edward L. Israel began to display the marks of a true progressive by speaking out against labor inequality in Maryland and throughout the country. In his response to one of the lesser-known labor strikes of the interwar era, Israel penned these words in May 1927:

Today, the sensual and luxury laden generation is nameless, but Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and the others who spoke in terms of justice and righteousness live on as a glory to mankind. The pulpit today may not be arrogant enough to dare to compare itself to these religious geniuses of the moral courage to speak in the name of God of mercy and truth wherever there is social or industrial injustice.<sup>1</sup>

Serving as an arbitrator for the Western Maryland Railroad strike in behalf of disgruntled workers, Israel led an ecumenical investigation team whose report was praised throughout the country. However, missing from this report was the black worker. Between 1926 and 1936, the rabbi evolved from a progressive voice in the labor movement to become an interracial and interfaith advocate who was forced to acknowledge the dehumanization of Jim Crowism after being challenged by the key leaders of the early civil rights movement in Baltimore. His activism represented a lesser-known black-Jewish alliance that became an essential element of the black freedom struggle in Baltimore and Maryland during the 1930s and early 1940s.<sup>2</sup>

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Israel's compulsion for civil rights and social justice was informed by three distinct traditions and experiences. The first emanated from the social justice legacy of Rabbi David Einhorn, who had served Har Sinai in the late 1850s. Israel lamented on this connection in describing the legacy of the historic Har Sinai and the impact that it had on Reform Judaism:

Har Sinai is larger than ever before in its history. Its place in the community as a spokesman of liberal thought, begun by David Einhorn, is today more and more recognized. Not only that! The principles of Reform Judaism which Har Sinai fostered under the most untoward conditions are today almost universally accepted by the modern descendants of those of a former age who failed utterly to understand that religious philosophy and who heaped vehement reproach upon Har Sinai for daring to espouse the liberal cause.<sup>3</sup>

The second of Israel's influences was rooted in the Reform movement's Pittsburgh Platform of 1885, where acts of social justice as taught by the Hebrew prophets were emphasized. This platform represents one of many pillars that laid the foundation for the black-Jewish alliance during the first half of the twentieth century. The interracial labor movement of the 1920s, where Israel's progressive leanings were tested by the Jewish community and challenged by prominent black Baltimore leaders, comprised the third element.<sup>4</sup>

This essay will focus on Rabbi Edward L. Israel's evolution as a progressive, particularly on his role in the interracial labor movement of the 1920s, and will examine the ways in which he diverged from the status quo of Reform Judaism and was challenged by prominent leaders of Baltimore's black freedom struggle. The initial phase of the story sheds light on the social justice tradition of the Reform movement and how it shaped Israel's approach to interracial concerns. Through the lens of the rabbi, we gain insight into the American Jewish liberal legacy that informed his social justice activism and the limits that were placed on him from within the Reform movement as he spoke out against bigotry and labor and racial inequality.

Hasia R. Diner's *In the Almost Promised Land* is among several works that treat the nature and evolution of black and Jewish relations during the early civil rights movement. In understanding the evolution and interracial interactions and social justice activism of Rabbi Edward Israel, the long civil rights approach is helpful in providing framework and context

for the connections that such experiences had on the black and Jewish alliance of the classical phase of the civil rights era of the 1950s and 1960s. The efforts of the 1920s and 1930s, which challenged racial violence, labor inequality, and Jim Crow, served as the prequel to the later movement.<sup>5</sup>

By the end of the 1920s, Israel had established himself as a socialist progressive challenging the moderate and passive approaches of Progressive-era rabbinical social justice leaders. His position was informed by the connections he nurtured with Baltimore's prominent black leaders, including Carl Murphy and Dr. Lillie Carroll Jackson, who challenged Israel to remember the roots of the black-Jewish alliance of the first decades of the twentieth century during an era when other second- and third-generation Jewish immigrants began to lose sight of this strategic partnership.

#### *Early Beginnings*

Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on August 30, 1896, Edward Israel grew up while the country and Cincinnati continued to feel the effects of the Panic of 1893, one of the worst economic depressions in American history.<sup>6</sup> His mother, Emma, was born in Cincinnati, and his father, Charles, arrived in the United States in the late 1880s during a wave of Jewish immigration from Prussia.<sup>7</sup> His younger brother Dorman was born in 1900, across the Ohio River in Kentucky.<sup>8</sup> Charles Israel arrived in America during a time when Jews were forced to deal with rising anti-Jewish sentiment. As Jews landed at New York's Castle Garden in large numbers, mostly from eastern Europe, they became convenient scapegoats for nativists who blamed them for America's economic troubles.<sup>9</sup>

Growing up in Cincinnati, Edward Israel had the advantage of experiencing American and Jewish influences while attending public and private schools for the first half of his life. As such, he became rooted in the second-generation immigrant culture endemic throughout Cincinnati. In 1910, at the age of fourteen, the future rabbi joined other young Jewish men entering the Reform rabbinical seminary, Hebrew Union College (HUC).

Israel's father became a successful insurance salesman, and the Israels made their home at 3589 Wilson Avenue. Like a number of Jewish homes in Cincinnati, the Israel home, less than two miles from HUC in the Clifton community, doubled as a boarding house and was opened to

*Rabbi Edward Israel, 1936.  
(Courtesy of the Jewish Museum  
of Maryland, Baltimore. 2012.108.130.)*

young Edward's classmates, who eventually felt like part of the family.<sup>10</sup> As in Baltimore, Jews and African Americans in Cincinnati were often relegated to residential segregation and lived side by side as they were barred from moving into white Christian communities. A number of black men established businesses and lived next to Clifton in Avondale and Cumminsville.<sup>11</sup>

Prior to this, Jews and Italians shared housing in the once aristocratic West End community near the Ohio River. As such, the West End was "a highly congested area built up with tenement and business houses, factories and railroads."<sup>12</sup> Indeed, such congestion was the result of the lack of housing for African Americans, many of whom migrated from the South. Most of this African American migration to Cincinnati took place during World War I as migrants were attracted to the economic opportunities



from the demand created by the war. In 1926, W. P. Dabney, editor of Cincinnati's black newspaper, the *Union*, wrote about the makeup of the community: "[T]he West End has a vast [Negro] colony which has largely driven out the Jews, Germans and Italians."<sup>13</sup> Dabney points to a segregated community, wrought by white immigrant flight. The makeup of Cincinnati during Israel's upbringing provided a unique contrast for what he later experienced in Baltimore, where blacks and Jews shared a similar experience and were excluded from white Christian neighborhoods.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Education and Early Adult Experiences*

Israel began his nine-year course of study at HUC in 1910 while still a student at Woodward High School. Throughout his tenure he remained dually enrolled at two institutions besides taking courses at others. Shortly after graduating from high school in 1913, Israel continued his studies at HUC and entered the freshman class of the University of Cincinnati (UC). He also found time to take summer courses at Harvard University during his last two years at UC. Very little is known about Israel's time and experiences at UC, where he graduated in 1917 with a bachelor of arts degree.<sup>15</sup> Apparently Israel did not become a liberal interracialist until he moved to Baltimore. One of his classmates recalled, "he was not an outstanding



*Rabbi David Philipson, 1904.*  
(Washington Times, February 7, 1904.)

rebel” while he attended HUC and “[i]t was only later—in his Baltimore period that I heard and thought of him as a fighting liberal for social causes.”<sup>16</sup>

In 1918, Israel decided to take part in the Great War as a chaplain to the Jewish troops fighting in Europe. In October 1918, after soliciting the support of his rabbi and mentor Dr. David Philipson and University of Cincinnati president Charles William Dabney, he enlisted in the United States Army. Philipson and Dabney wrote letters in support of Israel’s application, each stressing his strong character and noble sense of patriotism.<sup>17</sup>

By February 1919, Israel began serving alongside his mentor (possibly in the student pulpit), Rabbi Philipson, at his childhood congregation, Rockdale Temple. In many ways Philipson provided Israel with a link to the ideals of ethical monotheism and social justice espoused by the Pittsburgh Platform and Classical Reform Judaism more generally. Shortly thereafter, Israel received his acceptance letter from the Jewish Welfare Board naming him as a noncommissioned chaplain to the Jewish American troops in Europe, and in late March he arrived in Chaumont, France.<sup>18</sup>

On Saturday, April 5, 1919, at age twenty-three, along with a class of ten other men, Israel received his official rabbinic ordination in absentia from HUC President Kaufman Kohler. As a chaplain abroad, Israel developed skills that became valuable to meet congregational needs. While in France, for example, he gained experience facilitating weddings and other activities, functions later central to his dual role as a congregational and activist rabbi.

Israel daily wrote to his love, Amelia Dreyer, a Cincinnati native whom he had met in 1917, describing his experiences and anticipating the end of the war. He also demonstrated the first glimpse into the ways in which his Jewish ethos and his radical conceptualization of ecumenism would become central to his approach to social justice. After the war, in 1919, Israel returned to the United States. He then wasted no time marrying his fiancée Amelia.<sup>19</sup>

Shortly after their wedding in November 1919, Israel began his rabbinical post at B’rith Sholom in Springfield, Illinois, where he delivered the sermon, “Our Vow.” “Religion to me,” he said, “has a broad and radical meaning. It is full of tolerance of divergent ideals and beliefs. It yields to reason and respects honest faith.” He then stated that Reform Judaism

*Amelia and Edward Israel.*  
(Courtesy of the Jewish Museum  
of Maryland, Baltimore. 2012.108.151.)

in all its breadth and radicalness never ceases to be Judaism. It never loses sight of its Jewishness. . . . Universal to the extreme, it is full of leniency and latitudinarianism. Yet I remain a Jew and no fad nor fancy, nor the paltry love of social advancement or the cowardly fear of prejudice can make me anything but a strong-back-boned Jew.<sup>20</sup>

Little is known concerning Israel's tenure at B'rith Sholom, since the vast majority of the congregation's records were lost. Nonetheless, during his time in Springfield, Israel struggled to find confidence in his abilities. His wife commented on his experiences during the early part of his rabbinic: "I think when he started out, of course, he always had a feeling for humanity, but I think he became much more of a crusader as he got older.

He wanted to get out and fight for his causes rather than just being vocal about them. In that way, I think he changed as time went on."<sup>21</sup>

Nonetheless, during his time in Springfield Israel gained considerable experience and began to develop his social justice message. He and Amelia also welcomed their first son, Charles Edward "Chuck" Israel.<sup>22</sup> Little is known concerning why Israel only spent a year and a half in Springfield. He may have been looking to grow as a rabbi and social leader. He clearly sought a larger congregation where a higher salary would better support his family.<sup>23</sup>

*Washington Avenue Temple*

On May 5th, 1921, Israel was elected rabbi of the Washington Avenue Temple (WAT) in Evansville, Indiana, for a one-year term. After a year WAT extended Israel's contract for three years and granted him a salary increase. From the outset, the Evansville Jewish community welcomed the Israel family. In response to his problems securing housing, the congregation quickly purchased a home for their rabbi's use. Amelia Israel recalls the devotion of the Jewish community: "It was a wonderful community. A very religious minded and temple going congregation. We loved the whole bunch."<sup>24</sup> Israel seemed to become more comfortable in the pulpit and began preaching sermons centering on religious instruction and the life application of scriptures specifically in regards to youth and young adults within the congregation.

Israel also took this approach outside of the Jewish community, hosting a series of lectures including a popular series titled "What do Jews Believe?" and an ecological series of sermons on the biblical importance of protecting the environment. In 1921, Israel delivered one of his earliest social justice sermons, "Modern Theology," in which he proclaimed that modern theology concerned itself with the moral character of Pharaoh and his attitude toward his fellow creatures and his value as a member of society. The young rabbi asked, "Did Pharaoh have the right to oppress his people? Has any man . . . the right to oppress any fellow man? And the social consciousness has entered, through modern theology, the problem of poverty, the problem of social disease and industrial strife."<sup>25</sup>

As Israel developed as a rabbi and social justice advocate, he slowly established his presence in the Reform movement. In 1921, he participated in his first Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) convention,

held in Washington, D.C. Israel joined two committees and attended a reception at the White House hosted by President Warren G. Harding. Israel spent only two more years in Evansville as he gained popularity and began getting offers from larger congregations including Temple Shomer Emunim in Toledo, Ohio, and Har Sinai in Baltimore.<sup>26</sup> Ultimately Har Sinai gave Israel an offer that Shomer Emunim and Washington Avenue Temple could not match.

The *Baltimore Sun* ran the article, "Har Sinai Temple Calls Rabbi Edward L. Israel," months before he took up residence in Maryland's urban center.<sup>27</sup> By September 1923, during his installation, the Reform and Baltimore religious communities discovered that Israel was quite different from his predecessor, Harvey Wessel, who was not nearly as vocal during his one-year tenure in the pulpit from 1922 to 1923. Israel urged his congregation and members of the community to seek open-mindedness, asking that "there be a little more of true justice, mercy and humility and fewer sham ideals, punctuated in grim reality and venom and hatred."<sup>28</sup>

Baltimore Sun, July 24, 1923.  
(*Newspapers.com.*)

***Har Sinai Temple Calls  
Rabbi Edward L. Israel***

**Cincinnati Clergyman Elected By  
Congregation — To Come  
Here In September.**

Rabbi Edward L. Israel, of Evansville, Ind., was elected rabbi of the Har Sinai Temple at a congregational meeting last night at the temple, in approval of recommendations by the board of trustees.

Rabbi Israel was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, and was graduated from the Hebrew Union College five years ago. During the last two years of his college life he assisted Rabbi David Phillipson, rabbi of the Rockdale Avenue Temple, Cincinnati, a former rabbi of the Har Sinai Temple. During the World War he served as overseas chaplain under auspices of the Jewish Welfare Board. He is married and has one child. He is now rabbi of a temple at Evansville.

Rabbi Israel has signified his willingness to accept the call, it is said, and will be in Baltimore this week to select a home. He will begin his duties as rabbi on September 1.

J. D. Hornstein, chairman of the board, explained last night that a rabbi can be elected only by the congregation, and that the story regarding the election of the rabbi emanating from Cincinnati was premature.

*Har Sinai Congregation, Bolton Street Temple, Baltimore, MD.*

*(Courtesy of the Jewish Museum of Maryland, Baltimore. 1985.090.001.)*

Israel was aware of the reputation of Har Sinai specifically as it related to the legacy of the congregation's most notable leader, Rabbi David Einhorn, who spoke out during the antebellum period against proslavery advocate Rabbi Morris Jacob Raphall and fled the city amid threats against him because of his outspoken abolitionist views.<sup>29</sup> Behind the scenes, Israel had again depended on the support of David Philipson, who advised him as he transitioned in leadership and made his way to Baltimore. In correspondence with his mentor, Israel expressed anxiety about some of the requirements of the congregation's board of directors. The chair of the rabbinic search committee, J. D. Hornstein, had begun recruiting Israel through Philipson while the young rabbi was serving the Evansville congregation. In April 1923, Philipson, who had been Har Sinai's rabbi

between 1884 and 1888, facilitated the interview and recruitment process on behalf of Israel. Philipson wrote to Israel:

I do know that men in the congregation are very eager for a good leader. They are anxious to work. Poor [Rabbi Louis] Bernstein was building up a fine institution. They rallied around him splendidly. Of course, the two other Congregations are larger, but there is no reason why the oldest reform congregation in the country should not be made once again a very strong organization.<sup>30</sup>

Following in the legacy of Reform pioneer David Einhorn, in 1923 Israel accepted the call to lead Har Sinai. The *Baltimore Sun* provided two days of coverage of his selection to the post in an article titled "Cincinnati Clergymen Elected by Congregation."<sup>31</sup> A few months later in September, Israel was officially installed by Philipson and welcomed by Dr. William Rosenau, rabbi from 1892 to 1940 of the Eutaw Place Temple (Temple Oheb Shalom) on behalf of Baltimore's Reform community. From the outset, Israel advocated for an ecumenical and liberal approach to religion: "Only open hearts and minds, ready to investigate all that is new and follow it if it is worthwhile, will save religion."<sup>32</sup>

During his first year at Har Sinai, Israel became an active member of the Social Justice Commission of the CCAR. Founded in 1889 by Isaac Mayer Wise, the CCAR served as the professional organization for Reform rabbis and, in many ways, an extension of the efforts of the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885, which emphasized ideological and philosophical approaches to address the social and economic ills of society.<sup>33</sup> Leonard J. Mervis argues that rabbis involved in the platform "concerned themselves with social problems but in a manner that was idealistic and utopian."<sup>34</sup> Moreover, he writes, their "approach represented a philosophical attitude rather than a dynamic call to action."<sup>35</sup> Nonetheless by the late nineteenth century more direct approaches to social justice replaced these utopian ideals.

Working alongside the longtime chairman of the Social Justice Commission, Rabbi Ephraim Frisch of San Antonio, Texas, Israel began developing a more radical approach to combating social justice—an approach that proved to be problematic throughout his later tenure as chairman.<sup>36</sup> Patrick Jory suggests that such an approach was shared among individual rabbis who, he argues, were "understandably more militant and activist than CCAR."<sup>37</sup>

*Challenging Tradition:  
From Neophyte to Socialist Threat*

Three years into his tenure at Har Sinai, Israel adopted such an aggressive approach and began to assume the dual identity of rabbi and labor activist. In 1926, a labor dispute emerged with two of America's busiest railroads. A *Baltimore Sun* writer summarized the issue: "[B]oth the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and the Western Maryland Railroad companies received request yesterday from the Order of Railway Conductors, the Brotherhood of Railway Conductors and the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen for increases in pay amounting to approximately twenty percent." Referring to the incident as a strike, Maxwell Byers, president of the Western Maryland Railroad, characterized the union's demands as "perfectly absurd."<sup>38</sup>

Building on the same ecumenical partnerships that he had benefited from during World War I, Israel looked to Protestant and Catholic organizations including the department of research and education of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ (FCCC) and the department of social action of the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC) to join the effort in finding a moral way to deal with this major labor crisis. This partnership dates back to 1922 when these organizations issued a collective manifesto resulting in the termination of the twelve-hour workday by James Augustine Farrell, predecessor to John Pierpont Morgan and Elbert H. Gary as president of the United States Steel Corporation.<sup>39</sup>

As a member of the CCAR Social Justice Commission, Israel assumed the lead and coordinated the partnership with the CCAR, the FCCC, and the NCWC, and in fall 1926 the organizations began preparing a joint report on Maryland's labor crisis. In October, in a letter addressed to commission chair Ephraim Frisch, Israel provided an update concerning the status and impact of the ecumenical effort: "This report is being submitted to both the Western Maryland management and the Union." As a result of this collaboration, Israel argued that "the public will be more convinced than ever of the fairness with which the social justice branches of the three great denominations are handling and judging the moral issues of industrial dispute."<sup>40</sup> By November Israel directed his attention to the ways in which the labor inequality within the garment industry affected the Jewish community in Baltimore.



In a letter to Abraham Cronbach, a Reform rabbi and professor at HUC, Israel discussed the possibility of focusing his doctor of divinity thesis on combating such issues in Baltimore:

To the garment workers, I endeavor to discover what occupations their children are going into, and how many had drifted away from all connection with synagogue, how many had remained Orthodox, and how many had become Reform. I intend to use Baltimore City as a sort of laboratory for the urban phases of my work.<sup>41</sup>

Israel's protest was part of the larger force within the United States to combat the anticommunist movement of the 1920s and 1930s. Around 1919, in the aftermath of World War I, workers began to strike and unionize throughout the country. This coincided with the founding of the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) after the split in the Socialist Party of America. From the outset, the CPUSA played a major role in the American labor movement, a movement dedicated to fighting for fair wages and safer working conditions. Americans became suspicious of anything that appeared to be connected to communism following the Soviet revolution of 1917. The anticommunist movement—the Red Scare—emerged as a reactionary fear of communism, which had become closely tied to the growth of unionization. Propaganda campaigns connected the labor movement with communism, a political philosophy that was considered to be the enemy of capitalism and democracy.<sup>42</sup> By the mid-1920s anticommunist sentiment had spread beyond the labor movement to diplomacy as the U.S. State Department and diplomats began to fear communist advancement in neighboring countries such as Mexico, where America had vested economic and diplomatic interests.<sup>43</sup>

In 1927, while continuing to try to resolve the Western Maryland Railroad strike, Israel responded to the foreign situation, challenging the American tendency to bully Latin American countries by attempting to connect them to the communist movement. Secretary of State Frank D. Kellogg's testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee less than two weeks earlier fed into the anticommunist hysteria: "The Bolshevik leaders have had very definite ideas with respect to the role which Mexico and Latin America are to play in their general program of world revolution. They have set up as one of their fundamental tasks the destruction of what they term American imperialism as a necessary prerequisite to the

successful development of the international revolutionary movement in the New World."<sup>44</sup> Israel argued that Kellogg was using such propaganda to exploit the Mexican people: "This country [the United States] now says in effect, to Mexico: Because we have invested money with you – however illegally – you must accept our ideals of law." He challenged the *Sun* for republishing Kellogg's testimony, arguing that "Secretary Kellogg's talk of Bolshevism is the height of the ridiculous. He clearly has a mania on that subject."<sup>45</sup>

The rabbi concluded his message by referring to the God who individuals such as Kellogg believed supported such policies and rhetoric: "The God who rules in our relationship with our friends and who is a God of respect and good will is not the one whom we depend on when, as patriots, we think of our relations with Mexico and China."<sup>46</sup> Israel provides insights into political and diplomatic perceptions of Mexico during the 1920s that reverberate today in debates over immigration and Mexican-American relations. The young rabbi saw such issues as being connected with suffering immigrants in the United States and abroad. However, such a stance caused one of his colleagues to denounce him after Israel asked a fellow rabbi to support what that rabbi called the wives and children of "a bunch of Bolsheviks and Socialists."<sup>47</sup>

With the ecumenical investigation into the railroad strike coming to a close, Israel served as an "inter-church" investigator conducting interviews with national newspapers and labor union organizations. In January 1927, as chair of the commission on social justice from 1923 to 1933, Israel submitted a report of the findings from the investigation at a special meeting of the CCAR. The report pointed to the Western Maryland Railroad as the only company that failed to meet the wage requirements for "Class A" railroads. Unlike the previous collaborations during the early twenties, these findings were hailed throughout the United States and received substantial press coverage in a number of publications including *Labor Age*, the *Baltimore Sun*, the *New York World*, the *Survey*, the *New York Times*, the *New York Herald-Tribune*, the *New York Evening Post*, and the *Literary Digest*.<sup>48</sup>

In March 1927, the *Sun* ran an interview with Israel where he argued that the incident was nothing more than a lockout "brought about by the abrupt refusal of the management to negotiate with its employees." Ultimately, he saw the lack of "confidence between employer, and employee"

***Attacks Policy Of W. Md.  
In Dealing With Strikers***

**Rabbi E. L. Israel, In Hagerstown  
Talk, Says Employes Were  
Locked Out.**

Hagerstown, March 30 (Special).—An attack on the policy of the management of the Western Maryland Railway in dealing with its striking engineers and firemen was made here tonight by Rabbi Edward L. Israel, of Baltimore.

The speaker is a member of the committee of churchmen which recently investigated the Western Maryland strike.

Rabbi Israel said the strike was a lockout, brought about by the abrupt refusal of the management to negotiate with its employes.

"The essential factor of building up confidence between employer and employe was sadly absent on the Western Maryland," he asserted.

In dealing with the rights of stockholders to dividends, Rabbi Israel said that where there is a standard wage in an industry, that wage must be paid before there is any consideration of dividends.

Baltimore Sun, March 31, 1927.

(Newspapers.com.)

as the central issue concerning the Western Maryland situation. His inter-faith partnership set a precedent during the labor movement and represented an ecumenical approach to the social gospel that sought to address the morality of such economic injustice during the 1920s. By the end of the strike, Israel could clearly be described as a progressive liberal who had embraced his new role as chair of the CCAR's Social Justice Commission. The commission also emerged as a "powerful instrument of social action" directly addressing the concerns of everyday working Americans.<sup>49</sup> Rabbi Albert Vorspan sheds light on the significance of this ecumenical partnership towards combating social issues: "Never before, or since, has the Conference [CCAR] joined hands with Protestant and Catholic leaders so effectively in bread-and-butter, practical social action." He continues, "This period was the 'shining hour' for the CCAR as a vital exemplar of prophetic Judaism."<sup>50</sup> However, lost within the discussions and debates concerning workers' rights were African Americans.

*The Labor Movement, the Pullman Company, and Race Relations*

George Pullman founded Pullman, Illinois, during the 1880s to house his Pullman Company employees, including the black porters who attended passengers on sleeper cars.<sup>51</sup> During the panic of the 1890s, workers' wages were cut almost one third, and thousands were fired as a result of the overexpansion of the railroad industry. Meanwhile, rent remained unchanged, along with the dividends stockholders received and management salaries. In May 1894, members of the American Railway Union (ARU) led by Eugene V. Debs declared a strike, refusing to handle Pullman cars. Jewish labor activist and founder of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) Samuel Gompers, fearing the worst, rushed to Chicago in an attempt to prevent Debs and the ARU from declaring the strike. Ultimately, this peaceful strike turned bloody as Chicago erupted, two thousand federal troops were called in, and twelve people were killed.<sup>52</sup>

Two years later, *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) gave the Supreme Court's imprimatur to segregation across the United States with the "separate but equal" doctrine. Jim Crow laws, disenfranchisement of African American men through Mississippi Plan policies on the state level, and horrific lynchings led to the founding of the Niagara Movement in 1905 and ultimately the NAACP in 1909. The latter organization especially brought together prominent black and Jewish leaders to fight systemic injustice and inequality in the United States.

By the first two decades of the twentieth century, Jim Crow and economic inequality were fully functioning throughout the nation. Blinded by the rhetoric of American exceptionalism, the social and economic injustices against African Americans, immigrants, and the poor were overlooked. Big businesses thrived, and the Ku Klux Klan underwent a revival beginning with the lynching of Leo Frank in 1915. The socioeconomic gap and segregation could be tracked aboard the Pullman sleeping cars where the business tycoons and the working poor interacted on a daily basis. African Americans bore witness to this culture. Pullman porters, who attended passengers on sleeping cars, were expected to work four hundred hours a month or travel eleven thousand miles on limited rest. Wages were kept low, and income depended heavily on tips.<sup>53</sup>

In 1925, A. Philip Randolph established the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), an organization to aid African Americans in their

quest for labor rights. BSCP was the first labor organization led by an African American to win a collective bargaining agreement and obtain a charter from the American Federation of Labor (AFL). Working alongside individuals such as Marcus Garvey and W. E. B. Du Bois, Randolph developed an understanding of social justice that reflected a deep awareness of how race complicated labor conditions and class concerns for African Americans. Randolph's Methodist roots informed his philosophy toward the labor movement, and, consequently, Randolph aligned himself with progressive black clergy and white liberal Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish leaders such as Edward Israel to achieve fair working conditions for BSCP members as well as to combat segregation.<sup>54</sup>

Randolph looked to the United Hebrew Trades, which protected Jewish workers, and saw the need for a similar organization to protect vulnerable African American laborers against massive corporations such as the Pullman Company. In adopting the term *brotherhood*, Randolph and the founders considered the spiritual sense of the word based on the sacred notion of community united in a common interest. Around 1925, a group of Pullman porters began looking for a qualified leader who would fearlessly advocate for their rights. For these porters such a task required both spiritual and practical importance, and they needed a leader whom they could trust, a "crusader capable of waging holy war."<sup>55</sup>

Besides the sleeping car porters employed by the Pullman Company, a large number of African Americans worked directly for the railroads as chefs, bartenders, general porters, and dining car waiters. Historian Larry Tye sees the Pullman Porter as a metaphor for the "tens of thousands of other African-Americans who worked the railroads" including Baltimore's native son and future Supreme Court justice Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP *Crisis* editor Roy Wilkins, and theologian and educator Benjamin Elijah Mays.<sup>56</sup>

While a student at Lincoln University in 1926, Marshall, who would later join Rabbi Israel's anti-Nazi protest in Baltimore's Inner Harbor, was a Pullman porter when he began working as a dining car waiter with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B&O).<sup>57</sup> Unlike employees of the Pullman Company who worked on their signature sleeping cars, African Americans on the B&O dining trains served as either cooks or waiters. Marshall, not quite eighteen years old, came from a long line of railroad men.<sup>58</sup> As Marshall waited on the industrial tycoons of Baltimore, Randolph and

BSCP pressed to gain recognition as a union throughout North America. Offices sprang up in Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Detroit, Oakland, Boston, Buffalo, Washington, D.C., and other cities.<sup>59</sup>

By 1927, the Pullman Company became the largest single employer of African Americans in the United States, with between “10,000 to 12,000 colored porters and maids in its employ.”<sup>60</sup> On September 7, 1927, the BSCP filed a case with the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) requesting an investigation into the Pullman Company’s unjust practices concerning rates and porters’ wages, tips, and working conditions.

*Title page of The Pullman Porter,  
a fifteen-page pamphlet  
issued by the Brotherhood of  
Sleeping Car Porters, 1927.  
(University of California, via  
HathiTrust.org.)*

#### *The BSCP Reaches Out to the CCAR*

In 1925, the same year Randolph founded the BSCP, Israel and his wife Amelia welcomed their second son, his namesake, Edward L. Israel, Jr.<sup>61</sup> The CCAR’s Social Justice Commission and other religious organizations were well aware of the Pullman porters’ struggle. By the end of September, while Israel was transitioning into his new position as the commission’s chairperson, he was approached by CCAR president Hyman G. Enelow, whom Randolph had contacted in the hope of obtaining a commission statement in support of the BSCP’s struggle to

gain greater recognition as a union. Possibly Israel may have also seen the efforts of the BSCP in the *Baltimore Afro-American's* (the *Afro*) consistent coverage of the organization surrounding their recent complaint with the ICC. In a letter to Enelow, Israel described his plans to go public concerning the plight of the sleeping car porters: "[I am] preparing a statement on the Pullman situation. . . . I tried to get all the information I could on the Canadian aspect of the problem. I learned that the sleeping car porters are organized and treat with management on the basis of collective bargaining."<sup>62</sup> He included a memorandum drafted by his secretary concerning his previous conference in New York with Enelow where Israel discussed his plans to connect with several like-minded organizations concerning social justice. The memorandum provides further insight into what brought this to the attention of Israel and the Social Justice Commission: "Dr. Enelow requested Rabbi Israel to draw up a statement in response to a request from the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters with reference to their struggle for recognition as a Union, taking due cognizance of the advances which had been made along this line in Canada."<sup>63</sup>

Israel worked that night and the next day to submit his first draft to Enelow in "the name of the Social Justice Commission," asking him to make "suggestions as to changes . . . which you deem fit and if it is all right, we shall forward a copy to the Brotherhood which they can release."<sup>64</sup> He enclosed with his letter the latest pamphlet concerning the situation. The office of the BSCP, located in New York City, had published a fifteen-page pamphlet that included a brief "History of the Brotherhood," "Wages and Working Conditions," "The Demands of the Brotherhood," "The Tipping System," "The Employee Representation Plan," "Welfare Work" and, lastly, "The Pullman Company."<sup>65</sup> These were the central concerns raised by the BSCP in the case that it submitted to the ICC.

The pamphlet exposed the gaps in the information being disseminated by the Pullman Company. According to the pamphlet, porters were paid a minimum wage of \$72.50 a month. Yet the porters were responsible "for purchasing the shoe polish and equipment for shining passengers' shoes . . . in addition to being responsible for purchasing their uniforms totaling to around \$80 a year. Another expense came in the area of meals, the cost of which en route averages about \$23.65 per month."<sup>66</sup>

By the late 1920s the CCAR had developed a reputation for upholding the ideals of American democracy and advocating social justice. Nonetheless, it had been moderate in its rhetoric dealing with issues of national importance.<sup>67</sup> Maintaining this less radical approach became problematic for Israel leading up to and during the Great Depression. As David Polish has suggested, such an approach was shared among rabbis who, he argues, were “understandably more militant and activist than the CCAR.”<sup>68</sup>

This moderate rhetoric was evident in Enelow’s critique of Israel’s first draft. Enelow wrote to Israel: “I have also studied the statement you are planning to issue in regards to the sleeping car porters. I think it’s all right, except perhaps I would omit in paragraph two the word ‘bigotry,’ and possibly also ‘race prejudice,’ and instead of that I might say ‘the special obstacle which Negro workers, etc.’ (Sometimes too strong an expression hurts).”<sup>69</sup> He continued with his critique of paragraph five:

I don’t know but . . . I might omit the word ‘tyrannical’ as too emphatic an expression. I hope you will understand I don’t object to the view, but I am afraid of words that might sound excessive. If you say, it is unjust, etc., it seems to me it means as much as the more emphatic phrase to one accustomed to the uses of sane language. I hope you understand that this is no criticism, but just an attempt to help – and, of course I may be mistaken.<sup>70</sup>

Enelow’s reluctance provides evidence of the ways in which Jews negotiated their whiteness as they attempted to speak out against racial injustice. During the 1920s some attempted to maintain the alliance with African Americans of the early twentieth century while avoiding the flames of antisemitism.<sup>71</sup>

On October 12, 1927, Israel responded: “The Pullman Porter statement has changed as you designated and has been sent to the Brotherhood offices, the Pullman Company, and various publications such as Nation, New Republic, etc.”<sup>72</sup> Even with Enelow’s more conservative rhetoric, however, Israel failed to obtain a response or publication from the popular liberal magazines. Only the African American newspaper the *Philadelphia Tribune* printed his report. Titled “Rabbis Endorse Porters’ Union at Conference,” it ran under Israel’s signature.

The revisions suggested by Enelow are evident within the second paragraph, where Israel replaced his original language in exposing the



"bigotry" that was central to the black labor movement and the case of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. The published revised second paragraph reads, "The Social Justice Commission of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, discerns the special obstacles which Negro workers, struggling for human rights must overcome." Israel then argued, "we therefore, especially in this instance urge upon the public a spirit of fair-play for these men in their struggle for recognition."<sup>73</sup>

Not only was Israel concerned with shedding light on the intersections of race and class, he also countered the narrative of the black male brute and the emerging black militant represented by figures including Jack Johnson, the first African American heavyweight champion, who was married to his third white wife, and the black nationalist and trade unionist Marcus Garvey, who awaited his release from prison in November 1927. To distance the porters from such stereotypes, Israel wrote: "The Pullman Porter is a distinctly fine type of manhood. The nature of our U.S. sleeping car porters requires as Pullman porters men of a sound moral character. They must represent a high standard of personal conduct. They must have a sense of moral responsibility in their protection of the traveling public."<sup>74</sup>

He took this a step further referencing white male and female passengers in an attempt to humanize interracial interaction: "Theirs is an intimate relationship which every man and woman who travels must appreciate. Our hearts must surely respond to any effort to accord these men the inalienable human rights of organization, self-respect, and safeguards to health." Attempting to display a sense of neutrality as recommended by Enelow, Israel provided a caveat to his statement, which, he contended, "does not intend to assume an attitude of judgement regarding all details of difference between the Labor Union group and the Pullman Company. It asserts its sympathy with the fundamental aims of the workers on the basis of the Social Justice program of the Central Conference of American Rabbis."<sup>75</sup> Israel thus exposed the role of segregation and racial prejudice in shaping the decision that, he argued, involved human rights concerns rooted in racial inequality and the right to a living wage.

In spite of Rabbi Israel's call for humanitarianism and unity, members of the black press and community were not so quick to buy into his call for justice. Since 1920 Carl Murphy had been using the editorial pages

*Carl J. Murphy, editor of the  
Baltimore Afro-American.  
(Courtesy of the Lillie Carroll  
Jackson Civil Rights Museum,  
Morgan State University,  
Baltimore.)*

of his newspaper, the *Afro*, to speak out against racial injustice and social inequality. Murphy often penned the more direct opinion pieces in the newspaper. For example, in the April 24, 1920, edition, Murphy openly challenged President Calvin Coolidge for his failure to combat segregation in the South.<sup>76</sup>

Murphy was among the most prominent leaders of the black press during the first half of the twentieth century and one of the first black leaders to challenge publicly Rabbi Israel and his approach to combating racial injustice. Murphy, a native of Baltimore, took over the *Afro* newspaper in 1922 following the death of his father, John H. Murphy, Sr., who founded the paper in 1892. Previously, Murphy led the German department at Howard University between 1913 and 1918 after graduating from Howard University in 1911 with a bachelor of arts and from Harvard with a masters of arts in German in 1913. He pursued further studies at the University of Jena in Germany but returned to the United States in 1914 following the outbreak of World War I. Under his leadership the *Afro* became one of the largest and most financially successful African American newspapers in the United States.

By 1927 Murphy took aim at Rabbi Israel and his white coworkers in his editorial coverage of an interfaith "tolerance banquet":

Protestants, Catholics and Jews gathered in a goodwill banquet recently at the Southern Hotel. The Protestant speaker was the Rev. Charles E. Jefferson of the Broadway Tabernacle New York; the Catholic speaker, Senator Walsh of Massachusetts; and the Jewish speaker Rabbi Stephen Wise. The banquet was arranged by the Rev. Albert E. Smith, editor of the *Baltimore Catholic Review*, Dr. Peter Ainslie, of Christian Temple and Rabbi Edward L. Israel, of Har Sinai Temple. Inasmuch as no colored persons were invited to this banquet, we respectfully suggest that the name 'tolerance banquet' should have been changed to 'white tolerance banquet.' Not so much tolerance is involved when a Jew and a Christian, or a Protestant and a Catholic sit down at the banquet table together. It would have been a test of Christianity of the entire committee, however, had the program been broad enough to include all races.<sup>77</sup>

Israel responded to Murphy's criticism in a letter published in the *Afro*:

I agree with you entirely that the banquet could have been called appropriately 'White Tolerance Banquet.' It aimed to deal specifically with the misunderstandings that exist among Caucasians of the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish faiths. As to the intolerance against the Negro, I can assure you of my unqualified support in doing anything to overcome it.<sup>78</sup>

This pledge marked the second shift in Israel's thinking and actions. After his exchange with Murphy, Israel developed a friendly relationship with notable African American clergy and civil rights leaders including Baltimore NAACP president Lillie Carroll Jackson and future Supreme Court justice Thurgood Marshall. He cultivated these relationships after joining the Urban League and NAACP in addition to being appointed to the Maryland Interracial Commission and the Maryland Anti-Lynching Federation. In a program sponsored by the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) at Morgan College, he urged black students to recognize that social antagonism can only be broken down when there is "(1) a cleaning out at home, (2) a greater community cooperation, and (3) greater charity cooperation."<sup>79</sup>

In June 1928, at the annual CCAR convention, Israel led the charge of the Social Justice Commission in challenging the issues of labor inequality that dramatically affected minority populations. He described such issues as being systemic in nature and argued that solutions to such ills could not be found "in any class conscious struggle, but in the triumph of

sound humanitarian principles, which regard mankind as one."<sup>80</sup> Israel thus rejected Marxism and preached reform over class conflict, specifically focusing on the ways in which race and ethnicity were overlooked or dismissed when characterizing issues as rooted in class struggle.


Nonetheless, Israel depicted the economic exploitation of African American and immigrant populations as the inevitable result of capitalism. He argued that those who uphold a "religious philosophy cannot sanction this practice which tends more and more to treat labor only as an instrument. Machinery and industry exist for man, and not men for them." He proclaimed, "No materialistic philosophy can solve these problems. It is in the finer industrial democracy that we place our hope."<sup>81</sup> This hope for a truer democracy is similar to the prophetic call that was central to the classical civil rights movement and Martin Luther King's concept of the "American Dream," which King saw as being rooted in humanistic ideas central to the founding of this nation that affirmed the equality of mankind.<sup>82</sup> Israel visualized the labor conflict facing the country as an American problem that transcended race and was not representative of true democracy. He critiqued labor inequality and other social justice issues experienced by African Americans as destructive to American democracy.

At this pivotal 1928 convention, under Israel's leadership, the CCAR adopted a new social justice platform to combat the economic concerns leading up to the stock market crash of 1929. In the conference bulletin, Israel published a condensed version of the platform to be distributed to Reform congregations throughout the United States. In the preamble, he described the nature and evolution of the platform: "Deriving our inspiration for social justice from the teachings of the prophets of Israel and the great tradition of our faith, and applying these teachings concretely to the economic and social problems of today." He then named seventeen social issues the CCAR vowed to address, including the distribution and responsibility of wealth, the right to a living wage, unemployment, hours of labor and days of rest, prisons and penal laws, and, lastly, lynching.<sup>83</sup> Among the most timely of these issues was lynching, which became slightly more common as the nation began to suffer the effects of the Great Depression. Maryland was no exception, and Israel rose to the challenge boldly denouncing the lynchings of Matthew Williams in 1931 and George Armwood in 1933.

Following a dispute over pay discrepancies between Matthew Williams, a native of Salisbury, Maryland, and his employer, Daniel Elliot, witnesses heard two shots fired. When authorities arrived, Elliot was dead, and Williams lay incapacitated and unconscious, lying in a pool of blood. Shortly thereafter, Williams was taken to the segregated wing of Peninsula General Hospital in downtown Salisbury. After citizens realized he was alive, a crowd of more than a thousand people demanded Williams. Eventually, the mob reached Williams, who was straightjacketed in the hospital. Mob members threw him out of the window to the angry crowd below. White thugs then stabbed and dragged Williams three blocks to the courthouse lawn, where they hung his unconscious body twenty-five feet above the ground. Shortly thereafter, onlookers witnessed the traditional conclusion to such a ritual, which historian Donald Mathews names "the southern rite of human sacrifice," as ruffians cut Williams's genitals from his body as souvenirs. Finally, as if they had not done enough, the white mob anointed Williams's lifeless corpse with oil and gasoline and set his mutilated body ablaze.<sup>84</sup>

**SALISBURY KILLER IS HANGED  
FROM TREE AT COURTHOUSE**

**Mob Took Negro From Her Custody**



MISS HELEN WISE

**BODY THEN IS BURNED  
ON LOT NEAR EDGE OF  
COLORED SETTLEMENT**

**Crowd Of 2,000 Applauds As Noose Tightens On  
Bandaged Neck Of Murderer Of  
White Employer**

**OFFICERS ON SCENE OFFER  
NO PROTEST, WITNESSES SAY**

**Matthew Williams, Wounded By Self And Son Of  
Victim, Taken From Hospital After Shooting  
Of Daniel J. Elliott**

**Ritchie Hastening To City;  
Statement Due Today**

(New York Bureau of The Sun)  
New York, Dec. 4—Informed of the lynching of  
Matthew Williams, Salisbury (Md.) Negro, tonight, Gov.

Following this horrific incident, Maryland's leading political figure, Governor Albert Ritchie, equally condemned Williams and the actions of the "nameless" mob: "The crime of the Negro Williams was a shocking thing but he could have paid the penalty for it through the established legal machinery. The action of the mob in lynching him must bring the blush of shame to every law-abiding Marylander, whether on or off the eastern shore."<sup>85</sup>

Hospitalized for exhaustion, Israel responded to the governor in a letter from his sickbed. He believed the Williams lynching on the Eastern Shore required "the demonstration of a strong, courageous character" on the part of state leaders.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, Israel raised the question:

What is going to be the answer of the constituted authorities? Are we going to witness in Maryland the usual conclusion to these barbaric scenes? . . . Is a travesty of a coroner's inquest going to gather with the fake solemnity and declare that the negro came to his death at "the hands of persons unknown" while all the while the identity of the mob leaders is a matter of public knowledge?<sup>87</sup>

Israel next critiqued Ritchie and the legacy of the state for attempting to politicize the Williams lynching: "What are we going to find [in Annapolis]—real courage or petty politics which prates of State's rights yet will do nothing to uphold the dignity of those rights in the face of possible loss of political prestige?"<sup>88</sup>

Although lynchings were relatively infrequent on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, the community's apathetic responses and silence represented the prevailing ethos of white supremacy and racial violence in a region that historian John R. Wennersten says was "in spirit and sense of place . . . more like the Deep South when it comes to racial attitudes."<sup>89</sup> Such a southern cultural legacy was rooted in a twisted variant of Christianity that was employed as a medium to safeguard white supremacy, American exceptionalism, and false notions of democracy. Israel challenged the silent clergy who perpetuated such a view and called on them to reevaluate their moral and political obligations as Christian leaders: "What are the ministers in the churches of the Eastern Shore going to do? I ask whether they are going to be frightened into silence or are going to do what real religion commands—not only protest, but take the active steps toward removing the disgrace."<sup>90</sup>

By 1931, Israel had established a record of advocacy for social justice, which he perceived as a central component of the Jewish and Christian traditions. In an article published in the *Jewish Forum* and quoted by Franklin Roosevelt, Israel argued, "The Social Justice ideal of Judaism is almost as integral a part of its historic tradition as its unique God concept."<sup>91</sup> In addition, he challenged the apathetic tradition of American southern society that insisted "the province of the pulpit is to stay clear of such matters." Throughout American history white supremacists demanded that religious groups conform to their prejudicial mores. According to Israel, this legacy justified segregation and turned a blind eye to economic exploitation and racial violence. At the same time, he admonished Jewish religious leaders to challenge the political establishment. "Today, even though it may cause anti-Semitism, Jewish leaders must become the outspoken exhorters to social justice, regardless of what the conservative terms to be expediency or proprietary."<sup>92</sup>

As the 1930s marched on, Israel continued to challenge state and national political leaders in behalf of social justice. In 1932, he published a letter to the editor in the *Sun* in which he openly criticized the comments of one of Maryland's most prominent political figures, Dr. William Campbell Bruce. In a previous column in the *Sun*, Senator Bruce argued that "prejudice is inseparable from Eastern Shore stock and that he is proud to be born of that same stock."<sup>93</sup>

Like other leaders, Bruce did not defend the Williams lynching, but his response maintained a precedent that "allowed Eastern Shoremen to defend their conduct." Likewise, Israel criticized Ritchie's "conspicuous lack of aggressive leadership" since he failed to release a statement following the lynching while rushing a day later to Chicago to deliver a political speech.<sup>94</sup> As state leaders like Bruce and Ritchie attempted to put the Williams lynching behind the "Free State," the following year they received a rude awakening as the tradition continued, and George Armwood became the latest lynching victim along Maryland's Eastern Shore.

*"Acres of Diamonds"*

To Edward Israel and African American civil rights and religious leaders, 1933 represented a unique time in black-Jewish relations in Maryland. The lynching of George Armwood coincided with the rise of

Nazism in Germany, which forced political and religious leaders to consider the suffering of African Americans in contrast to the suffering of Jews in Europe. Out of this context Israel preached a prophetic sermon titled “Acres of Diamonds” at the Howard University chapel in Washington, D.C.<sup>95</sup> He argued that organized religion failed to meet the challenge of social justice in unemployment and race lynching, among other areas. As Hitler’s intentions became clear and Nazi Germany continued to rise, Israel asked congregants to consider the suffering of blacks and Jews comparatively. Reported by the *Afro* on March 25, 1933, Israel proclaimed, “I, as a Jew, talking to a Negro congregation, can speak as a brother. You know the story of the masses of Jews in Poland and Russia. You know the story of the Jews and Hitler in Germany. . . . You know this story today in lynchings. . . . The same Congress that refuses to pass the [Costigan-Wagner] Anti-Lynching Bill opens in prayer.”<sup>96</sup>

Such a prophetic call galvanized African American civil rights and religious leaders in Maryland to join together to bring an end to lynching in the state. Consequently, a little over a week following Armwood’s lynching, several civil rights advocates established the Maryland Anti-Lynching Federation (MALF) at the home of socialist and civil liberties activist Elisabeth Gilman. The founding officers included the Reverend Asbury Smith of the McKendree Methodist Church, chair George B. Murphy, Jr., of the *Afro*, and vice chair Israel.<sup>97</sup> Comprised of over thirty religious and interracial organizations, the MALF represented a clear representation of the transition from rhetoric to direct action.

Through MALF, liberals took a policy-based approach to combating race lynching in their state. Such an approach was evident during the organization’s first meeting, where the participants established four committees, each of which took a progressive approach as they framed their organization’s ideology. The antilynching activists addressed some of the common issues such as the failure to prosecute known vigilantes and what they saw as one of the underlying issues supporting Maryland’s race lynching tradition—the role of education. The committees thus focused on developing antilynching legislation, education reform, membership, and fundraising.

As with the founding of the NAACP, liberal Jewish and non-Jewish white allies worked with African Americans to fight lynching. The youthful Asbury Smith, Edward Israel, and Elisabeth Gilman became the faces



of the organization. Smith, like Israel, maintained an active role in politics on the state level. Known for his work in the “sociological fields,” Smith chaired the State Emergency Peace Campaign and the Interracial Commission of the Baltimore Federation of Churches, in addition to serving as a member of the National Urban League.<sup>98</sup>

Likewise, Gilman represented the interracial makeup of the organization's leadership. A devout socialist and daughter of Johns Hopkins University president Daniel C. Gilman, she emerged in the 1920s as a pioneering political figure and financial supporter of social justice organizations including MALF. In 1928, Gilman began holding some of the first interracial dinners in Baltimore at her home in the upscale Mount Vernon neighborhood. There she honored NAACP pioneer and grandson of William Lloyd Garrison, Oswald Garrison Villard. After the Southern Hotel refused to serve the six blacks out of more than one hundred people in attendance, Gilman moved the dinner to her home. In the early 1930s, she joined the Socialist Party and even pursued runs for mayor of Baltimore and governor of Maryland.<sup>99</sup>



*Elisabeth Gilman, c. 1910.*  
(*Wikimedia Commons.*)



*Oswald Garrison Villard, c. 1910.*  
(*NAACP Collection, Library  
of Congress.*)

Gilman's relationship with Villard led him to become a regular speaker at the federation's meetings, where Villard, like Israel, contrasted Maryland's and the nation's attitude toward lynching with the atrocities taking place in Germany. In December 1933, a few months following the George Armwood lynching, the MALF hosted Villard at the Westminster Presbyterian Church. Placing the events in global perspective, he lamented,

We have lived through one of the most disastrous weeks in our history. . . . Today, if we protest against the horrible brutalities in Germany, the ill-treatment of political prisoners in Poland, Yugo-Slavia, of Japan's action in Manchuria, what standing are we going to have? Will it not be enough for despots everywhere to point the finger of scorn at us and repeat three words, "Maryland, Missouri, California." Hitler himself could make the same reply if there were American protest against anti-Semitic crimes in Germany.<sup>100</sup>

Beyond placing lynching in Maryland in global perspective, Villard spotlighted two other cases of lynching that took place just months apart: the lynching of Lloyd Warner in St. Joseph, Missouri, and Thomas Harold Thurmond and John M. Holmes in San Jose, California.<sup>101</sup>

One year later, Asbury, Israel, Gilman, and other MALF members traveled to Washington, D.C., where they joined political, civil rights, and religious leaders from throughout the nation to testify at the Costigan-Wagner Anti-Lynching hearing. The ten delegates from Maryland included Juanita Jackson Mitchell of the Baltimore City-Wide Young People's Forum (C-WYPF); journalists Clarence Mitchell and Louis Azreal; Johns Hopkins professor Dr. Broadus Mitchell; Father John T. Gilliard, SSJ, chaplain to the Oblate Sisters of Providence; W. Preston Lane, attorney general of Maryland; and Simon E. Sobeloff, U.S. District Attorney for Maryland.<sup>102</sup> Regardless of their efforts and those of many others, their antilynching bill never made it through Congress.

*Alliance with Dr. Lillie May Carroll Jackson*

In spite of failing to make any progress relating to antilynching legislation, Israel continued to work alongside local and national black leaders in Baltimore. However, his liberal ideals were soon challenged a second time when he was forced to confront the antiblack racism practiced by members of his congregation, who owned a number of retail stores and

*Lillie Carroll Jackson.*

*(Courtesy of the Lillie Carroll Jackson Civil Rights Museum,  
Morgan State University, Baltimore.)*

entertainment venues in predominantly black West Baltimore along Pennsylvania Avenue but failed to provide jobs for the black customers on whose dollars they depended. By 1936, with black unemployment rates nearly triple the national average, problems such as these had begun to arise throughout northern cities, sparking a movement commonly known as the Buy Where You Can Work campaign.<sup>103</sup> For those who valued the role that Jews had historically played in the black freedom struggle until this point, such discrimination by Jewish business owners was alarming.

Dr. Lillie Carroll Jackson was one such leader and, like Murphy, she challenged the limits of Jewish liberalism, sparking a national discussion concerning racism among Jews and antisemitism among African Americans.

Committed to interracial and interfaith work, besides being a member of the NAACP and the National Urban League, Israel participated in the C-WYPF, an interracial civil rights youth group founded by the daughter of Dr. Lillie Carroll Jackson, Juanita Jackson Mitchell, in 1931 in response to the lynching of Matthew Williams. In December 1935, C-WYPF hosted its monthly meeting, at which members focused on "Germany's Treatment of the Jews: Is It Justified?" On December 13, following the meeting, Israel quickly penned an article, "Jew Hatred Among Negroes," in response to his experience at the meeting and sent it to the national NAACP executive secretary Walter White. After reviewing Israel's letter, White responded three days later promising to share the article with Roy Wilkins, editor of the *Crisis*. He went on to corroborate Israel's perceptions:

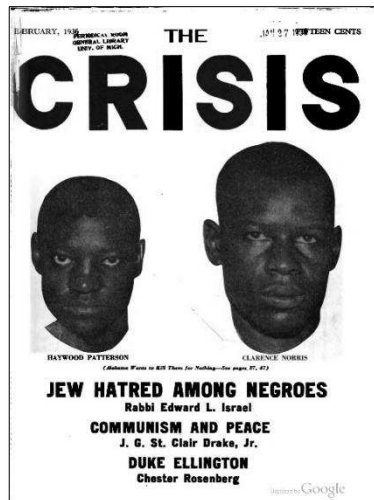
I too am much concerned about the growth of anti-sem[i]tic feeling among Negroes. I confess I was deeply disturbed at certain Negro reactions to the opposition of the Association [NAACP] and myself to American participation in the 1936 Olympics if held in Berlin. These reactions are too long to try to tell them in a letter, but I hope sometime soon to be able to sit down and discuss the whole matter with you. One thing is certain and that is that, whatever its cause, this feeling must be combated wisely and effectively. I wish you would write me specific ways in which you think this can be done. I have talked this over with several of my Jewish friends during the last few weeks, and I would like to know what you think could and should be done so that I may combine your suggestions with my own ideas.<sup>104</sup>

Two months later Israel's letter was published in the NAACP's *Crisis* magazine, garnering national attention. In the essay Israel recounts the C-WYPF symposium, "Germany's Treatment of the Jews: Is It Justified?," which was set up like a simulated debate in which Israel spoke for the negative and his opponent, a professor of sociology who, Israel argued, was not antisemitic but rather treated the subject objectively, providing historical background for the events that led to the development of Nazism's racial policy.<sup>105</sup>

Israel began his article by laying out the evidence concerning the growth of “anti-Jewish feeling among the colored people,” pointing to national events such as the Harlem riots, where “the chief target of Negro wrath seemed to be the Jew.” Israel argued that this anti-Jewish attitude was not confined to the “Negro intelligenzia,” but that it was also showing up among the leadership of national interracial organizations (most likely the National Urban League) and in the lower class where black domestics began posting classified ads requesting work from “Gentiles only.” According to Israel, forum leadership warned him that “some of our people feel that Hitler is justified in his treatment of the Jews.”<sup>106</sup> Indeed, Israel understood that such attitudes existed among the black population. Nonetheless, he did not believe it was pervasive. In addition, Israel described himself as an ally in the black freedom struggle, pointing to his support for the black community, including the federal antilynching bill and his rejection of segregation pacts and racism within his own congregation.

During the question and answer period of the forum, he was further shocked when he was asked “why Jewish department store owners in Baltimore refused to sell to Negroes.” Israel responded: “This condition is true in one or two instances. It is also true that several Jewish department stores have no such attitude and that, moreover, the department stores controlled by non-Jews almost universally exclude Negroes.”<sup>107</sup>

*Cover of The Crisis, February 1936,  
featuring an article by Edward  
Israel. (Google Books.)*



As the question and answer period continued, Israel casually mentioned the upcoming Olympic games and the protest against their being held in Berlin. In response, the forum president, Juanita Jackson Mitchell, introduced a motion to send a telegram protesting the decision to hold the games in Berlin. Israel was further shocked when two members in the forum opposed the resolution. Israel argued, "It was no love for Hitler but an anti-Jewish sentiment which gave rise to some outspoken oppositions to the motion." In the end Israel argued that the rise in anti-Jewish sentiment was based on "distasteful experiences with or their dislike of certain inferior people who happen to be Jews." Considering the similarities in their experiences in America he urged the readers of the *Crisis* to remember that fascism and Nazism represented a threat both to blacks and Jews and expressed the hope that the "two minority groups who have so many problems in common, particularly in these trying times, and whose salvation depends similarly upon a successful resistance to Fascism and Nazism, will come to understand each other a little better."<sup>108</sup>

In many ways Israel saw this alleged increase in antisemitism as a threat to the black and Jewish freedom struggle in America, something that he was indeed familiar with but had come to appreciate more fully as Nazism and fascism began to spread throughout Europe. In defending his strong record of combating racism, Israel was unable to see the full scale of antiblack racism practiced by Jewish business owners and developers, who were prominent members of his congregation.

Following the publication of Israel's essay, Roy Wilkins, the acting editor of the *Crisis*, replied to a letter from both Israel and White, telling him to anticipate several letters responding to his essay that would appear in the March and April issues of the magazine.<sup>109</sup> Among the letters that Wilkins received was that of Dr. Lillie Carroll Jackson, Baltimore NAACP president and mother of the forum host. In response to Israel's article, Jackson described grievances that the black community had towards members of the Jewish community. Jackson seemed to argue that what Israel saw as anti-Jewish hatred was quite the contrary, but she noted there was a lack of trust between the two groups. She argued, "We admit with Rabbi Israel that Gentiles have exploited and still are doing so, but because both Jews and Negroes represent minority groups, who are being persecuted, the Negroes naturally expect better treatment from the Jewish group."<sup>110</sup>

This lack of trust, she argued, was fueled by the growing trends of racism and mistreatment that African Americans suffered at the hands of their Jewish neighbors. Jackson laid out four specific examples: Jewish store owners who failed to sell their products to African Americans; Jewish property owners who ran up the prices of properties in black neighborhoods; Jewish family members who treated black domestic laborers harshly; and Jewish political leaders who made promises to support black political candidates only to renege after they secure the black vote. In the end she offered a solution:

I feel that fair-minded Jews, Gentiles and Negroes in a community should get together to discuss pro and con the grievances of their groups toward each other; then do all they can within their own race to create good will. Thus, through an honest and sincere cooperation the injustices felt by each group may be corrected and all races live in harmony.<sup>111</sup>

By 1936 the Baltimore branch of the NAACP had grown from two hundred to more than two thousand members, and this growth put it in position to be the ideal location for the organization's national conference between June 29 and July 5. Hosting the conference, Jackson placed Israel among the list of notable conference speakers for his lecture, "Fascism and Minority Groups."<sup>112</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Israel's activism in many ways was not unique. Leaders such as Rabbi Ira Sanders of Little Rock, Arkansas, took similar approaches to advocating for civil rights and social justice. Israel's experiences, like Sanders's, speak to what James L. Moses calls the "precarious position of the Southern rabbi and the Jewish community during the civil rights struggle."<sup>113</sup> In spite of the success of Israel's activism, it did not come without criticism from national Reform leaders as well as members of his congregation.<sup>114</sup>

As Israel evolved as an interracial activist, he joined the ecumenical movement in the 1930s, partnering with and working alongside some of the nation's most prominent African American religious leaders, including Mordecai Wyatt Johnson, Vernon Johns, and Howard Thurman.<sup>115</sup>

As the Depression moved into the 1930s, Rabbi Israel continued to advocate for social justice and equality, against labor inequality and racial

violence, and to link racism in the United States with its counterpart in Nazi Germany. Early African American civil rights leaders in Baltimore challenged Israel to move beyond liberal rhetoric. The rabbi's reputation as a labor unionist and his work with national and local civil rights leaders placed him on the radar of the antisocialist political activist Elisabeth Dilling, who identified him with other Maryland progressives and such notable figures such as Albert Einstein, Walter White, and W. E. B. Du Bois in one of her first radical publications.<sup>116</sup>

Toward the end of the rabbi's life, President Franklin D. Roosevelt recognized Edward Israel as "one of the great liberals of our time."<sup>117</sup> Despite such praise, Roosevelt failed to heed the prophetic warning of Reform Jewish leaders, including Israel, pertaining to domestic injustices. Lynching dramatically declined, although the blood of black bodies continued to stain American democracy, and Adolf Hitler continued his march through Europe killing millions of Jews. Roosevelt simply did not adequately address these atrocities.

Unfortunately, Rabbi Israel did not live to see the end of the war. He died suddenly on October 20, 1941, of a heart attack as he rose to speak at a meeting of the executive board of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), an organization that he was supposed to begin leading as executive director just two days later. Thousands of supporters filled the Har Sinai sanctuary for his funeral, and thousands more stood outside as the synagogue had reached capacity. Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, a social reformer, NAACP leader, and a close friend of Israel's, delivered the eulogy to the crowd of thousands. Maryland governor Herbert O'Connor and Baltimore Mayor Howard Jackson attended and served as honorary pallbearers.

Governor O'Connor's remarks fittingly describe the impact that Israel made: "His untimely death removes one of America's foremost and effective advocates in the cause of tolerance and social reform."<sup>118</sup> Rabbi Wise lamented, "The impression he has left on American Jewish life will abide. He was the most Jewish of Jews, as well as deeply American. The tragedy of his going as he stood on the threshold of a second career to help American Jews realize their heritage is no mean portion."<sup>119</sup> On behalf of the Baltimore branch of the NAACP, Dr. Lillie Carroll Jackson offered her condolences for the loss of Israel, whom she described as an "esteemed and honored friend."<sup>120</sup>



Rabbi Abraham Shusterman filled the pulpit at Har Sinai following Israel's death in 1941 and remained there until 1972. Like Israel, Shusterman was a student of David Philipson and graduate of HUC, and he picked up the mantle and went on to participate in interfaith efforts throughout the state and the nation, extending the black-Jewish alliance from the early to the classical phase of the civil rights movement. Shusterman went on to join forces with Baltimore's African American leaders planning civil rights protest and joining the Clergy Brotherhood of Baltimore.<sup>121</sup>

Possibly because of his short life, Edward Israel is an essential figure missing from the scholarship of the early civil rights movement. His work with pioneering figures including Carl Murphy and Lillie Carroll Jackson made him part of the generation of activists who laid the foundation and preceded the more famous relationships between Rabbi Joachim Prinz, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., during the height of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Edward L. Israel, "Strike Situation on Western Maryland and the Principles Involved as Seen by an Interchurch Investigator," *Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen's Magazine* (May 1927): 412.

<sup>2</sup> My use of the phrase *black-Jewish alliance* can be seen as problematic. For example, a number of notable historians have become critical of the phrase. See, for example, Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton, 2010), 15; John Bracey and August Meier, "Towards a Research Agenda on Blacks and Jews in United States History," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12 (Spring 1993): 61. Much of their concern, however, focuses on the representations of the "alliance" during what Bayard Rustin named the "classical phase" of the American civil rights movement, the 1950s and 1960s. Bayard Rustin, *Down the Line: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin* (Chicago, 1971), 111. Outside of the work of Hasia R. Diner, very few scholars reference the phrase when attempting to understand the significance of the relationship between blacks and Jews during the early civil rights movement, 1890 through the 1940s. Hasia Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915-1935* (Baltimore, 1995), ix, xi, 236, 238, 240. For the purposes of this essay, I will use the term sparingly, defining it as the historic relationships maintained by blacks and Jews based on similarities in their struggles, both domestically and abroad, between 1890 and the 1940s. The term *alliance* in this case centers around a consistent relationship between blacks and Jews based on both shared interests and

more formal "associations," represented within the activism leadership by interracial civil rights organizations such as the NAACP and the National Urban League.

<sup>3</sup> Edward L. Israel, *Ninth Annual Report: Har Sinai Congregation* (Baltimore, 1932), 3; Abraham Shusterman, *The Legacy of a Liberal: The Miracle of Har Sinai Congregation as It Is Recounted on the One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Anniversary* (Baltimore, 1991 [1967]), 23.

<sup>4</sup> The role of the Pittsburgh Platform in shaping Reform Judaism is a topic hotly debated by historians. Jonathan D. Sarna sheds light on this debate: "For some, the Pittsburgh Platform was Reform Judaism. For others, it was but a manifestation of Reform, no more binding than any other Reform pronouncement on the movement's adherents." Jonathan D. Sarna, "New Light on the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885," *American Jewish History* 76 (March 1987): 368. See also Walter Jacob, ed., *The Changing World of Reform Judaism: The Pittsburgh Platform in Retrospect* (Pittsburgh, 1985); Sefton D. Temkin, "The Pittsburgh Platform: A Centenary Assessment," *Journal of Reform Judaism* 32 (Fall 1985): 1-12; Dana Evan Kaplan, *Platforms and Prayer Books: Theological and Liturgical Perspectives on Reform Judaism* (Lanham, MD, 2002).

<sup>5</sup> Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land*, ix, xi, 236, 238, 240. For more on the long civil rights movement see Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History* 91 (March 2005): 1233-63.

<sup>6</sup> "Edward L. Israel," Ohio Deaths, 1908-1953, FamilySearch, accessed March 11, 2019, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:X8QS-713>.

<sup>7</sup> Most Jews who migrated to the United States from Prussia actually came from Posen, but historians and others have considered them as Germans similar to Rhinelanders or Bavarians. See Hasia R. Diner, *A Time for Gathering: The Second Migration, 1820-1880* (Baltimore, 1992), 28.

<sup>8</sup> "Dorman Daniel Israel," United States World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918, FamilySearch, accessed March 13, 2018, <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:K6F3-N6M>.

<sup>9</sup> James S. Olson and Heather Olson Beal, *The Ethnic Dimension in American History* (New York, 2011), 183; Castle Garden, also known as Castle Clinton, was the precursor to Ellis Island and functioned as an immigration processing center from August 3, 1855, until it closed on April 18, 1890. See George J. Svejda, *Castle Garden As An Immigrant Depot, 1855-1890* (Washington, DC, 1968).

<sup>10</sup> Abraham I. Shinedling, "Edward L. Israel - A Memoir," December 1970, 2-3, box 3, folder 3, Edward Leopold Israel Papers, Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives (hereafter cited as Israel Papers and AJA).

<sup>11</sup> Twenty-four African American homeowners lived in the Avondale community and sixty-one in Cumminsville. For more information on black homeowners in Cincinnati, see Wendell P. Dabney, *Cincinnati's Colored Citizens: Historical, Sociological and Biographical* (Cincinnati, 1926), 428.

<sup>12</sup> Dabney, *Cincinnati's Colored Citizens*, 382-83; "Statistics of Jews," *American Jewish Year Book* (Philadelphia, 1916), 278; Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, "Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, for the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States," U.S. Census Bureau Working Paper No. 56, September 2000, 68, accessed July 13, 2019, <https://census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2002/demo/POP-twps0056.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Dabney, *Cincinnati's Colored Citizens*, 146. See also, Robert B. Fairbanks, "Cincinnati Blacks and the Irony of Low-Income Housing Reform, 1900–1950," in *Race and the City: Work, Community, and Protest in Cincinnati, 1820–1970*, ed. Henry Louis Taylor, Jr. (Chicago, 1993), 196.

<sup>14</sup> Isaac M. Fein, *The Making of an American Jewish Community: The History of Baltimore Jewry from 1773 to 1920* (Philadelphia, 1971), 242; Garrett Power, "The Residential Segregation of Baltimore's Jews: Restrictive Covenants or Gentlemen's Agreement?" *Generations* (Fall 1996), 5–6.

<sup>15</sup> University of Cincinnati, *The Cincinnati* (Cincinnati, 1917), 61, University of Cincinnati Libraries, Cincinnati, OH. The *Cincinnati* is the UC student yearbook.

<sup>16</sup> Harvey E. Wessel to Edward Cohen, n.d. [1973], box 2, folder 13, Israel Papers.

<sup>17</sup> David Philipson was a prominent leader and scholar in the Reform movement. He served as secretary at the famous Pittsburgh conference in 1885 and as rabbi of Har Sinai from 1884 to 1888. Philipson actively supported the Pittsburgh Platform, spread its principles, and positioned it as the ideological basis of Classical Reform Judaism. See David Philipson to the United States Army, October 30, 1918, box 1, folder 15, Israel Papers; Charles Dabney to the United States Army, October 30, 1918, box 1, folder 1, Israel Papers; David Philipson, *The Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York, 1907); David Philipson, *My Life as an American Jew: An Autobiography* (Cincinnati, 1941).

<sup>18</sup> Based on the time of his enlistment and of his official ordination, Israel did not receive his formal rabbinical ordination prior to entering the U.S. Army as a chaplain.

<sup>19</sup> After the rabbi's death, Amelia Israel eventually moved to California with her sons, where she continued to carry on her husband's legacy and remained active in local political organizations, serving as vice president for the Fullerton Democratic Women's Club. She remained in California until her death in December of 1981. "Amelia Israel," United States Social Security Death Index, FamilySearch, accessed March 1, 2019, <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:V3G4-T2P>; "Democrats Convene," *Los Angeles Times*, February 18, 1960; Correspondence concerning marriage, 1919, box 1, folder 4, Israel Papers; Mrs. E. L. Israel, interview by Edward Paul Cohn, June 1972, quoted in Edward Paul Cohn, "A Rabbi Named Israel" (master's thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1974), 17; "Edward L. Israel," Ohio, County Marriages, 1789–2013, FamilySearch, accessed March 1, 2019, <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:X8TT-P6V>; "Edward L. Israel," New York Passenger Arrival Lists (Ellis Island), 1892–1924, FamilySearch, accessed March 1, 2019, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:J6WS-T4S>.

<sup>20</sup> "Our Vow," September 26, 1914, box 4, folder 4, Israel Papers.

<sup>21</sup> Mrs. E. L. Israel interview, quoted in Cohn, "A Rabbi Named Israel," 17.

<sup>22</sup> Charles Edward Israel was born in Evansville, Indiana, in 1921 and worked on immigrant service ships during the post-World War II years. By 1950 he had joined his mother and brother in California, where he married Margaret Braithwaite. "Charles Edward Israel," New York, New York Passenger and Crew Lists, 1909, 1944, 1948, 1950, FamilySearch, accessed April 1, 2019, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:2HSH-PV8>, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:2HSH-PNT>, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVP8-HTWB>, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:>

24TK-Q47; "Charles Edward Israel," California, County Marriages, 1850-1952, FamilySearch, accessed April 1, 2019, <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-893H-VC9?cc=1804002&wc=965M-RM3%3A151625301>; "Charles Edward Israel," Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Baltimore City, Maryland, FamilySearch, accessed April 1, 2019, <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GRHH-FT?cc=1810731&wc=QZF3-KY6%3A648803201%2C649359801%2C649315601%2C1589285049>.

<sup>23</sup> Cohn, "A Rabbi Named Israel," 25.

<sup>24</sup> Mrs. E. L. Israel interview, quoted in Cohn, "A Rabbi Named Israel," 21.

<sup>25</sup> Edward L. Israel, "Modern Theology," January 14, 1921, Israel Papers.

<sup>26</sup> Kerry M. Olitzky and Marc Lee Raphael, *The American Synagogue: A Historical Dictionary and Sourcebook* (Westport, CN, 1996), 294.

<sup>27</sup> "Har Sinai Temple Calls Rabbi Edward L. Israel," *Baltimore Sun*, July 24, 1923.

<sup>28</sup> "Liberalism Urged by Har Sinai Rabbi," *Baltimore Sun*, September 1, 1923.

<sup>29</sup> Jonathan D. Sarna and Adam Mendelsohn *Jews and the Civil War: A Reader* (New York, 2011), 185-190.

<sup>30</sup> Rabbi Louis Bernstein had preceded Harvey Wessel at Har Sinai from 1920 to 1922. Thus when Israel was elected rabbi the congregation had a tradition of short tenures in its pulpit. J. D. Hornstein to Philipson, n.d. [1923], box 1, folder 12, Israel Papers; "Necrology," *American Jewish Year Book* 25 (Philadelphia, 1923), 138; "List of Members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis by State and City," *Central Conference of American Rabbis Annual Convention* 32 (1922), 303.

<sup>31</sup> "Rabbi Edward L. Israel Called to Har Sinai Post," *Baltimore Sun*, July 23, 1923; "Har Sinai Temple Calls Rabbi Edward L. Israel," *Baltimore Sun*, July 24, 1923.

<sup>32</sup> "Liberalism Urged by [Har] Sinai Rabbi," *Baltimore Sun*, September 1, 1923.

<sup>33</sup> Bertram Wallace Korn, *Retrospect and Prospect: Essays in Commemoration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1889-1964* (Cincinnati, 1965), 272; Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (Detroit, 1995), 276.

<sup>34</sup> Leonard J. Mervis, "The Social Justice Movement and the American Reform Rabbi," *American Jewish Archives* 7 (1955): 172. See also, James H. Moorhead, "'God's Right Arm'? Minority Faiths and Protestant Visions of America," in *Minority Faiths and the American Protestant Mainstream*, ed. Jonathan D. Sarna (Urbana, IL, 1998), 346-48; Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (Cambridge, 2005), 150; Dana Evan Kaplan, "Introduction: Conflicting Visions of the Reform Movement in the United States Today," in *Contemporary Debates in American Reform Judaism: Conflicting Visions*, ed. Dana Evan Kaplan (New York, 2001), 8-9; Arnold Jacob Wolf, "Reform's Original Sin," in Kaplan, *Contemporary Debates in American Reform Judaism*, 91; Harold S. Silver, "From the Christmas Tree to the Yarmulke: What Separates Classical Reform from Mainstream Reform?," in Kaplan, *Contemporary Debates in American Reform Judaism*, 96.

<sup>35</sup> Mervis, "Social Justice Movement," 172.

<sup>36</sup> For Frisch's career in social activism, see Hollace Ava Weiner, *Jewish Stars in Texas: Rabbits and Their Work* (College Station, Tex., 1999), 156-81.

<sup>37</sup> Abraham J. Karp, "The Conservative Rabbi—'Dissatisfied but Not Unhappy,'" in *The American Rabbinate: A Century of Continuity and Change, 1883–1983*, ed. Jacob Rader Marcus and Abraham J. Peck (Hoboken, NJ, 1983), 223.

<sup>38</sup> "Western Maryland Head Calls Demands Absurd," *Baltimore Sun*, February 2, 1926.

<sup>39</sup> Abraham Cronbach, "Joint Endeavor and the Public Good," *Christian Century* 52 (January 22, 1936): 173.

<sup>40</sup> Edward Israel to Ephraim Frisch, October, 27, 1926, box 2, folder 12, Ferdinand M. Isserman Papers (hereafter cited as Isserman Papers), AJA.

<sup>41</sup> Edward Israel to Abraham Cronbach, December 24, 1926, box 1, folder 1, Israel Papers. For more on Cronbach's impact on Reform Judaism and pacifism, see Abraham Cronbach, *The Quest for Peace* (Cincinnati, 1937).

<sup>42</sup> Gloria Skurzynski, *Sweat and Blood: A History of U.S. Labor Unions* (Minneapolis, MN, 2008), 29; Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill, 2015), 140; Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States: Postwar Struggles, 1918–1920* (New York, 1987), 250; Markku Ruotsila, "Leftward Ramparts: Labor and Anticommunism between the World Wars," in *Little "Red Scares": Anti-Communism and Political Repression in the United States, 1921–1946*, ed. Robert Justin Goldstein (Farnham, UK, 2014), 165.

<sup>43</sup> James J. Horn, "U.S. Diplomacy and 'The Specter of Bolshevism' in Mexico (1924–1927)," *The Americas* 32 (July 1975): 31–45, accessed May 1, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.2307/980401>.

<sup>44</sup> Scholars of Mexican-American relations during the 1920s have paid considerable attention to the historic events that took place toward the end of the decade, more specifically the goodwill mission of Dwight Whitney Morrow to Mexico in 1927. As a result of this hyper-emphasis, scholars have failed to pay attention to the events leading up to Whitney's mission under the leadership of his predecessor, James Rockwell Sheffield. During Sheffield's tenure Mexico began to come into its own, place its interest above others, and display independence from the United States. Under the leadership of Alvaro Obregon, Mexico became the first western nation to recognize the Soviet Union. This radical shift was the result of large Soviet purchases of Mexican goods and products. "Secretary Kellogg on Bolshevism in Mexico and Latin America: Submitted to Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate," *Advocate of Peace through Justice* 89 (February 1927), 115.

<sup>45</sup> "Arbitration with Mexico Urged by Rabbi," *Baltimore Sun*, January 24, 1927.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Edward L. Israel, "As to Social Justice and the Central Conference Rabbis: A Specifically Jewish Note in the View of the Matters Now Occupying the Attention of the Commission," *American Israelite*, July 20, 1928.

<sup>48</sup> "Rabbi Ephraim Frisch's Internal Report on the Maryland Strike to CCAR Social Justice Commission," January 4, 1927, box 2, folder 12, Isserman Papers.

<sup>49</sup> "Attacks Policy of Western Maryland In Dealing with Strike," *Baltimore Sun*, March 31, 1927.

<sup>50</sup> Albert Vorspan, *Giants of Justice* (New York, 1960), 165.

<sup>51</sup> Ted Newcomen, "Pullman, Illinois: Changes in Community Planning from the 1880s to the 1990s," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 4 (1998): 10.

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<sup>52</sup> Almont Lindsey, *The Pullman Strike: The Story of a Unique Experiment and of a Great Labor Upehaval* (Chicago, 1964), 228; Harold C. Livesay, *Samuel Gompers and Organized Labor in America* (Long Grove, IL, 1993), 12.

<sup>53</sup> Jack Santino, *Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle: Stories of Black Pullman Porters* (Urbana, IL, 1989), 6–10.

<sup>54</sup> Cynthia Taylor, *A. Philip Randolph: The Religious Journey of an African American Labor Leader* (New York, 2005), 31–33.

<sup>55</sup> Larry Tye, *Rising from the Rails: Pullman Porters and the Making of the Black Middle Class* (New York, 2004), 131.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

<sup>57</sup> For information on the anti-Nazi protest see Deborah R. Weiner “Insiders and Outsiders: Jewish-Gentile Relations in Baltimore during the Interwar Era,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* (Winter 2015): 477–78; Eric L. Goldstein and Deborah R. Weiner, *On Middle Ground: A History of the Jews of Baltimore* (Baltimore, 2018), 227–28, 232.

<sup>58</sup> B&O Employee Card for Thurgood Marshall, 1926–1929, B&O Railroad Museum and Archives, Baltimore, Maryland. Marshall’s father and uncle served as sleeping car porters. His uncle, Fearless Williams, the personal assistant to the president of the B&O Railroad, was possibly able to pull strings with management to secure employment for his young nephew. See Larry S. Gibson, *Young Thurgood: The Making of a Supreme Court Justice* (New York, 2012), 90.

<sup>59</sup> Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, *The Pullman Porter* (New York, 1927), 6.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>61</sup> Edward L. Israel, Jr., was born in Baltimore, attended the historic Baltimore City College, and enlisted in the U.S. military. Shortly thereafter he moved to California and started his own company, the Edward Lumber Manufacturing Company. He remained in California until his death in 1992. “Edward L Israel,” Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Baltimore City, Maryland, FamilySearch, accessed April 1, 2019, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:X34C-D4Z>; “3 East Bay Lumber Men Are Indicted,” *San Bernardino County Sun*, December 10, 1960; “Edward Leopold Israel,” California Death Index, 1940–1997, FamilySearch, accessed April 1, 2019, <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:VPZR-LXS>.

<sup>62</sup> Edward Israel to H. G. Enelow, September 22, 1927, box 10, folder 12, Hyman G. Enelow Papers (hereafter cited as Enelow Papers), AJA.

<sup>63</sup> Edward Israel to H. G. Enelow, September 22, 1927, box 10, folder 12, Enelow Papers.

<sup>64</sup> Edward Israel to H. G. Enelow, September 23, 1927, box 10, folder 12, Enelow Papers.

<sup>65</sup> BSCP, *The Pullman Porter*, 3.

<sup>66</sup> Edward Israel to H. G. Enelow, September 22, 1927, box 10, folder 12, Enelow Papers.

<sup>67</sup> In terms of international affairs, in 1927 the CCAR had urged the U.S. government to provide support for famine relief in China and to remove troops from Nicaragua.

<sup>68</sup> David Polish, “The Changing and the Constant in the Reform Rabbinate,” in Marcus and Peck, *American Rabbinate*, 223.

<sup>69</sup> H. G. Enelow to Edward Israel, September 26, 1927, box 10, folder 12, Enelow Papers.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1998); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA, 1999).

<sup>72</sup> Edward Israel to H. G. Enelow, October 12, 1927, box 10, folder 12, Enelow Papers.

<sup>73</sup> Edward L. Israel, "Rabbis Endorse Porters' Union at Conference: Urge Fair Play for Men Whom They Call Fine," *Philadelphia Tribune*, October 27, 1927.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Hayward Farrar, *The Baltimore Afro-American, 1892-1950* (Westport, CN, 1998), 11.

<sup>77</sup> Carl Murphy, "Toleration," *Afro-American* (Baltimore), December 31, 1927.

<sup>78</sup> "Not Fair to Criticize," *Afro-American* (Baltimore), January 14, 1928.

<sup>79</sup> "At Morgan College," *Afro-American* (Baltimore), April 5, 1930. A historically black institution, Morgan College became Morgan State College in 1937 and Morgan State University in 1975.

<sup>80</sup> "Rabbi Would Save Personality of Labor," *New York Times*, June 30, 1928.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Lewis V. Baldwin, *To Make the Wounded Whole: The Cultural Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Minneapolis, MN, 1992), 72; James H. Cone, *Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream or a Nightmare* (Ossining, NY, 1991), 27-28.

<sup>83</sup> Edward L. Israel, "As to Social Justice and the Central Conference Rabbis," *Jewish Exponent*, July 20, 1928.

<sup>84</sup> Mathews contextualizes such a cultural phenomenon: "Given the brutality of lynching and the contempt with which its victims were treated, one might be excused some skepticism that in executing a black victim, whites were making him sacred." Donald G. Mathews, "The Southern Rite of Human Sacrifice: Lynching in the American South," *Mississippi Quarterly* 61 (2008): 27; "Eye Witness to Lynching Tells How Mob Acted," *Afro-American*, December 12, 1931.

<sup>85</sup> "Ritchie Orders Mob Members' Arrest," *Baltimore Sun*, December 6, 1931.

<sup>86</sup> "Rabbi Israel Urges Action on Lynching," newspaper clippings and correspondence relating to the lynching of Matthew Williams, Governor Albert Ritchie Collection, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, MD.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> John R. Wennersten, *Maryland's Eastern Shore: A Journey in Time and Place* (Centerville, MD, 1992), 137.

<sup>90</sup> "Rabbi Israel Urges Action on Lynching."

<sup>91</sup> Edward L. Israel, "Some Thoughts on Social Justice Today," n.d., Har Sinai Collection, Jewish Museum of Maryland, Baltimore (hereafter cited as Har Sinai Collection); Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Campaign Address at Detroit, Michigan," October 2, 1932, Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, The American Presidency Project, accessed May 1, 2019, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=88393>.

<sup>92</sup> Israel, "Some Thoughts on Social Justice Today."

<sup>93</sup> "Dr. Israel on 'Dr.' Bruce," *Baltimore Sun*, January 31, 1932.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Israel borrowed the title from the famous inspirational lecture, published in 1890, by Russell Conwell, a Baptist minister and founder and first president of Temple University in Philadelphia.

<sup>96</sup> "Religion Fails, Rabbi Israel tells Howard," *Afro-American*, March 25, 1933.

<sup>97</sup> George B. Murphy, Jr., the nephew of Carl J. Murphy, was born in Baltimore in 1906 to George B. Murphy, Sr., and Grace H. L. Murphy. Like the rest of the family, Murphy went on to work for the *Afro*, serving as a correspondent in Harlem during the 1930s and eventually working his way up to becoming the editor in chief of the *Washington Afro-American* during the 1940s. Like his uncle, Murphy, Jr., was heavily involved in the antilynching protest of the early civil rights movement and went on to establish friendships with W. E. B. DuBois and Paul Robeson. Eben Miller, *Born along the Color Line: The 1933 America Conference and the Rise of a National Civil Rights Movement* (New York, 2012), 164; Farrar, *Baltimore Afro-American*, 5,6; "George B. Murphy, Jr.," Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Baltimore City, MD; "Named Honorary Head of Anti-Lynching Group," *Baltimore Sun*, November 7, 1933.

<sup>98</sup> "M. E. Pastor Accepts Memorial Church Call," *Baltimore Sun*, January 19, 1937.

<sup>99</sup> "City's 'Nation' Dinner Most Memorable in Series—Villard," *Afro-American* (Baltimore), March 17, 1928.

<sup>100</sup> "Asserts Lynching Increases Crimes," *Baltimore Sun*, December 2, 1933.

<sup>101</sup> "Inquiry Ordered in Missouri Mob's Burning of Negro," *Albany* (New York) *Evening News*, November 29, 1933; "Slayers of Hart Lynched by California Mob after Body of Victim is Found," *Baltimore Sun*, November 27, 1933.

<sup>102</sup> "City to Send Ten to Lynch Hearing," *Baltimore Sun*, February 20, 1934.

<sup>103</sup> Andor Skotnes, *A New Deal for All? Race and Class Struggles in Depression-Era Baltimore* (Durham, NC, 2012), 283; Andor Skotnes, "'Buy Where You Can Work': Boycotting for Jobs in African-American Baltimore, 1933–1934," *Journal of Social History* 27 (Summer 1994): 735–36; Weiner, "Insiders and Outsiders," 477–78.

<sup>104</sup> Walter White to Edward Israel, December 16, 1935, box 2, folder 1, Israel Papers.

<sup>105</sup> "Jew Hatred Among Negro," *Crisis* (February 1936): 39.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>109</sup> Roy Wilkins to Edward Israel, February 25, 1935, box 2, folder 1, Israel Papers.

<sup>110</sup> Lillie M. Jackson, "Letters from Readers: Jew Hatred Among Negroes," *Crisis* (April 1936): 122.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr., "N.A.A.C.P.—Welcome to Baltimore!," *Crisis* (July 1936): 200.

<sup>113</sup> James L. Moses, *Just and Righteous Causes: Rabbi Ira Sanders and the Fight for Racial and Social Justice in Arkansas, 1926–1963* (Fayetteville, AR, 2018), 6.

<sup>114</sup> Abraham Shusterman, *Legacy of a Liberal*, 79.

<sup>115</sup> "Annual School of Religion Set at Howard University," *Washington Post*, November 5, 1934.

<sup>116</sup> Elizabeth Kirkpatrick Dilling, *The Red Network: A "Who's Who" and Handbook of Radicalism for Patriots* (Chicago, 1934), 114, 129, 181, 197.



<sup>117</sup> "Twentieth Anniversary of the Death of Rabbi Israel," 1962, Har Sinai Collection.

<sup>118</sup> "Dr. Israel's Death Mourned," *Baltimore Sun*, October 21, 1941.

<sup>119</sup> "Funeral of Dr. Israel to Take Place Today in Baltimore," *Jewish Telegraph Agency*, October 22, 1941.

<sup>120</sup> Lillie M. Jackson telegraph to Mrs. Edward L. Israel and Family, October 20, 1941, box 2, folder 15, Israel Papers.

<sup>121</sup> Lenora Heilig Nast, Laurence N. Krause, and Richard C. Monk *Baltimore: A Living Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1982), 89, 90, 97.



A Call to Service: Rabbis Jacob M. Rothschild,  
Alexander D. Goode, Sidney M. Lefkowitz, and  
Roland B. Gittelsohn and World War II

by

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**W**orld War II was the great watershed of the twentieth century. The historian Michael Bess's *Choices Under Fire: Moral Dimensions of World War II* argues that the war provided

the single greatest catalyst of change in the twentieth century, bringing about (or sharply accelerating) deep transformations in virtually every domain of human life, from geopolitics to social movements, from economies to high culture. Put all the pieces together, and you have a historical watershed of the first magnitude—like the French Revolution—one of those markers we tacitly use in delimiting the major eras of history.<sup>1</sup>

The transformations resulting from the war were extremely evident in the United States. Whether one is concerned with scientific developments, the history of science and higher education, demographic migrations, the growth of government, the status of women, race relations, industrialization, urbanization and suburbanization, or the emergence of America as a world power, the war was crucial in instituting or accelerating change. The war's impact was particularly great in the South. In perhaps no other region, with the exception of California, did the war bring more abrupt change. It diminished the isolation of much of the South's rural population, encouraged the flight from farms and small towns to factories and cities, and quickened the undermining of the region's racial mores. The effect of the war was especially felt in myriad ways by the millions of southerners who served in the military

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during the war and returned to the South with different perspectives and ambitions. Increasingly after the war the South came to resemble the rest of America.<sup>2</sup>

The year 2020 marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the war's end and is perhaps an appropriate time to consider its legacy as exemplified in the lives of four Jewish military chaplains. It is impossible to write of the history of America's Jews since 1945 without considering the effect of the war in general and the influence of these rabbis in particular. These four Jewish chaplains, and the history of Jewish chaplaincy generally, influenced the ways American Jews were perceived after the war and facilitated their entry into the American mainstream. The history of Jewish military chaplaincy reflects the broader theme of Jewish acceptance in the United States.

Jewish chaplaincy in the American military began in the Civil War, and the role and numbers of Jewish chaplains radically increased during World War I and grew even greater during World War II. The Jewish Welfare Board (JWB), working through various committees such as the Committee on Army and Navy Religious Affairs, the Publications Committee, and the Responsa Committee, was responsible for providing the Jewish chaplains requested by the military, supplying their needs, and publicizing their activities. More than three hundred Jewish military chaplains served during the war, comprising more than half of all American rabbis. The contributions of chaplains and other Jews to the war effort was publicized by the JWB's Bureau of War Records, which was eager to refute the canard that Jews shirked their military responsibilities.<sup>3</sup> Undoubtedly the work of the Bureau of War Records contributed to the postwar decline of antisemitism, as did popular culture produced by Jews.

On many levels, this essay concerns images: images of patriotism, unity, and selfless sacrifice; the image that the war and related events exerted on calls for a just, fairer, and more equitable society; and the images projected by the rabbis' actions and cultural depictions that contributed to a decline of antisemitism. It is the story of the impact of these and other images of social change.

America's Jews had a stake in the war unlike that of other Americans. The nation's major enemy was bent on the annihilation of European Jewry, and America's Jews never doubted that it was a "good

war," to use the title of Studs Turkel's best-selling book. Although they numbered only 3 percent of the general population, Jews exerted a massive impact on the nation's understanding of the war. The most popular novel of each of the military services was written by a Jewish veteran of the war: Herman Wouk's *The Caine Mutiny* for the navy; Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* and Irwin Shaw's *The Young Lions* for the army; Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* for the air force; and Leon Uris's *Battle Cry* for the marines.<sup>4</sup>

The same impact occurred in American cinema as well as in classical, popular, and Broadway music. The Jewish-owned Warner Brothers Studio produced such classic wartime films as *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, *Casablanca*, *Destination Tokyo*, *Mission to Moscow*, *Pride of the Marines*, and *Air Force*, while other Jewish-owned studios came out with additional important World War II films. Among the most significant classical musical compositions on the war written during the 1940s were Aaron Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man," Marc Blitzstein's "Airborne Symphony," Morton Gould's "American Salute," Leonard Bernstein's "Jeremiah" symphony, and Richard Rodgers's score for the television series *Victory at Sea*. Jews wrote the lyrics and music for such popular wartime songs as "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," "The Last Time I Saw Paris," "There'll Be Blue Birds Over the White Cliffs of Dover," "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," and "When the Light Go On Again (All Over the World)." The most popular Broadway musical during the war was Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II's *Oklahoma*, in which Curly proclaims, "the land I belong to is grand." Arguably the three most iconic American images of the war are Joe Rosenthal's photograph of the raising of the flag at Iwo Jima, Alfred Eisenstadt's picture of the Times Square celebration at the end of the war, and the United States postal stamp of the four chaplains who perished when their ship, the USAT *Dorchester*, was torpedoed by a German submarine near Greenland.<sup>5</sup>

Alexander D. Goode was a Jewish chaplain aboard the *Dorchester*. Two other Jewish military chaplains, Sidney M. Lefkowitz and Roland B. Gittelsohn, gave two of the most famous orations of the war, while Jacob M. Rothschild was the first Jewish chaplain of World War II to see action. Three of these rabbis—Goode, Lefkowitz, and Rothschild—were southerners, or at least adopted southerners if one's definition of the South

includes Washington, D.C., which is south of the Mason-Dixon Line. The war impacted all four rabbis in indelible ways, and their lives take on new meaning when seen against the background of their wartime service. Their experiences and the responses they evoked offer insights into the war's impact as a major turning point in American and American Jewish history.<sup>6</sup>

These four rabbis were contemporaries and friends. Their families had immigrated to America from eastern Europe around the turn of the twentieth century, and all were born in the United States—one in 1908, one in 1910, and two in 1911—and they came of age politically during the Great Depression, which heightened their political sensibilities. All attended Hebrew Union College (HUC), the Reform seminary in Cincinnati, and their presence there reflected the rapid acculturation of the second generation of eastern European Jews. At HUC they were immersed in the school's emphasis on *tikun olam*, the repair of the world. Lefkowitz was ordained in 1933, Gittelsohn and Rothschild in 1936, and Goode in 1937, and each was representative of the Reform rabbinate of their generation.

*Jacob M. Rothschild*

Jacob M. Rothschild was born in 1911 and grew up in the Squirrel Hill section of Pittsburgh. His family held membership in Temple Rodef Shalom, where he received his early Jewish education.<sup>7</sup> He attended the University of Pittsburgh for a year and then transferred to the University of Cincinnati. While in Cincinnati he also was a student at HUC. Under the seminary's auspices, he functioned as a student rabbi in Henderson, Kentucky, and Jonesboro, Arkansas. Following ordination in 1936, he served for a year as the rabbi of Temple Emanuel, a Reform congregation in Davenport, Iowa. In 1937 he returned to Pittsburgh as the assistant rabbi of Rodef Shalom, then headed by Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof, a prominent Talmudic scholar.



*Chaplain Fred W. Thissen, Catholic (left), Chaplain Ernest Pine, Protestant (center), and Chaplain Jacob Rothschild, Jewish (right), students at the U.S. Army chaplain school, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, April 1942. (Photograph by Jack Delano. Office of War Information, Library of Congress.)*

Rothschild joined the military as soon as he could after the Pearl Harbor attack. He did his basic training at Fort Bragg in North Carolina, and after chaplaincy training was assigned to the army's Americal Division (later the Twenty-Third Division). The division went ashore on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands in October 1942 and on October 13 was the first army division to engage in any offensive operation during the war. In 1943, while in the South Pacific, Rothschild contracted malaria. He was sent to Augusta, Georgia, to recover, and then did public relations work in Washington, D.C., Newport News, Virginia, and elsewhere in behalf of the war effort, often speaking about his combat experiences.

As was true of other Jewish chaplains who served during World War II, Rothschild came out of the war with a heightened appreciation of its ideological dimensions, and this intensified the emphasis on social involvement he had imbibed while at HUC. His biographer, who was also his widow, noted that while "his style was still rough and a bit immature, his idealism and sense of social justice, his faith in the American system, his dedication to the cause of brotherhood, and his awareness of current events" remained intact after the war. He was optimistic regarding the country's future. America's servicemen, he said shortly after the war's end, are returning to the states having "learned love. From the loss of freedom they have learned the love of freedom. They shall return not only *eager* to create a better world. What is far more important, they shall come back *prepared* to create that world."<sup>8</sup>

Rothschild left the service in April 1946 and became the rabbi of the Hebrew Benevolent Congregation (The Temple), the prominent and only Reform congregation in Atlanta at the time, and remained there until his death in 1973.<sup>9</sup> Coming from the North and raised in a religious environment that prioritized social action, he was appalled by the racial situation that he encountered firsthand in Atlanta. He joined several organizations seeking to overturn segregation, including the Atlanta Council of Human Relations, the Southern Regional Council, the Georgia Council of Human Relations, and the Urban League. Here he met his future allies during the heady days of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. He was also involved with the Central Conference of American Rabbis' Commission on Justice and Peace and the Social Action Committee of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.



Because of his support of the civil rights movement and his close friendship with Martin Luther King, Jr., Rothschild became perhaps the most prominent southern rabbi of his time. His relationship with King was such that the Atlanta Ministerial Association chose him to deliver the eulogy at its memorial service for the murdered civil rights leader. Four years earlier, when King had won the Nobel Peace Prize, Rothschild was cochairman of an Atlanta banquet in King's honor. This was the first integrated formal event in the city.<sup>10</sup>

*Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., at an Atlanta event honoring King for winning the Nobel Peace Prize, 1965.  
(Courtesy of the Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History  
at the Breman Museum, Atlanta.)*

Rothschild wasted no time informing his new congregants of his attitude toward southern racial patterns. In a High Holiday sermon at The Temple in 1946, he noted that the blood of white and black soldiers of World War II was identical, and on the same occasion the next year he warned his congregants that the South was facing an imminent racial crisis. Despite the opposition of some congregants, he continued to

preach on this topic with increasing intensity, at times comparing conditions in the South with those in Nazi Germany. A decade later, in response to one southern rabbi who feared such pronouncements would endanger the vulnerable Jews of the South, Rothschild drew a comparison to World War II. How, he asked, "can we condemn the millions who stood by under Hitler or honor those few who chose to live by their ideals . . . when we refuse to make a similar choice now that the dilemma is our own?" And in 1964 he compared the burning and bombing of black churches in the South to *Kristallnacht* and the beating of black children by white southerners to the violence directed at Jews in Europe.<sup>11</sup>

Rabid segregationists and neo-Nazis detested Rothschild, and they bombed The Temple on October 12, 1958, destroying the religious school, assembly hall, and offices. The attack was strongly condemned by Atlanta's religious, political, and economic leaders, and Ralph McGill, editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, won a Pulitzer Prize for his commentary on the incident. The bombing, however, did not discourage Rothschild from continuing to preach against racism and segregation. For his efforts he received the Clergyman of the Year Award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews and the Abe Goldstein Human Relations Award from the Anti-Defamation League.<sup>12</sup> Rothschild's funeral in January 1974 was extensively covered in the Atlanta press and was attended by a who's who of Atlanta's economic and religious elite as well as by Congressman Andrew Young, Jimmy Carter, the governor of Georgia and future president, and his wife, Rosalynn.

It is likely that had Rothschild not been in the military he still would have been on the forefront of the civil rights movement. Many Jews who did not serve in the military were fervent supporters of the civil rights movement after the war. But the support for civil rights by Rothschild and other Jews who had served in the war against Nazism and tyranny and had seen the effect of racism with their own eyes was infused with a particular passion.

*Alexander D. Goode*

Alexander D. Goode was born in Brooklyn in May 1911. He grew up in the nation's capital and married his high school sweetheart, who was a niece of the entertainer Al Jolson, whose family also lived in Washington.<sup>13</sup> During the 1930s Washington's schools and playgrounds were



*Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, c. 1942.*  
(Wikimedia Commons.)

racially segregated, and pro-segregation southern senators and congressmen determined the city's political fate. Goode's experience of living in a segregated city left a deep impression, and he later compared the treatment of blacks in Washington with that of Europe's Jews.<sup>14</sup> He graduated from the University of Cincinnati in 1934, and three years later was ordained by HUC. As was true of many of HUC's students living under the cloud of World War I, Goode valued shalom and identified as a pacifist.<sup>15</sup> His pacifism, however, could not survive the Nazi threat to European Jewry. He volunteered for military service in the Navy in early 1941 but was told he was not needed. He volunteered again after the Pearl Harbor attack and in July 1942 was accepted into the army's chaplaincy branch. Goode did his training at the Army Chaplains School at Harvard University and briefly served as a chaplain at the 333rd Air Base Squadron in Goldsboro, North Carolina. On January 23, 1943, he boarded the USAT *Dorchester*, a former luxury liner that had been converted to a troop transport, bound for Greenland with military supplies and eight hundred soldiers.<sup>16</sup>

Goode wrote a letter to his wife shortly before his ship left port in which he voiced the patriotic, liberal, internationalist, and optimistic

sentiments common within Reform circles at that time and which Rothschild, Lefkowitz, and Gittelsohn would later also express. The American cause, he said, was a struggle in behalf of the justice and righteousness dreamed of by the prophets of the bible, and he predicted that an Allied victory would bring forth a "new age of brotherhood . . . that will usher in at the same time the world democracy we all want; the age when men will admire the freedom and responsibility of the common man in American democracy. Our methods will be imitated and improved upon. Our spirit of tolerance will spread." The freedom from want and fear enunciated by Franklin Roosevelt in his famous Four Freedoms speech would spread. "Men the world over will have enough to eat, clothes to wear, opportunity for improvement through education, and full employment." Tyranny would disappear, because "the forces of justice speeded through space by airplane, will have overwhelmed it," and "protests against injustice will be heard in every capital of the world the moment it occurs and redress will be granted at once." The future was bright. "What has seemed like civilization up to this point is but a crude effort compared to the era that lies just before us. The new world will be the goal of the cavalcade of democracy through the ages. Toward the new world the cavalcade of democracy marches on, heralding the century of humanity." Goode left behind a manuscript titled "Cavalcade of Democracy" which described a postwar world of cooperation between Christians and Jews in which the spirit of democracy would rule. "Christianity and Judaism were religions of democracy," he claimed, because both looked to God as the father of every person.<sup>17</sup>

Shortly after midnight on February 3, 1943, a German submarine torpedoed the *Dorchester* in the Labrador Sea one hundred miles from its destination. It sank in under thirty minutes, the only American troopship lost during the war. Of the 904 men aboard, 678 perished, including Goode and one Roman Catholic and two Protestant chaplains. The chaplains had handed over their life jackets to soldiers who, in their haste to escape the sinking ship, had forgotten to take theirs with them. Goode also gave his gloves to a man who credited them with saving his life. Legend has it that the chaplains linked their hands together and were praying when the ship went under. It is doubtful that anyone in the water or in the lifeboats could have heard anything the chaplains were

saying, but it makes a good story. Goode was the first Jewish chaplain killed in any American war.<sup>18</sup>

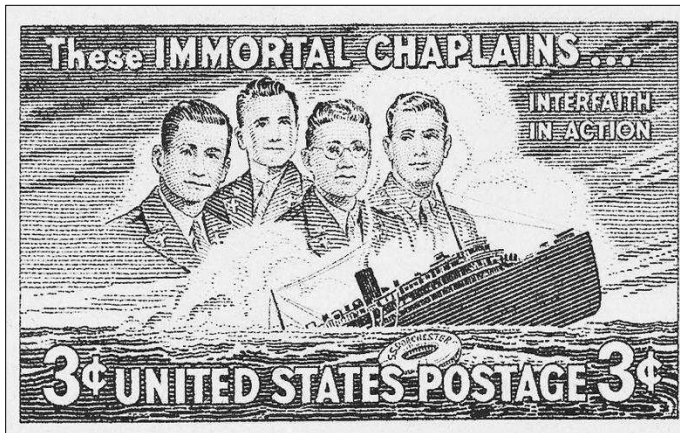
It took several weeks for news of the sinking to circulate in America, but when it did the response was swift, unambiguous, and electric. The four chaplains became national heroes and a collective symbol of patriotism, democracy, religious pluralism, interfaith harmony, and the unity necessary for military victory. They were seen as embodying the passage in the *Chaplain's Training Manual* portraying the military chaplain as "the servant of God for all, and no narrow sectarian spirit should color his utterances, nor should his personal work assist only a special group."<sup>19</sup> Robert L. Gushwa's history of the army's chaplaincy during the war described the actions of the four chaplains as "the most famous and celebrated incident" involving American chaplains during World War II. It is also probably the most illustrious and admired event in the entire history of the American military chaplaincy.<sup>20</sup>

On December 19, 1944, the chaplains were awarded the Purple Heart and the Distinguished Service Cross. Brigadier General William R. Arnold, Chief of Chaplains, said when the awards were announced that "the extraordinary heroism and devotion of these men of God has been an unwavering beacon for the thousands of chaplains of the armed forces. Their example has inspired and strengthened men everywhere. The manner of their dying was one of the noble deeds of the war. The churches of America can be proud that such men carried their banners into this war, and men of all faiths can be proud that these men of different faiths died together."<sup>21</sup>

Stained-glass windows depicting the chaplains' selfless act were placed in the Heroes Chapel at the National Cathedral in Washington, the United States Military Academy at West Point, the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, the Pentagon, a Veterans Administration hospital in Minneapolis, and in the chapels at Fort Jackson, South Carolina; Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Snelling, Minnesota; and Fort Lewis, Washington. In 1951 President Harry S. Truman dedicated the Chapel of the Four Chaplains in the basement of a Baptist church in Philadelphia. The church was sold to Temple University in 1974, and two decades later the chapel was relocated to Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, and then to the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. Other chapels honoring the four chaplains were established in the Pittsburgh International Airport, in the *Queen*

*Mary* docked at Long Beach, California, and in an army base in South Korea. A public school in York, Pennsylvania, where Goode had served as a rabbi before the war, was named for him. Finally, monuments, sculptures, and plaques were placed in dozens of schools, churches, parks, cemeteries, racetracks, courthouses, hospitals, and museums around the United States.

A U.S. postage stamp was issued in honor of the four chaplains in 1948 that pictured them looking down from a cloud with the caption "These Immortal Chaplains . . . Interfaith in Action." This was the first time that a stamp had been issued to honor someone other than a president who had not been dead for at least ten years.<sup>22</sup> Thirteen years later Congress awarded the four chaplains a Special Medal for Heroism, which had never been awarded previously and was never to be awarded again.<sup>23</sup> In 1968, Congress passed a resolution designating February 3 as Four Chaplains Day. In the late 1990s, descendants of the chaplains established the Immortal Chaplains Foundation that awarded medals to individuals who had demonstrated courage and risked their lives to help others. Honorees have included the villagers of the French town of Le Chambon, who saved five thousand Jews during World War II, and



*U.S. Postal Service commemorative stamp honoring the four chaplains who perished on the USAT Dorchester, issued in 1948. Pictured left to right: Rev. George L. Fox (Methodist), Rev. Clark V. Poling (Reformed Church in America), Fr. John P. Washington (Catholic); and Rabbi Alexander D. Goode (Jewish).*

*(Wikimedia Commons.)*

Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa. The United States Air Force also annually awards the Spirit of the Four Chaplains medal to Air Force personnel who exhibit traits associated with the four chaplains. The date of the sinking, February 3, is listed as a feast day in the Episcopal Church of the United States.

Goode's death, alongside those of his Catholic and Protestant colleagues, assumed an important symbolic meaning for all Americans, and particularly for Jews. It refuted the long-standing antisemitic canard that Jews were unpatriotic and shirked military service, reinforced the post-war image of America as a nation in which Protestants, Catholics, and Jews stood as equals, and helped drive antisemitism, as well as other prejudices, into the margins of American social and political life. The chaplains' deaths also fortified the "melting pot" imagery of American nationality which views American identity as the product of contributions from all of America's ethnic, racial, and religious groups and encouraged Americans to see themselves as living in a "Judeo-Christian" culture. Finally, the response to Goode's death was one factor in the normalization of American Jewish identity. It reassured Jews, who remembered the antisemitism in America of the 1920s and 1930s and witnessed the Holocaust of European Jewry, that the America of World War II and the postwar years was truly different and that the contribution of Jews such as Goode to the war effort had helped make this difference a reality.

*Sidney M. Lefkowitz*

A year and a half after the sinking of the *Dorchester*, three other famous events took place involving Sidney Lefkowitz. Lefkowitz was born on September 11, 1908, in New York City and educated in Brooklyn public schools. He graduated from the University of Cincinnati in 1930 and was ordained by HUC three years later. Twice while a student at HUC he led High Holiday services in Opelousas, Louisiana, a small town west of Baton Rouge. Lefkowitz would renew his friendship with the Jews of Opelousas when he was a chaplain at Camp Livingston, Camp Claiborne, and Essler Field outside Alexandria, Louisiana, during the war. In 1933, he became the assistant rabbi of Congregation Beth Ahabah in Richmond, Virginia, and a few years later married Dorothy Sycle, a native of that city. In 1941, Lefkowitz headed the Richmond Jew-

ish Army and Navy Committee, which provided Sunday lunches at Beth Ahabah for Jews stationed in the Richmond area.<sup>24</sup> He remained in Richmond until he joined the army in April 1942. When the army asked where he would like to be stationed, he said anywhere in the South. His wife, he later noted, was an “unreconstructed Southerner” and “we would never think of going north.”<sup>25</sup>

By December 7, 1941, Lefkowitz had shed whatever pacifist inclinations he might have imbued at HUC. He said that it would be improper for him to lead a congregation whose members served in the military, some of whom had perhaps been casualties, without having served himself, and he declared that the war should continue until the unconditional surrender of the enemy. During the war Lefkowitz accumulated seven battle stars and a Bronze Star and rose to the rank of major. He came ashore at Utah Beach in the early stages of the Normandy invasion, served as a chaplain during the fighting for Saint-Lô and the Battle of the Bulge, and was the first rabbi to encounter a German concentration camp when, on April 11, 1945, he entered the notorious Dora-Mittelbau slave labor camp near Nordhausen.<sup>26</sup>

His most notable involvement in the war, however, had occurred a half year earlier. On September 16, 1944, Lefkowitz’s unit entered Germany. “Now, at last, we are in Germany itself,” he wrote in his diary. “Now we can see for ourselves what is left of Jewry—its people, its houses of worship, its cemeteries—after the brutal years of Nazi oppression.” The next day Lefkowitz conducted Rosh Hashanah services for Jewish soldiers near Aachen in a textile factory with a picture of Hitler on the wall. This was the first Jewish religious service in occupied Germany, although a brief memorial for Chaplain Irving Tepper, who had been killed in action on August 11, 1944, in France, preceded it.<sup>27</sup> German planes briefly interrupted the service, and the worshippers had to take cover. In retribution for their bad manners, three of the German planes were shot down by American artillery.<sup>28</sup>

Ten days later Lefkowitz conducted three Yom Kippur services for nine hundred Jewish soldiers in Kornelimünster near Aachen. Photographers were present at the three services, as were representatives from the Allied Newspapers, a consortium of major American newspapers including the *New York Post* and the *Boston Globe*. Andy Rooney also reported on them for *Stars and Stripes*, the military newspaper. A British



Broadcasting Company reporter recorded part of the first service, and it was broadcast the next day on a radio program titled "Combat Diary."<sup>29</sup>

The third event occurred on Sunday morning, October 29, 1944, when Lefkowitz, assisted by Protestant chaplain Bernard F. Henry and Roman Catholic chaplain Edward J. Waters, led a ten-minute open-air service for fifty Jewish soldiers near the remains of an Aachen synagogue that had been smashed by the Nazis during *Kristallnacht* in November 1938. The service was broadcast throughout the globe on radio by the National Broadcasting Company and was the first direct broadcast of a Jewish religious service from German soil since the coming to power of National Socialism. German artillery could be heard in the background. A famous photo shows the service taking place in the midst of dozens of German dragon-teeth tank obstacles. That the rabbi was assisted by a Protestant and Catholic chaplain in this highly symbolic and well-publicized event harkened back to the sacrifice of the four chaplains on the *Dorchester*.<sup>30</sup>

In his homily, Lefkowitz stressed that the war was a struggle in defense of religious freedom and freedom of conscience. He underscored that the service was "not merely a Jewish religious service, however important that in itself is. It is far more." It was in essence "a proclamation that the days of darkness are passing, that the bastions from which were spewed forth hatred and malice [have] been breached and will soon be destroyed, that worship of God is again restored in part of His world where it had been proscribed."<sup>31</sup> By emphasizing the threat posed to religious freedom, Lefkowitz distorted the nature of Nazi antisemitism. The Nazis' hatred of Jews was based on racism, not religion. Jewish converts to Christianity were equally subjected to persecution and murder because, according to false Nazi eugenic theories, they racially remained Jews. Lefkowitz's stress on the threat that Germany posed to freedom of religion and freedom of conscience elicited an immediate assent from all sectors of American society for whom such civil liberties were fundamental to American identity. It also avoided giving ammunition to those inclined to compare the racially based treatment of Jews in Europe with that of African Americans in the United States. As historians have noted, attacks on Germany for its treatment of Jews did not necessarily translate into opposition to racial segregation in the South.<sup>32</sup>

*Rabbi Sidney Lefkowitz, left-center, conducts services near Aachen, Germany, October 29, 1944. Cantor Max Fuchs is singing, while James Cassidy of NBC holds the microphone over which the services were broadcast to the U.S.*

*(National Jewish Welfare Board Records, American Jewish Historical Society, New York.)*

In May 1944, Lefkowitz resigned from his position at Beth Ahabah because of his strained personal relationship with the senior rabbi, Edward N. Calisch.<sup>33</sup> After Lefkowitz left the military in December 1945 he was offered pulpits in New York and Boston, but he wished to remain in the South. He interviewed for positions in Atlanta, New Orleans, Wilmington, North Carolina, and Jacksonville, Florida, and chose Congregation Ahavath Chesed in Jacksonville. He remained its rabbi until 1973, when he assumed emeritus status. He continued living in Jacksonville until his death in July 1997. A significant figure in the city's civic life, he taught comparative religion at Jacksonville University, served on the board of trustees of the Jacksonville Public Library and the Wolfson Children's Hospital, and was involved in various interreligious activities. He was also a member of the board of directors of the National Conference of Christians and Jews and was a member of the Jacksonville Urban League. The family of the future historian Stephen J. Whitfield belonged to Lefkowitz's congregation, and Whitfield remembers the rabbi's commitment to the life of the mind and the "moral authority" of his sermons.<sup>34</sup>

Lefkowitz, Gittelsohn, and Rothschild were all involved in interfaith work after the war, and Goode undoubtedly would have been had he survived.<sup>35</sup> For chaplains, military service had been an extended exercise in the religious ecumenism encouraged by the military's belief that unity was necessary for victory. The chaplains' activities often included

*Rabbi Sidney Lefkowitz, c. 1950s.*  
 (Courtesy of Hazel Mack, Archivist,  
 Congregation Ahavath Chesed—  
 The Temple, Jacksonville, FL.)

tasks for which their seminary training had not prepared them. Thus Christian chaplains helped plan and then participated in Passover seders, while Jewish chaplains offered last rites for mortally wounded Christian soldiers.<sup>36</sup> Such work left a lasting impression, and it was natural that chaplains would continue to be supportive of interfaith work after the war. Finally, the example of the Holocaust showed what could result from religious and racial bigotry. The rapid decline in American antisemitism after 1945 and the destruction in less than two decades of legally mandated racial segregation in the South would not have occurred had it not been for the war.

Lefkowitz's brief sermon of October 29, 1944, resembled the more famous eulogy delivered by Roland Gittelsohn in March 1945 on Iwo Jima. Both emphasized the threat posed by the enemy to all Americans and to religion in general, and both subsumed American Jews into the broader category of Americans and stressed broader themes of faith and patriotism. The fact that America's greatest enemy was also the greatest enemy of Jews reassured Jews that there was no dissonance between their American and Jewish identities. Participation in the war against Nazism, the historian Jonathan D. Sarna wrote, had become for Jews "the ultimate synthesis of patriotic allegiance and religious duty."<sup>37</sup>

*Roland B. Gittelsohn*

Roland B. Gittelsohn was born in Cleveland in May 1910, graduated from Western Reserve University in 1931, and was ordained by HUC in 1936. When World War II broke out in Europe in 1939, he was the rabbi of the Central Synagogue in Rockville Centre, Long Island, New York. As was true of other liberal American rabbis during the 1930s when memories of World War I were still fresh, he was a pacifist and, in his case, an extreme pacifist. He was a zealous reader of antiwar literature, a strong proponent of disarmament, and an opponent of the military draft and the presence of ROTC units on college campuses. He joined the War Resisters League and took the Oxford Pledge that stated that he would refuse to participate in any future war. War, he said, "was the ultimate immorality, to be shunned at all cost."<sup>38</sup>

Lee Mandel, Gittelsohn's biographer, noted that when it came to war he was "completely obsessed with the First World War and the 'lessons' that had to be derived from it." Ten million lives had been lost in

that conflict, Gittelson asked in 1934, to what end? He answered, "more war, more hate, more suspicion, more death." He declared, "war is nothing but organized butchery; today war is nothing but suicide—senseless, shameless suicide!" Gittelson put his faith in the power of international law, the League of Nations, disarmament agreements, and the bleak memories of World War I to prevent future wars.<sup>39</sup>

When these solutions proved futile and World War II broke out in Europe in September 1939, Gittelson could foresee nothing that could possibly justify American entry into the fighting. "If we do nothing else," he said, "we must stay out of this war. . . . I hate Hitler and want desperately to see him defeated, [but] I want us to stay out of the war even if he seems to be winning."<sup>40</sup> Gittelson accepted the revisionist interpretation of America's entry into World War I that blamed it on "merchants of death"—bankers and munition manufacturers—and he strongly supported the neutrality legislation of the late 1930s designed to eliminate the economic benefits of trading with belligerent nations. He attacked President Franklin D. Roosevelt as a hypocritical warmonger and championed the Ludlow Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which, had it passed, would have required approval by a national referendum prior to American involvement in any war.

Gittelson's aversion to war forced him to equate Great Britain and France with Germany. Neither side in the European conflict, he averred, was worthy of American support. England and France, he claimed in a 1939 sermon, were hardly defenders of democracy or western civilization. "What's democratic about an England which betrays every sacred promise it ever made?" he asked. "I do not love England! I hate England! I will not fight for England! . . . At least Hitler's Germany never pretended to be our friend or the friend of democracy. At least Hitler's Germany never embraced us so that it could knife us."<sup>41</sup> From the retrospect of the postwar years, these words are shocking. It is true that the Holocaust and other nefarious objectives of Hitler were not completely clear in 1939, but his fanatical antisemitism and the plight of German Jewry were common knowledge.

Gittelson admitted after the war that his antiwar stance had been "extremist," "foolish," "unreasonable," and "dogmatic." In 1943, after what he called "the most excruciating moral dilemma of my life" and after opposing every naval appropriation bill in Congress prior to Pearl

Harbor and predicting that Japan would never be so foolish to attack the United States, he enlisted in the Navy.<sup>42</sup> By then he had adopted the longstanding religious distinction between just and unjust wars and had concluded that American entry into World War II was morally justified. After chaplaincy training, Gittelsohn was commissioned in May 1943, and in 1944 was assigned to the Fifth Marine Corps Division, becoming the first Jewish chaplain in the Corps' history.<sup>43</sup>

On February 19, 1945, the Fifth Marine Division, along with Third and Fourth Marine Divisions, invaded Iwo Jima, a small island 750 miles south of Tokyo. The American military wanted the island in order to destroy the radar stations warning Japan of approaching American B-29 bombers; eliminate the threat to the bombers posed by Japanese fighter planes based on its three air fields; provide a rescue base for bombers unable to complete the long trek back to the Mariana Islands; furnish a base for American fighter planes to escort the B-29s, and offer a staging area and naval base for the eventual invasion of the Japanese home islands.

The Japanese had heavily fortified the island, were prepared to fight to the death, and put up their stoutest defense of the war. This resulted in the bloodiest clash in Marine Corps history and the only World War II battle in which American casualties exceeded those of the Japanese. Approximately 44 percent of the sixty thousand Marines who took part were either killed or wounded. In actual numbers, 6,800 died, and 20,000 were wounded. Of the killed, 2,600 were from the Fifth Division. This battle, Gittelsohn observed, "was the most unspeakably horrendous hell I have ever known or could possibly imagine."<sup>44</sup> He might have thought otherwise had he been stationed in Europe and witnessed the results of the Holocaust or visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the war.

Gittelsohn became famous in March 1945 when a controversy erupted over his participation in the opening of a Fifth Division cemetery on Iwo Jima. Rev. Warren Cuthriell, the head chaplain of the division, proposed that Gittelsohn deliver the main eulogy. Eight Christian chaplains of the division, two Protestant and six Roman Catholic, vehemently protested. They argued that this would be unseemly since more than 95 percent of those interred in the cemetery were Christians, and they threatened to boycott the ceremony if Gittelsohn was selected. Cuthriell



*Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn, far right, conducting the eulogy for Jewish members of the Fifth Marine Division on the island of Iwo Jima, March 26, 1945.*

*(Jewish Virtual Library.)*

refused to back down. Having Gittelsohn deliver the eulogy, he claimed, "was precisely one of the things for which we were fighting the war."<sup>45</sup>

When Gittelsohn heard of the squabble, he withdrew his name from consideration. Instead of a joint ceremony, there were three separate ceremonies—one each for Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Jews. On March 26, Gittelsohn delivered his eulogy in the Jewish part of the cemetery, and, in a show of support, three Protestant chaplains attended it rather than their own service. Two years later Gittelsohn said that he did "not remember anything in my life that made me so painfully heart-sick. We had just come through nearly five weeks of miserable hell. . . . Protestants, Catholics, and Jews had lived together, fought together, died together, and now lay buried together. But we the living could not unite to pray together!"<sup>46</sup>

The Gittelsohn eulogy, which he titled "The Purest Democracy," was the most celebrated American military eulogy of World War II and became part of Marine Corps lore. Shortly before his death Gittelsohn read the eulogy in 1995 at the Marine Corps monument in northern Virginia commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the battle. Ten years later President George W. Bush quoted from it in a speech in San Diego discussing the carnage that resulted from Hurricane Katrina.<sup>47</sup> Contemporary news of the eulogy soon spread rapidly throughout the United States, and newspapers, *Time* magazine, and Robert St. John's NBC radio program reported on it. The army radio network broadcast news of it to American troops throughout the world, and it was reprinted in the *Congressional Record*. The eulogy was acclaimed as an eloquent declaration of American war aims, and public opinion condemned those chaplains who opposed Gittelsohn delivering the eulogy as bigots.

One of the reasons for the popularity of Gittelsohn's eulogy was that it reflected the interreligious spirit of cooperation fostered during the war by the military, particularly the chaplaincy corps. The armed forces, the historian Deborah Dash Moore notes, "initiated the pragmatic performance of ecumenism on the battlefield, in hospitals and camps, and at thousands of memorial services honoring the dead. In its effort to integrate Jews and Christians as equal partners in uniform, the military encouraged chaplains to move from cooperative behavior to common belief in a religious worldview that sustained American democracy."<sup>48</sup> But this military ecumenism and religious pluralism was limited since it denied the legitimacy of the complaints of Roman Catholic and Protestant chaplains that, according to their churches' teachings, only members of their faith should eulogize their dead. It was hardly surprising that some Christian chaplains would believe that only one of their own should deliver the eulogy at the dedication of a cemetery in which the vast majority of the dead were Christians. Would not Jews find it troubling if a Christian was chosen to deliver a eulogy at such a ceremony in Israel? The dispute over the Gittelsohn eulogy anticipated the broader postwar debate over the deference that should be granted to traditional religious beliefs when they conflict with modern views of equality and democracy.<sup>49</sup>

The most interesting aspect of Gittelsohn's eulogy was not the eulogy itself but the response to it back in the United States. Gittelsohn



speculated in his autobiography whether anyone would have heard of it if not for the attempt to prevent him from delivering it at the opening of the main cemetery on Iwo Jima. Certainly there was little in the eulogy that was original, but expressing the obvious can often be noteworthy. His depiction of the war as an ideological struggle between bigotry and totalitarianism on the one hand and liberty, equality, and democracy on the other captured the fundamental American rationale for the war and seemingly put his clerical opponents outside this patriotic consensus.

Gittelsohn's view was pervasive within the American politics and culture of the war years, perhaps nowhere more so than in Hollywood, which produced dozens of wartime motion pictures termed by historians "platoon movies." These featured small groups of servicemen of diverse ethnic, social, religious, economic, and geographical backgrounds working together for a military victory out of which will emerge a better world. These platoon films, writes film historian Patricia Erens, "became a microcosm of the cultural, religious, and racial diversity of America itself. In the ability of this group to work in harmony for the survival of all, we are given a lesson in democracy at work."<sup>50</sup> American novels of the war also emphasized the diversity of the war effort. The contributions of many ethnic, racial, and religious groups, along with the democratic ideology of the war, transformed any form of prejudice, particularly antisemitism, into an inherently un-American activity.<sup>51</sup>

Gittelsohn's brief eulogy was modeled closely after the most famous of all American eulogies, Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and it reflected the liberal ideology that was central to his Jewish identity.<sup>52</sup> It began by noting the importance of consecrating this "sacred soil" to the memory of the marines whose lives had been so cruelly cut short. "Somewhere in this plot of ground," he said, "there may lie the man who could have discovered the cure for cancer. Under one of these Christian Crosses, or beneath a Jewish Star of David, there may rest now a man who was destined to be a great prophet—to find the way, perhaps, for all to live in plenty." The rabbi maintained that they will not have died in vain if we, the living, show the same courage in peacetime that they showed in war. The fruits of victory should not be squandered, as they had been after World War I when America retreated into a "selfish isolation." Rather, a more peaceful and equitable world must emerge.<sup>53</sup>

The dead, Gittelsohn emphasized, comprised a microcosm of America: officers and enlisted men, rich and poor, Christians and Jews, Protestants and Catholics, whites and blacks. "Here no man prefers another because of his faith or despises him because of his color. Here there are no quotas of how many from each group are admitted or allowed. . . . Theirs is the highest and purest democracy." Prejudice betrays the ideals for which these men gave their lives, the rabbi argued, and makes a mockery of this ceremony consecrating their cemetery. No longer can we accept the extremes of wealth and poverty that sow the seeds of future wars. "This war has been fought by the common man; its fruits of peace must be enjoyed by the common man! We promise, by all that is sacred

*Rabbi Roland B. Gittelsohn, 1960s.  
(Courtesy of Temple Israel,  
Boston.)*

and holy, that your sons, the sons of miners and millers, the sons of farmers and workers, will inherit from your death the right to a living that is decent and secure." In conclusion, Gittelsohn vowed to continue the struggle for which the departed gave their lives. "Too much blood has gone into this soil for us to let it lie barren. Too much pain and heartache have fertilized the earth on which we stand. We here solemnly swear: This shall not be in vain! Out of this, and from the suffering and sorrow of those we mourn . . . we promise the birth of a new freedom for the sons of men everywhere."<sup>54</sup>

Gittelsohn's contribution to this new birth of freedom was his zealous advocacy of civil rights for blacks. In this he resembled Jacob

Rothschild, his closest friend. While rabbi of Central Synagogue on Long Island after the war, Gittelsohn served on the President's Committee on Civil Rights during the Truman administration when it issued its famous report "To Secure These Rights." In 1953 he became the rabbi of Temple Israel in Boston, the largest Reform congregation in New England, and served there until his retirement in 1977. While in Boston he was in the forefront of the civil rights movement and other reform efforts. He served on the Commission on Social Action of the Reform movement, supported Cesar Chavez and his United Farm Workers, opposed the death penalty, and championed prison reform.

He was an especially staunch foe of America's war in Vietnam. The historian Marc Saperstein believes that Gittelsohn's September 26, 1965, Rosh Hashanah sermon was the first time any rabbi ever condemned from the pulpit his government's fundamental wartime policies. Gittelsohn titled the sermon "Would There be a Tomorrow?," and he began by defending his decision to talk about the war, even though he realized that some of his listeners believed such a topic was inappropriate at that sacred time. Humanity, he said, was "perched more precariously than ever on the raw edge of catastrophe. Unless a dramatic and decisive reversal takes place soon, the year which commences at this moment might well witness the calamitous end of civilization." If America did not change its Vietnam policy, "there will be no tomorrow."<sup>55</sup>

That Gittelsohn could seriously believe the world faced a greater potential catastrophe in 1965 than it had during World War II shows his penchant for making "extremist," "foolish," "dogmatic," and apocalyptic pronouncements. The sermon spoke to its listeners as "responsible citizens in a democracy" rather than as Jews, and it could just as easily have been delivered by a Christian cleric. In it he criticized the 1965 American intervention in the Dominican Republic, America's support for French colonialism in Southeast Asia, American assistance to various right-wing governments in South Vietnam, and the Johnson administration's bombing of North Vietnam, its reluctance to enter into serious negotiations to end the war, and its lying to Congress and the American public regarding the war's progress. Gittelsohn concluded by urging his congregants to become politically involved and to support the Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy, the United World Federalists, and other such organizations.<sup>56</sup> He continued to preach against the Vietnam War during the late

1960s and 1970s. In a 1970 sermon he encouraged Jews who had been inducted into the military to claim conscientious objector status. "Judaism," he told his congregation, "gives even higher priority to responsibly motivated conscience than to government and law."<sup>57</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The symbiosis of Jewish and American identities promoted by Rothschild, Goode, Lefkowitz, and Gittelsohn was a major aspect of American Jewish history during the war. Perhaps never before had America's Jews felt so comfortable as Americans and as Jews. Approximately 550,000 Jews served in the American military, while hundreds of thousands of others planted victory gardens, served as air raid wardens, participated in paper and scrap metal drives, and purchased war bonds.<sup>58</sup> When Rabbi David de Sola Pool of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in New York City, the oldest Jewish congregation in the United States, offered a three-minute radio prayer on June 6, 1944, praising "our sons," "our brothers," and "our beloved warriors" who had landed that morning on the beaches of Normandy, he was not referring merely to Jewish soldiers.<sup>59</sup>

Louis Finkelstein, the chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, also encouraged a belief in this merging of American and Jewish identities. In 1944 the seminary established "The Eternal Light," a popular weekly radio show that explored the relationship between American democracy and Jewish values and emphasized the contributions of America's Jews to the war effort. The seminary also housed the Institute for Religious and Social Studies, sponsor of annual conferences on science, philosophy, and religion. These sought to create a Jewish context for democracy and, as noted by historian Lila Corwin Berman, reflected Finkelstein's belief that Judaism, "embodied by a set of moral ideas and the ongoing survival of the Jewish people, was particularly fit for the work of democracy." Finkelstein's ultimate objective was to expand the American civil religion to encompass Judaism.<sup>60</sup>

If Jews had entered the war as American Jews, they came out of it as Jewish Americans.<sup>61</sup> This sense of Jews being at home in America was reinforced by the selection on September 8, 1945, less than one month after the surrender of Japan, of Bess Myerson, who had been born into a Yiddish-speaking family in the Bronx, as Miss America. From the per-

spective of America's Jews it was also fitting that "God Bless America," which became the unofficial national anthem during the war, had been written by a Jewish immigrant, Israel Baline (Irving Berlin).<sup>62</sup>

Never was the repair of the world advocated by Rothschild, Goode, Lefkowitz, and Gittelsohn more relevant than during World War II, the most turbulent, brutal, and bloodiest of history's wars. The four rabbis helped shape America's understanding of what the war was all about, or at least what Americans, and particularly America's Jews, believed the war was all about or should have been about. Their voices joined the millions of other liberals who defined the war as a "people's war" against oppression, racism, imperialism, fascism, and tyranny and offered the hope that out of the war would emerge a "people's peace." Liberals used such words as "democracy," "freedom," "tolerance," "unity," "brotherhood," "economic justice," "the people's century," "the common man," and "the people's revolution" in explaining the war, and they praised Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech, Henry Luce's essay "The American Century," and Henry Wallace's speech "Century of the Common Man" for laying out a democratic and liberal set of war aims.<sup>63</sup>

Liberals also hoped the war would shrink the gap between American ideals and the economic and social injustice extant within the United States. In his 1943 essay "The Unimagined America," the poet Archibald MacLeish expressed this liberal optimism about postwar America. "We know that whatever the world will be when the war ends, the world will be different. . . . We have the metal and the men to take this country down . . . and to build it again as we please. . . . We have the power and the courage and the resources of good-will and decency and common understanding . . . to create a nation such as men have never seen."<sup>64</sup>

Rothschild, Goode, Lefkowitz, and Gittelsohn shared MacLeish's goals for the American future, including a broadened vision of American identity encompassing previously marginalized racial, religious and ethnic minorities.<sup>65</sup> The question "what does it mean to be an American," the historian Philip Gleason notes, became a matter of great importance during the war when American identity was being increasingly defined by ideology and values in contrast to the Nazi emphasis on race and imperialism. "We know that this country is bound together by an idea," Eleanor Roosevelt proclaimed in 1942. "The citizens of this country belong to many races and creeds. They have come here and built a great

nation around the idea of democracy and freedom."<sup>66</sup> This pluralistic vision was expressed in the ten-minute 1945 film *The House I Live In*, in which Frank Sinatra sang the title song that proclaimed, "The house I live in, a plot of earth, a street,/The grocer and the butcher, and the people that I meet./The children in the playground, the faces that I see,/All races and religions, that's America to me."<sup>67</sup>

The Allied victory and the contributions of American Jews to the war effort emboldened the American Jewish establishment. It concluded that the time was propitious for a crusade to achieve the liberal and pluralistic goals espoused by the four Jewish chaplains. This included an aggressive attempt to raise the wall of separation between church and state. "Ever since the end of World War II," the political scientist Gregg Ivers writes, "American Jews and the organizational structures that represent their interests have been at the forefront of organized efforts to influence the church-state jurisprudence of the Supreme Court."<sup>68</sup> The historian Naomi Cohen agreed. In her book *Jews in Christian America*, she notes that the major Jewish organizations immediately after the war "took a dramatic turn" on church-state matters. Whereas prior to the war these organizations had argued that government should be neutral to all religions, they now opposed governmental aid to all parochial schools, all religious displays on public property, and Sunday closing laws. For Jews, who comprised only 3 percent of the country's population, to oppose Roman Catholics and other Christians displayed a confidence that had not existed prior to the war when fears of antisemitism dominated. It also reflected the widespread belief within Jewish circles that cultural pluralism and democratic values were best advanced in secular public schools.<sup>69</sup>

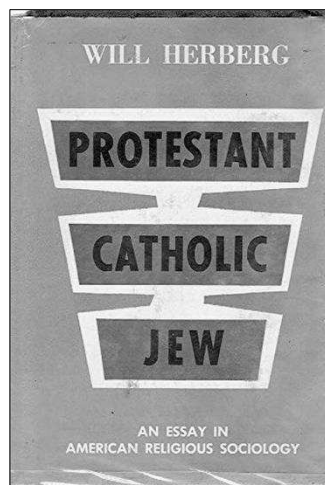
In addition, Germany's war against the Jews, which revealed what could result when bigotry was joined to political power, intensified the commitment of American Jews to combat all forms of prejudice. Meier Steinbrink, a New York judge and national chairman of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, argued in 1946 that "There must be no cleavage in the ranks of America's millions; as we worked together — all races, religions, creeds, side by side — toward victory, so we must continue to work to cement that victory, to make meaningful the enormous investment in life, limb and labor." Equality of opportunity in education and employment must be provided to everyone. The ADL, he assured its

members, will be in “the militant vanguard of the struggle against prejudice and intolerance, toward an America of daily democracy for all citizens.”<sup>70</sup> These words would have pleased Rothschild, Goode, Lefkowitz, and Gittelsohn.

The rabbis would also have been gratified by the expansion of the notion of American nationality during the 1940s and 1950s, as reflected in postwar novels, movies, songs, and political pronouncements.<sup>71</sup> This was due in part to the chaplaincy corps’ emphasis on “brotherhood” and a “tri-faith America,” which, as the historian Ronit Y. Stahl argues, “moved Catholics and Jews from the margins to the mainstream” of American life.<sup>72</sup> This trifaith America was the major theme of Will Herberg’s *Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (1955), the most talked about book of the decade on the sociology of American religion. The volume was a pleasant surprise to its American Jewish readers who had experienced the antisemitism of the 1920s, 1930s, and the early years of World War II.

According to Herberg, the much-hyped postwar American religious “revival” was a result of the decline of ethnic consciousness among third-generation Americans. Instead of considering themselves as Irish, Italians, Poles, Jews, or Germans, the third generation, in answering the question “who am I,” were sorting themselves out within the triple religious melting pots of Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism. Furthermore, Herberg asserted, most Americans now considered these

*Will Herberg’s classic book,  
Protestant, Catholic, Jew (1955).  
(Amazon.com.)*



three religions equally valid expressions of the American democratic way of life. This was certainly gratifying news for Jews, who now saw themselves ranked equally alongside Protestants and Catholics.<sup>73</sup>

Herberg's argument owed much to his biography as a second-generation American Jew growing up in New York City. He believed, as I have noted elsewhere, that "instead of Jews conforming to Christian America, Christians were conforming to the pattern of ethnic and religious identity exhibited particularly by Jews."<sup>74</sup> Jews, Herberg wrote, were "in a certain sense, paradoxically the most 'American' of all the ethnic groups that went into the making of modern America."<sup>75</sup> But Jews were also the most unusual of America's subgroups since they comprised both a religion and an ethnicity. Herberg's conflating of Jewishness with Judaism, however, ignored the manifold secular ways by which Jews defined and lived out their Jewish identity. Furthermore, his major hypothesis that emphasized ethnicity and religion did not take into consideration issues of gender, class, or race in defining identity, nor did it consider that immigrants and their descendants from Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa might define themselves differently than their European counterparts. The major significance of *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* thus lay not in its contribution to the history and sociology of American immigration and religion, but rather in its celebration of American postwar tolerance and its underscoring of the movement of postwar Jewry into the American mainstream. These were due in part to the efforts of Jewish military chaplains such as Rothschild, Goode, Lefkowitz, and Gittelsohn, who helped make World War II a major turning point in American and American Jewish history.<sup>76</sup>

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Michael Bess, *Choices Under Fire: Moral Dimensions of World War II* (New York, 2006), 259.

<sup>2</sup> George B. Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South, 1913–1945* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1967).

<sup>3</sup> For the history of American Jewish chaplains during World War II, see Isidor Kaufman, *American Jews in World War II: The Story of 550,000 Fighters for Freedom* (New York, 1947); Louis Barish, ed., *Rabbis in Uniform: The Story of the American Jewish Military Chaplain* (New York, 1962); Philip S. Bernstein, *Rabbis at War: The CANRA Story* (Waltham, MA,



1971); Alex Grobman, *Rekindling the Flame: American Jewish Chaplains and the Survivors of European Jewry, 1944–1948* (Detroit, 1992); Albert Isaac Slomovitz, *The Fighting Rabbis: Jewish Military Chaplains and American History* (New York, 1999); Greg Palmer and Mark S. Zaid, eds., *The GI's Rabbi: World War 2 Letters of David Max Eichorn* (Lawrence, KS, 2004); and Deborah Dash Moore, *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (Cambridge, MA, 2004). For southern Reform rabbis and World War II, see various essays in Mark K. Bauman and Berkley Kalin, eds., *The Quiet Voices: Southern Rabbis and Black Civil Rights, 1880s to 1990s* (Tuscaloosa, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Leah Garrett, *Young Lions: How Jewish Authors Reinvented the American War Novel* (Evanston, IL, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Rosenthal had converted to Roman Catholicism prior to the war.

<sup>6</sup> The ecumenism fostered by the military affected Jewish chaplains from all branches of the military. When, for instance, Joseph B. Soloveitchik, a transcendent figure within Orthodox Judaism in America at the time, was asked whether Orthodox rabbis should enter the military chaplaincy, he responded that it was not only permissible but their duty to do so. Nonetheless, he emphasized the need to service the religious requirements of Jewish soldiers, a perspective which was narrower than that of the four Reform rabbis who stressed *tikkun olam*. Slomovitz, *The Fighting Rabbis*, 78.

<sup>7</sup> For the history of Rodef Shalom as a synagogue steeped in classic Reform ideology, see Steven R. Weisman, *The Chosen Wars: How Judaism Became an American Religion* (New York, 2018), 230.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Janice Rothschild Blumberg, *One Voice: Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild and the Troubled South* (Macon, GA, 1985), 20–21.

<sup>9</sup> The original name of the Hebrew Benevolent Congregation was K'hilah Kodesh Gemilath Chesed. It has usually been referred to as The Temple. Prior to his marriage in December 1946, Rothschild lived at the Atlanta Biltmore Hotel, where one of his neighbors was General George Van Horn Mosley, a notorious antisemite and head of the Knights of the White Camelia. Mosley had attacked Dr. David Marx, Rothschild's predecessor in the Atlanta pulpit, as unpatriotic in the retired general's 1939 testimony before the House Un-American Activities Committee.

<sup>10</sup> For the relationship of Rothschild and his wife with the King family, see Blumberg, *One Voice*, 139–45, 164–66, 200–203.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 191–92.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 1–2, 44–46, 57–77, 167–75; Janice Rothschild Blumberg, "Jacob M. Rothschild: His Legacy Twenty Years After," in Bauman and Kalin, *The Quiet Voices*, 263–85; Janice Rothschild Blumberg, *As But a Day to A Hundred and Twenty: 1867–1987* (Atlanta, 1987, rev. ed.), 106–112, 125, 128. Five men were arrested, indicted for the bombing, and put on trial. They were ultimately acquitted after two trials, but kept under surveillance. For the trials, see Blumberg, *One Voice*, ch. 5. In her essay "Reigns of Terror in America," *New Yorker*, November 12, 2018, historian Jill Lepore used Rothschild and the response to the bombing as a standard against which to judge contemporary American politicians. On the Temple

bombing, the positive response that followed, and the trials, see Melissa Fay Greene, *The Temple Bombing* (Reading, MA, 1996).

<sup>13</sup> Barry M. Sax, "A Higher Duty," *Reform Judaism* 32 (2003). Goode's father was Rabbi Hyman Goodekowitz.

<sup>14</sup> Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton, 2006), 197.

<sup>15</sup> Many rabbis during the 1920s and 1930s were pacifists because of World War I. Marc Saperstein, *Jewish Preaching in Times of War, 1800–2001* (London, 2008), ix. Goode also earned a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University in 1940.

<sup>16</sup> USAT stands for United States Army Transport.

<sup>17</sup> Kaufman, *American Jews in World War II*, 1:308–309; Dan Kurzman, *No Greater Glory: The Four Immortal Chaplains and the Sinking of the Dorchester in World War II* (New York, 2004), 59–60.

<sup>18</sup> There is no unanimity among historians regarding the exact number of casualties. See, for example, Robert L. Gushwa, *The Best and Worst of Times: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1920–1945* (Washington, DC, 1977), 127–29, 153; Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, vol. 1, *The Battle of the Atlantic* (Boston, 1947), 331–34. Goode was one of eight Jewish chaplains to die in World War II.

<sup>19</sup> Kurzman, *No Greater Glory*, 54.

<sup>20</sup> Gushwa, *Best and Worst of Times*, 128–29; Lyle W. Dorsett, *Serving God and Country: U.S. Military Chaplains in World War II* (New York, 2012), 126–28. See also Francis Beauchesne Thornton, *Sea of Glory: The Magnificent Story of Four Chaplains* (New York, 1953).

<sup>21</sup> *New York Times*, December 3, 1944; Deborah Dash Moore, *GI Jews*, 122. Arnold's use of the word *churches* is a conspicuous oversight.

<sup>22</sup> Louis Schwimmer, a Jew who headed the art department of the New York branch of the United States Post Office, designed the stamp. It could be argued that the ten-year precedent had not been broken since the stamp did not feature the names of the chaplains, and that the stamp honored an event rather than any individual. It would not be until 1969, when a stamp was issued with the picture of Neil Armstrong, that the precedent was truly broken.

<sup>23</sup> The Special Medal for Heroism was in lieu of the Medal of Honor, which is reserved for those who exhibit exceptional bravery while under enemy fire.

<sup>24</sup> Sidney M. Lefkowitz to Board of Congregation Beth Ahabah, September 9, 1941, Sidney M. Lefkowitz Papers, Beth Ahabah Archives, Richmond, VA.

<sup>25</sup> Biographical details concerning Lefkowitz are from his September 25, 1988, interview in the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, George A. Smathers Library, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL.

<sup>26</sup> Grobman, *Rekindling the Flame*, 55; Franklin Young, "Holocaust's Horror Remains with Rabbi," *Florida Times-Union*, April 19, 1980; Bill Foley, obituary of Lefkowitz, *Florida Times-Union*, July 25, 1997.

<sup>27</sup> Charlotte Bonelli, "The Internet Rekindles Vivid World War II Memory," undated press release, American Jewish Committee Archives, New York. Bonelli was director of the AJCommittee archives.

<sup>28</sup> Meyer Levin, "Portrait of a Chaplain," *Commentary* 1 (November, 1945): 80.

<sup>29</sup> Sidney M. Lefkowitz to Mrs. S. M. Lefkowitz, September 27, 1944, Lefkowitz Papers, Congregation Ahavath Chesed, Jacksonville, FL (hereafter cited as Lefkowitz Papers). In this letter Lefkowitz noted that it was sent from Germany, "back again."

<sup>30</sup> *Brooklyn Eagle*, November 2, 1944. In the photo of the service conducted by Lefkowitz, the soldier wearing a helmet to his left is Max Fuchs. Fuchs was a rifleman in the First Infantry Division, the celebrated Big Red One, which did not have a Jewish chaplain. He grew up in a religious family on New York City's Lowest East Side, knew Hebrew, and often led religious services while in the Army. After landing at Omaha Beach in the Normandy invasion, Fuchs was transferred to division headquarters and made a chaplain. Naomi Groob of Brooklyn heard the radio broadcast and was impressed by the cantor's singing. By happenstance, they met shortly after the end of the war and married in 1946. For Fuchs, see Paul Vitello, "A Soldier's Voice Rediscovered," *New York Times*, September 18, 2009; Charlotte Bonelli, "Film: Max Fuchs," undated press release, AJCommittee Archives, New York.

<sup>31</sup> "The First Broadcast of Jewish Religious Service From Nazi Germany," October 29, 1944, Lefkowitz Papers; *Florida Times-Union*, July 3, 2004. A Jewish religious service had also been broadcast on July 23, 1944, from Temple Israelitico, a synagogue in Rome, a month and a half after the city was liberated from the Germans. Grobman, *Rekindling the Flame*, 17. In 2008, to mark the tenth anniversary of the opening of its office in Berlin, the American Jewish Committee presented the first Sidney Lefkowitz Award for International Renewal of Jewish Life to Charlotte Knobloch, the president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany. The AJCommittee had helped plan the October 29, 1944, broadcast, and in 2005 it produced a short compact disc on the broadcast that can be accessed from the Internet. Dan Scanlan, "Man of God, and the War," *Florida Times-Union*, May 14, 2005; Charlotte Bonelli, "The Jewish Service Heard Around the World," *Reform Judaism* 23 (Winter 2009): 23, 56.

<sup>32</sup> See Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton, 2006).

<sup>33</sup> Sidney M. Lefkowitz to Board of Congregation Beth Ahabah, May 30, 1944, Lefkowitz Papers; Edwin L. Levy to Sidney M. Lefkowitz, June 9, 1944, Lefkowitz Papers. Levy was president of Beth Ahabah.

<sup>34</sup> Stephen J. Whitfield, interview with author, n.d. Lefkowitz, however, was quite reticent to speak out in opposition to racial segregation, and members of his congregation do not recall him ever discussing the issue from the pulpit during the heyday of the civil rights movement. It is possible that he believed working behind the scenes would be more effective.

<sup>35</sup> Rothschild had been involved with the National Conference of Christians and Jews while an assistant rabbi in Pittsburgh prior to the war. Janice Rothschild Blumberg, interview conducted by author, January 9, 2019.

<sup>36</sup> Ronit Y. Stahl, *Enlisting Faith: How the Military Chaplaincy Shaped Religion and State in Modern America* (Cambridge, MA, 2017), 74–81.

<sup>37</sup> Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, CT, 2004), 265.

<sup>38</sup> Lee Mandel, *Unlikely Warrior: A Pacifist Rabbi's Journey from the Pulpit to Iwo Jima* (Gretna, LA, 2015), 53–54; Roland B. Gittelsohn, *Here Am I – Harnessed to Hope* (New York, 1988), 94.

<sup>39</sup> Mandel, *Unlikely Warrior*, 58, 98.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 207–209; Gittelsohn, *Here Am I*, 93–95.

<sup>41</sup> Mandel, *Unlikely Warrior*, 168–69.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 46–47, 211–13; Gittelsohn, *Here Am I*, 94.

<sup>43</sup> For the Fifth Marine Division, see Howard M. Conner, *The Spearhead: The World War II History of the 5th Marine Division* (Washington, DC, 1950).

<sup>44</sup> Gittelsohn, *Here Am I*, 110. The marines pictured in the famous Joe Rosenthal photograph of the raising of the flag on Mount Suribachi on February 23 were from the Fifth Marine Division.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Stahl, *Enlisting Faith*, 85–86.

<sup>46</sup> Roland B. Gittelsohn, “Brothers All?” *Reconstructionist* 12 (February 7, 1947): 10. See also Mandel, *Unlikely Warrior*, chs. 27–28.

<sup>47</sup> Mary Dudziak, “Hurricane Damage,” *Boston Globe*, September 2, 2005. When in 2018 I telephoned the Marine Corps library in Quantico, Virginia, to see whether it had material on the eulogy, before I could finish my first sentence the archivist interrupted that I must be referring to the one by Gittelsohn.

<sup>48</sup> Deborah Dash Moore, “Worshipping Together in Uniform: Christians and Jews in World War II” (Swig Lecture, University of San Francisco, 2001), 14. This essay by Moore is available in pamphlet form.

<sup>49</sup> When a general visiting the cemetery of the Thirty-Sixth Army Division in Italy in 1943 complained that a Star of David among the crosses ruined its “symmetry” and ordered that it be moved, a division chaplain refused, and the grave was undisturbed. Rick Atkinson, *The Day of Battle: The War in Sicily and Italy, 1943–1944* (New York, 2007), 238.

<sup>50</sup> Patricia Erens, *The Jew in American Cinema* (Bloomington, IN, 1984), 171. See also Lester D. Friedman, *Hollywood's Image of the Jew* (New York, 1982), 95–96, and John Morton Blum, *V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II* (San Diego, 1976), 63. Many historians have emphasized the impact of World War II on discrediting racism and broadening the notion of American identity to encompass previously excluded ethnic and racial groups. See Richard Polenberg, *One Nation Divisible: Class, Race, and Ethnicity in the United States Since 1938* (New York, 1980), 46–85; Alan Brinkley, *Liberalism and Its Discontents* (Cambridge, MA, 1989), 85–109; Goldstein, *Price of Whiteness*, 192–96; Robert L. Fleegler, “‘Forget All Differences Until the Forces of Freedom are Triumphant’: The World

War II-Era Quest for Ethnic and Religious Tolerance," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 27 (Winter 2008): 59–84; Thomas Brusolino, *A Nation Forged in War: How World War II Taught Americans to Get Along* (Knoxville, TN, 2010), 127–44; Stephen J. Whitfield, "The Theme of Indivisibility in the Post-War Struggle against Prejudice in the United States," *Patterns of Prejudice* 48 (2014), 223–47. Philip Gleason's essay "Americans All" is particularly important in this respect. Originally published in the *Review of Politics* (October 1981), it was reprinted in his collection *Speaking of Diversity: Language and Ethnicity in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore, 1992), ch. 6. Also valuable is Gleason's "The Study of American Culture," which originally appeared in the *American Quarterly* (1984) and was also reprinted in *Speaking of Diversity*, ch. 7.

<sup>51</sup> One sign in a Charleston, SC, bus reflected the difficulties that some Americans had in adapting to this new imperative. "If the . . . country's races do not pull together," it read, "victory is lost. We, therefore, respectfully direct your attention to the laws and customs of the state in regard to segregation. . . . Avoid friction. Be patriotic. White passengers will be seated from front to rear; colored passengers from rear to front." Polenberg, *One Nation Divisible*, 74.

<sup>52</sup> Gittelsohn, *Here Am I*, 132. Outsiders are often oblivious to the centrality of social reform in the Jewish identity of the American Reform rabbinate. When I spoke on Gittelsohn to an audience of Orthodox Jews, several listeners wondered aloud what was particularly Jewish about him and his eulogy. For them, Jewish identity involved keeping kosher, celebrating the Sabbath and Jewish holidays, funding Jewish religious institutions, and studying the Talmud and other Jewish religious texts. It had nothing to do with supporting migrant farm workers, higher minimum wages, freedom of choice regarding abortion, pacifism, or prison reform.

<sup>53</sup> Saperstein, *Jewish Preaching in Times of War*, 482. There is more than one version of the eulogy. The Gittelsohn eulogy appearing on the website of the US Army Chaplain Center and School omitted its attack on American businessmen for trading with militaristic countries during the 1930s and its pledge of postwar cooperation with the Soviet Union and China.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 482–85.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 492–500.

<sup>56</sup> Saperstein, *Jewish Preaching in Times of War*, 70, 490–500. See pp. 500–507 for a second antiwar sermon by Gittelsohn.

<sup>57</sup> Stahl, *Enlisting Faith*, 206–207.

<sup>58</sup> Rufus Lears (Israel Goldberg), *The Jews in America: A History* (New York, 1972), 299.

<sup>59</sup> The de Sola Pool prayer is found on YouTube, accessed November 2, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NmSodwz8UKU>.

<sup>60</sup> Lila Corwin Berman, *Speaking of Jews: Rabbis, Intellectuals, and the Creation of an American Public Identity* (Berkeley, CA, 2009), 76–84, 91.

<sup>61</sup> Deborah Dash Moore, *Jewish New York: The Remarkable Story of a City and a People* (New York, 2017), 270–71; Deborah Dash Moore, "When Jews Were GIs: How World War II

Changed a Generation and Remade American Jewry," in *American Jewish Identity Politics*, ed. Deborah Dash Moore (Ann Arbor, MI, 2008), 23–43; Naomi Praver Kadar, *Raising Secular Jews: Yiddish Schools and Their Periodicals for American Children, 1917–1950* (Waltham, MA, 2017), 220–31; Arthur Hertzberg, *A Jew in America: My Life and a People's Struggle for Identity* (New York, 2002), 148–49; Jeffrey S. Gurock, *The Holocaust Averted: An Alternate History of American Jewry, 1938–1967* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2015), 276–77; Edward S. Shapiro, *A Time for Healing: American Jewry Since World War II* (Baltimore, 1992), 9–15.

<sup>62</sup> "God Bless America" was written during World War I, but its popularity dated from World War II. James Kaplan, "The Complicated DNA of 'God Bless America,'" *New York Times*, November 9, 2018.

<sup>63</sup> Marc Dollinger, *Quest for Inclusion: Jews and Liberalism in Modern America* (Princeton, 2000), chs. 3–4.

<sup>64</sup> Quoted in Brinkley, *Liberalism and Its Discontents*, 94. The term "people's war" was used in the popular British film "Mrs. Miniver" (1942), and Angus Calder used it for the title of his history of the British homefront during the war. For liberalism and the war, see Frank A. Warren, *Noble Abstractions: American Liberal Intellectuals and World War II* (Columbus, OH, 1999).

<sup>65</sup> For the role of Jews in this more expansive notion of American identity, see Richard W. Steele, "The War on Intolerance: The Reformulation of American Nationalism, 1939–1941," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 9 (Fall 1989): 17–30. The great exception to this enlargement of American identity during the war involved Japanese-Americans.

<sup>66</sup> Gleason, *Speaking of Diversity*, 154, 166, 196.

<sup>67</sup> Unfortunately the film version of the song did not include the verse "The house I live in, my neighbors white and black,/The people who just came here and from generations back." Abel Meeropol, a communist who wrote the lyrics, strongly protested this omission. For the history of "The House I Live In," see David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How American Immigrants Became White; The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York, 2005), 235–43. Gunnar Myrdal's important book *An American Dilemma*, which emphasized the incongruity between American ideals and the conditions of African Americans, appeared in 1944.

<sup>68</sup> Gregg Ivers, *To Build a Wall: American Jews and the Separation of Church and State* (Charlottesville, VA, 1995), 2, 20–27.

<sup>69</sup> Naomi W. Cohen, *Jews in Christian America: The Pursuit of Religious Equality* (New York, 1992), 123–30. Cohen is skeptical about some aspects of this new agenda.

<sup>70</sup> Stuart Svonkin, *Jews Against Prejudice: American Jews and the Fight for Civil Liberties* (New York, 1997), 18–20.

<sup>71</sup> See Bernard F. Dick, *The Star-Spangled Screen: The American World War II Film* (Lexington, KY, 1985); Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies* (New York, 1987); Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II* (New York, 1993); Robert L. McLaughlin and Sally E. Parry, *We'll Always Have the Movies: American Cinema*

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*During World War II* (Lexington, KY, 2006); M. Todd Bennett, *One World, Big Screen: Hollywood, the Allies, and World War II* (Chapel Hill, 2012); John Bush Jones, *The Songs That Fought the War: Popular Music and the Home Front, 1939–1945* (Waltham, MA, 2006); William H. Young and Nancy K. Young, *Music of the World War II Era* (Westport, CT, 2008); Sheldon Winkler, *The Music of World War II: War Songs and Their Stories* (Bennington, VT, 2013); Garrett, *Young Lions*.

<sup>72</sup> Stahl, *Enlisting Faith*, 74–82.

<sup>73</sup> Edward S. Shapiro, “Will Herberg’s *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*: A Critique,” in *Key Texts in American Jewish Culture*, ed. Jack Kugelmass (New Brunswick, NJ, 2003), 258–71. For other critiques of Herberg, see Philip Gleason, “Looking Back at *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 23 (Winter 2005), 51–64 and Ronit Y. Stahl, “A Jewish America and a Protestant Civil Religion: Will Herberg, Robert Bellah, and Mid-Twentieth Century American Religion,” *Religions* 6 (2015), 434–50, accessed April 27, 2019, <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/6/2/434>. For a general overview, see Kevin M. Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its Protestant Promise* (New York, 2011).

<sup>74</sup> Shapiro, “Will Herberg’s *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*,” 271.

<sup>75</sup> Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology* (New York, 1960 [1955]), 10. For an analysis that emphasizes the Jewishness of Herberg’s volume, see Rebecca Kneale Gould, “*Protestant-Catholic-Jew* at Fifty: An Historian’s Perspective,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 23 (Winter 2005): 79–86.

<sup>76</sup> Stahl, “Jewish America,” 447; Shapiro, *Time for Healing*.





Hyman Judah Schachtel,  
Congregation Beth Israel, and  
the American Council for Judaism

by

Kyle Stanton\*

**H**yman Judah Schachtel returned to Cincinnati and his alma mater, Hebrew Union College (HUC), in 1943 as one of the most divisive figures in American Reform Judaism. The Reform seminary invited Schachtel to explain his congregation's opposition to Zionism, a view that had grown widely unpopular among American Jews. After addressing the student body and faculty, Schachtel attended an informal dinner in the cafeteria with a group of rabbinical students. When the students began singing Zionist songs, Schachtel rose from his chair and shouted over them that the only difference between them and Orthodox Jews was skullcaps.<sup>1</sup>

As previous historians have shown, Congregation Beth Israel in Houston, Texas, where Schachtel served as senior rabbi, deepened divisions among American Jews when the members published their Basic Principles, a set of guidelines for admitting new congregants, earlier that year. The Basic Principles created a schism over the question of Zionism within the congregation that became a hotly contested issue nationally in Reform circles and among American Jews generally. The Basic Principles barred Zionists, as well as those who kept kosher, from becoming full voting members of the congregation. Additionally, the document affirmed that the race of Jews in Houston was Caucasian.<sup>2</sup> This was an unprecedented move for a Reform congregation. Because of the desire during World War II to establish unity of American Jews in the face of the

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*Rabbi Hyman Judah Schachtel.*  
*(Oil painting, courtesy of Congregation Beth Israel, Houston, TX.)*

European crisis, many other congregations preferred neutrality on the divisive issue of Zionism.<sup>3</sup> A sizable minority of Beth Israel members (more than 140 families out of a membership of about 800) eventually left the congregation as a result of the Basic Principles.<sup>4</sup> These defectors formed a distinctly Zionist Reform congregation named Emanu El.

Many accounts of the Basic Principles exist in other works, and it is not my intention in this article to provide a new interpretation of the document. Historians generally agree that the crafters of the document attempted to revive a version of Classical Reform Judaism in alignment with their conception of the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885.<sup>5</sup> In most analyses, the demographics of the congregation factor heavily in the schism. For instance, historians frame the schism as a split between older, more assimilated Jews of central European origin and newer eastern European Jewish immigrants who harbored more traditional religious tendencies and supported Zionism. These histories note the negative national and local responses to the Basic Principles.<sup>6</sup>

Little has been written, however, about the congregation in the years following the crisis, which took place in 1942 and 1943. Prior accounts typically end with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and Schachtel's eventual acceptance of the Jewish state. Some histories mention that Congregation Beth Israel rescinded its Basic Principles in 1968 after the Six-Day War and the emergence of mass support for Israel. In this essay I shed light on an additional event at Congregation Beth Israel that led to the establishment of another Reform congregation in Houston in the late 1950s and go beyond previous research in the aforementioned areas as well.

Several basic new themes will emerge. The case of Congregation Beth Israel shows that southern Jews were not provincial, nor were their communities isolated backwaters. Rather the Beth Israel experience demonstrates that southern Jews were integrated into various networks across the United States. Congregants of Beth Israel provided a model to other Jewish groups both inside and outside the South for challenging what they thought to be the emerging hegemony of Zionism within official Reform bodies. Southern Jews also filled the ranks of the controversial American Council for Judaism (ACJ) as leaders and lay members, and this article examines the ACJ's influence on Congregation Beth Israel and surveys similar congregations with ACJ partisans during the 1950s. For the

ACJ, Houston represented an important model for other congregations to emulate across the United States. Some did so, if less dramatically than what transpired in Houston.

*Historical Context*

Beth Israel's leadership invited Schachtel to become their rabbi after forcing long-time rabbi Henry Barnston into retirement in 1943. They hoped to give themselves a chance to replace Barnston with someone similar in view rather than letting the position fall to the congregation's associate rabbi, Robert Kahn, whom many viewed as too traditional in his religious outlook.<sup>7</sup> Both Schachtel and Barnston were members of the ACJ, the controversial anti-Zionist organization, and it is necessary to explain briefly the ACJ's background, because Houston became a major flashpoint in the controversy between Zionists and anti-Zionists in the Reform movement almost simultaneously with the creation of the ACJ.

The ACJ formed during one of the most trying years for American Jews. Just one day after the ACJ announced its formation on November 23, 1942, the U.S. State Department confirmed the worst possible news: Nazis were exterminating European Jewry on a massive scale. The organization began in earnest when ninety Reform rabbis signed a public statement affirming that Jews were only a religious group in the United States, as opposed to a race or nationality. From its first meeting in the summer of that year, the ACJ received calls for its disbandment from both inside and outside the Reform movement. ACJ members faced ire from many American Jews because the organization opposed the idea that Jews could also constitute a national group. This limited perspective of Jewish identity led ACJ members to oppose the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.

The ACJ's position had its origins in early nineteenth-century Europe, the Haskalah, and *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.<sup>8</sup> From the onset of Reform in the United States, adherents likewise generally rejected Jewish nationalism because they viewed Judaism primarily as a religion and America as their Zion. Although never formally adopted, the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 attempted to codify opposition to Jewish nationalism and stood as a guiding document for most Reform temples for over fifty years. This stood in stark contrast to Theodor Herzl's concept of political Zionism—the idea that Jews were a national group that required a homeland

*Program for event honoring  
Congregation Beth Israel's outgoing  
and incoming rabbis, 1943.  
(Courtesy of Congregation Beth  
Israel, Houston, TX.)*

in order to normalize itself in the world community. Herzl initiated a global Zionist movement as chair of the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897.

With the emigration of eastern European Jews to the United States in large numbers after 1881, the Reform movement and later the Pittsburgh Platform faced significant challenges. Most historians tend to frame the challenges to the Pittsburgh Platform in terms of demographics: Jews of central European origin generally supported it, while Jews of eastern European origin disapproved of its positions on Zionism and traditional religious practices.<sup>9</sup>

With the rise of Adolf Hitler and the establishment of his antisemitic policies, however, Reform leaders began to rethink their position on Zionism. The movement's Columbus Platform of 1938 reflects this softening stance by acknowledging Jews' historical connections to Palestine and expressing hope that it might become a center of spiritual and cultural life as well as a haven for oppressed Jews. While amending Reform's position

to effective neutrality pleased some, a sizable portion of Reform rabbis felt the new platform abandoned foundational principles.<sup>10</sup> The conflict within Reform circles reached a crescendo in 1942 when the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), Reform's rabbinical organization, endorsed the creation of a multinational, multilingual Jewish army.<sup>11</sup> Although most American Jewish organizations endorsed political Zionism during the Biltmore Conference in May 1942, which issued an explicit declaration of Zionist goals to establish a "commonwealth"/state, the CCAR endorsement served as a breaking point for some Reform rabbis. After about a year of painful deliberation, anti-Zionist rabbis including Louis Wolsey, Elmer Berger, William Fineshriber, Henry Barnston, and Hyman Schachtel formed the ACJ, which then contributed to further rifts within the Reform movement.

*Congregation Beth Israel and the Basic Principles*

Established in 1854, Beth Israel was the first Jewish congregation in Texas. Its membership was mostly central European in origin, and although the congregation began with Orthodox practices, it affiliated with the Reform movement in 1874 like so many similar congregations.<sup>12</sup> A modest influx of Jews from eastern Europe began to appear in Houston in the early twentieth century, but the city's Reform community in the 1940s remained largely central European and Classical Reform. Other Texas cities had Jewish communities with similar demographics and histories of anti-Zionism. For instance, rabbis David Lefkowitz of Dallas and Henry Cohen of Galveston were also ACJ members who led sizable congregations. However, Hitler's antisemitic policies influenced the majority of Texas congregations to support political Zionism by the time of America's entry into World War II.<sup>13</sup>

**Opposite page:** *Brochure enumerating the  
Basic Principles of Congregation Beth Israel, 1943.  
(Courtesy of Congregation Beth Israel, Houston, TX.)*



Beth Israel members claimed that the influx of eastern European immigrants impelled them to adopt the Basic Principles so their congregation would not become co-opted by Zionists and their traditional practices.<sup>14</sup> The majority of Beth Israel congregants opposed Zionism because they believed that it could raise questions about the local Jewish community's racial status and allegiance to the United States. With the principles drafted, congregational leaders extended the invitation to fill their pulpit to Schachtel, a rabbi supportive of their principles.

From the outset, questions surrounded the circumstances of Schachtel's appointment. At the time of his selection, Beth Israel's associate rabbi, Robert Kahn, was stationed in Papua New Guinea as an American military chaplain. Congregants generally liked Kahn, but many worried that his liberal views on civil rights and his support for Zionism could raise issues with the larger non-Jewish Houston community.<sup>15</sup> During World War I, Houston had been the scene of riots against African American soldiers. Congregants such as Beth Israel board members Israel Friedlander and Leopold Meyer surely remembered heightened racial tensions during that era.<sup>16</sup> When Beth Israel offered its senior rabbi position to Schachtel, Kahn, while still stationed in Papua New Guinea, resigned and accepted the position of senior rabbi of Congregation Emanu El. Since its creation by members who had left Beth Israel, Emanu El defined itself in opposition to the older congregation. Its founding charter stated that the

*Announcement of special service  
in honor of Rabbi Robert Kahn's  
enlistment as an Army chaplain,  
1942. (Courtesy of Congregation  
Beth Israel, Houston, TX.)*



congregation adhered to democratic principles, and Kahn stated that it was largely the antidemocratic manner in which Congregation Beth Israel drafted the Basic Principles that impelled him to resign.<sup>17</sup> A fundamental principle of Reform from the outset had been the individual's freedom to choose what to believe and which practices to follow.<sup>18</sup> Thus ironically Beth Israel's actions flew in the face of the historical Reform it claimed to want to preserve.

Schachtel's outspoken anti-Zionism previously had cost him a chance at career advancement. Prior to his appointment at Beth Israel, Schachtel served as associate rabbi of the West End Synagogue in New York City. Schachtel expected that he would be named president of the New York Board of Jewish Ministers in 1942. However, he failed to win election because of interference from Stephen S. Wise, a leading Zionist Reform rabbi, who offered numerous nasty comments about Schachtel. Another influential rabbi urged that "quislings" and "traitors" like Schachtel be rooted out of all important positions. Shortly after this episode, Schachtel accepted Beth Israel's invitation to become its senior rabbi.<sup>19</sup>

An interesting episode followed Schachtel's appointment at Beth Israel. The Reform movement's policies regarding the chaplaincy during World War II came under greater scrutiny as a result of the Houston ordeal. Solomon Freehof, a prolific writer of Reform *responsa*, attempted to mediate between Schachtel and critics of his appointment in Houston because Freehof was tasked with arranging Reform chaplaincy assignments during the war. Freehof unsuccessfully sought compromise between the Zionist and anti-Zionist rabbis.<sup>20</sup> From the organization's inception, ACJ members like Schachtel complained that Zionist Reform rabbis did not serve in the chaplaincy in as high numbers as non-Zionists and anti-Zionists did, a claim that cast doubt on Zionists' allegiance to the United States. Critics of the ACJ attempted to capitalize on Schachtel's appointment by demanding that he submit to a medical examination by a military doctor to officially rule him unfit for the chaplaincy.<sup>21</sup> Schachtel claimed that his personal doctor in New York City examined him and declared him unfit for the chaplaincy because of his family history of hypertension.<sup>22</sup> Over several months, Schachtel corresponded with Freehof and resisted a medical examination by military doctors. As a result of the Schachtel-Kahn episode, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC),

the national association of Reform congregations, prohibited its members from naming new rabbis if their current rabbis were serving in the chaplaincy.<sup>23</sup>

Critics of Beth Israel's actions argued that the congregation did not learn lessons from events in Europe. Usually the congregants faced accusations of arrogance, self-hatred, or authoritarianism. Critics also negatively compared the ACJ and Beth Israel to the notorious *Judenrat*, Jewish ghetto leadership in Nazi-occupied eastern Europe. For instance, one critic of the congregation stated that "in the early days of Hitler Germany the Jewish community also had its 'little foxes'."<sup>24</sup>

Critics of the Basic Principles believed that they threatened unity among Houstonian and American Jews. For instance, one open letter to the congregation stated that the ACJ created the controversy because it was made up of Jewish isolationists who sought to threaten the unity of the Houston Jewish community.<sup>25</sup> The basis for this criticism was Lessing Rosenwald, the first president of the ACJ and a participant in the America First Committee prior to American entry into World War II. (Rosenwald resigned from this organization when reportedly he discovered that many members were antisemitic.) Rosenwald perhaps received more scorn than any other ACJ member because he was a layperson, not a rabbi, even though many of his anti-Zionist formulations derived from the work of Rabbi Elmer Berger.

The majority of support for Beth Israel came from ACJ partisans. One group in Nebraska even threatened to copy the Basic Principles and form its own anti-Zionist congregation in Lincoln, even though its rabbi nominally supported the ACJ. Their proposed name was "American Reform Congregation."<sup>26</sup> Like Houston, a decades-long rift existed in Lincoln between Jews of central and eastern European origins. Eventually the Reform community of Lincoln resolved the cleavages with the appointment of an ACJ rabbi to its pulpit. The issue of Zionism was only one of a myriad of conflicts between the two groups. The Basic Principles inspired a number of similar congregational crises around the country.<sup>27</sup>

Even after the controversy in Houston had calmed somewhat, a similar situation in Cleveland, Ohio, developed with less national attention. In 1948, some congregants from two separate Cleveland Reform synagogues believed that neither congregation represented their ambivalent stance on political Zionism and Israel. These congregants felt that the two

Cleveland Reform congregations did not tolerate non-Zionism or anti-Zionism because nationally prominent Zionist rabbis filled their pulpits and led them. The schismatic congregants formed Suburban Temple-Kol Ami with a limit on new membership and a charter that was comparable to the Basic Principles in its stance opposing political Zionism.<sup>28</sup>

With the British Mandate for Palestine drawing close to ending, Beth Israel hosted a lecture by Kermit Roosevelt, the son of former president Theodore Roosevelt, in 1947. Roosevelt's stop in Houston was part of a speaking tour supported by the ACJ.<sup>29</sup> His Houston lecture highlighted the need for reconciliation among Arabs and Jews in Palestine. Some Houston rabbis protested the lecture, arguing that a speaker should also be present to argue from a Zionist perspective.<sup>30</sup> The same night that Roosevelt spoke, national and local Jewish organizations and Congregation Emanu El, the newly established Reform Zionist congregation, organized a concert by Menahem Pressler, a classically trained pianist and Holocaust survivor. That same year, Emanu El cancelled a Thanksgiving dinner with Beth Israel meant to symbolize reconciliation between the two congregations. Emanu El congregants felt that they could not engage with Beth Israel congregants because the majority still supported the ACJ's philosophy.

*The Establishment of the Houston Congregation  
for Reform Judaism*

A forgotten aspect of the ACJ's activities during the 1950s is its religious education program, which is important for understanding some of the controversies surrounding the organization after its early years. The aims of the program were to create a curriculum in line with Classical Reform Judaism because its members felt that current educational texts emphasized Jewish nationalism above Judaism. A couple of examples of texts in the ACJ curriculum were Allan Tarshish's *Not by Power: The Story of the Growth of Reform Judaism* and *Judaism for Today* by Abraham Cronbach, two rabbis who were also members of the organization.<sup>31</sup> Notably, the ACJ curriculum also did not include Hebrew. The organization's religious education program was perhaps its most effective and innovative activity. Here again it provided a national model and leadership, since a number of sizable Reform congregations and even some Conservative institutions adopted its curriculum throughout the 1950s.<sup>32</sup>

Beth Israel again became the site of conflict among its congregants partially as a result of this curriculum. However this time the conflict did not reverberate outside of Houston's Reform community. ACJ partisans within Beth Israel continued to press for vigorous adherence to Classical Reform principles during the 1950s, and they wanted to adopt the ACJ's curriculum for their congregation's religious school. This group included many of the same congregants who had crafted the Basic Principles fourteen years previously and had been responsible for inviting Schachtel to become senior rabbi.<sup>33</sup>

Tensions erupted again at Beth Israel during the Suez Crisis in 1956, a military action in which Israel, the United Kingdom, and France conducted a tripartite intervention in order to overthrow Egypt's government and open the Suez Canal to international trade. The Eisenhower administration and the Soviets forced an end to the action with strong condemnations of Israel and her two allies. ACJ members felt vindicated because the claim the organization had made for almost fifteen years—that American Jewish support for Israel would not always align with American interests—seemed proven correct. Israel had acted directly against the wishes of the American government. At Beth Israel, conflict arose between ACJ partisans, who wanted to call American Jewish Zionist loyalties into question locally as the national organization did, and the rest of the congregation including, in this case, Rabbi Schachtel, who no longer had the will to be the center of controversy.<sup>34</sup> When Schachtel resisted the ACJ partisans' demands, many left the congregation.

The Houston Congregation for Reform Judaism (HCRJ) was formed the following year as a congregation committed to Classical Reform principles and immediately affiliated its religious school with the ACJ. Shortly after the HCRJ formed, the ACJ held its annual conference in Houston and commended the HCRJ's religious school for its progress, noting Houston's longer legacy and experiences with Classical Reform Judaism compared to another religious school that recently opened in Los Angeles.<sup>35</sup> In its early years, ACJ stalwart I. E. Naman strictly monitored the HCRJ's religious school. Naman, along with other former Beth Israel congregants, relieved rabbis and religious school teachers of their duties if they were deemed pro-Zionist.<sup>36</sup> The HCRJ eventually named Wolfgang Hamburger, a member of the ACJ who had served briefly as its president, as its senior rabbi.

*Original synagogue building of the Houston Congregation for Reform Judaism, c. 1962.  
(Courtesy of the Houston Congregation for Reform Judaism, Houston, TX.)*

*The Council Down South and Elsewhere in the United States:  
Other Chapters During the 1950s*

Many of the most influential chapters of the ACJ were found outside of the South. Sizable chapters were located in Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Seattle, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, and Chicago. These chapters formed for various reasons. Most often, members were from the oldest Reform congregation of a city, such as Keneseth Israel in Philadelphia, where William Fineshriber, an ACJ rabbi who had previously served Memphis's Temple Israel, helped found the Philadelphia ACJ chapter. Congregations associated with the ACJ chapter were often among the wealthiest in their city, as was the case with the Temple de Hirsch of Seattle. ACJ chapters usually existed in areas where there were sizable numbers of Jews of central European origin, such as San Francisco, whose chapter was the most financially influential in the organization during the mid-twentieth century. This chapter included the well-entrenched Jewish aristocracy of the city, families that were among the founders of San Francisco and contributed substantially to the city's welfare, especially after the great fire. Irving

Reichert was a key rabbi in the community until 1948.<sup>37</sup> In some cases, ACJ chapters were established in cities with acute histories of antisemitism. Members believed that charges of dual loyalty fostered such prejudice. This was certainly true in Michigan, the home state of vocal antisemites such as Father Charles Coughlin and Henry Ford. ACJ lay membership also tended to be older in age. A study commissioned by the ACJ during the mid-1950s found that the average ACJ layperson was around the age of fifty-five and noted that about half of its membership was also affiliated with B'nai B'rith or the American Jewish Committee (AJCommittee). Jews of central European origin had founded these organizations, and the AJCommittee had historically opposed the creation of a Jewish state.<sup>38</sup> Although about half of the ACJ's members were also members of prestigious national Jewish organizations and leaders in their respective communities, their identities as Jews were often tenuous.<sup>39</sup>

In the South, ACJ chapters existed in cities including Norfolk, Richmond, New Orleans, Shreveport, St. Louis, Birmingham, Little Rock, and Charleston. During the 1950s, some of these chapters were at the center of controversies that shed light on disagreements about American Jewish identity. The Norfolk chapter worried that the UAHC's support for Israel and the African American civil rights movement would jeopardize its members' racial status. The city of Norfolk closed its public schools in defiance of court-ordered desegregation. During spring 1957, with the threat of public schools being shuttered, the Norfolk ACJ chapter brought a resolution to the UAHC's biennial conference stating that the UAHC should refrain from commenting on ongoing political matters. The Norfolk chapter's intent was to restrain the UAHC's leadership, namely director Maurice Eisendrath, from making public statements supporting desegregation. However, as an affiliated chapter of an ostensibly single-issue, anti-Zionist organization, Norfolk chapter members claimed that they were concerned with the UAHC's support for Israel during the Suez Crisis of the previous year. Whereas Zionism raised the specter of dual national loyalty, outspoken integration statements brought into question southern Jewish allegiance to the Solid South.

Although Norfolk's leading rabbi, Malcolm H. Stern, supported adherence to the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, and many congregants quietly accepted gradual desegregation, such strong and outward support for integration—as with the issue of dual loyalty—

placed their social and economic positions in jeopardy. The chapter's proposed resolution failed to pass during the conference.<sup>40</sup>

Stern held the pulpit at Norfolk's Ohef Sholom during the battle over school integration.<sup>41</sup> In addition to being a luminary of American Jewish genealogy, Stern was associated with the ACJ. His relationship to the organization can be characterized as supportive, yet he was not nearly as outspoken as other ACJ rabbis. Stern continued to support the ACJ after 1948, presumably for personal reasons. Stern had served as associate rabbi at Keneseth Israel in Philadelphia under William Fineshriber, a more vocal member of the ACJ, prior to his appointment at Ohef Sholom. As will be discussed below, Fineshriber and Morris Lazon were at the center of a

*Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern.  
(Courtesy of the Jacob  
Rader Marcus Center  
of the American Jewish  
Archives, Cincinnati.)*

controversy with HUC over whether they would receive honorary degrees because of their roles in the ACJ. Stern presumably felt a connection to Fineshriber and remained in the organization that Fineshriber helped found. Another reason for Stern's continued association with the ACJ was that Michael Lazon was an influential member at Ohef Sholom and the son of Morris Lazon, the second most important rabbi of the ACJ from its founding until his death in 1979.<sup>42</sup>

In New Orleans, ACJ members of Temple Sinai attempted to introduce ACJ curriculum to the congregation's religious school in 1955, as HCRJ did a few years later. However, opponents of the curriculum complained about its condescension to Orthodox Jews and its denial that Jews

constituted a national group. Julian Feibelman, Temple Sinai's senior rabbi and an ACJ member, expressed support for the curriculum, although he also attempted to appear neutral.<sup>43</sup> Some Temple Sinai congregants resigned as a result of the implementation of the new curriculum.<sup>44</sup> Feibelman had previously been the center of a controversy during World War II when he criticized Stephen Wise for publicly announcing to Americans that European Jews were being killed en masse rather than having the State Department make the announcement. Feibelman argued that it was not a rabbi's place to confirm news of this kind to the non-Jewish public. Louis Newman, a Reform rabbi and fierce advocate of Zionism, criticized Feibelman for taking this public stance. Repeatedly, ACJ members demonstrated consistency in their opposition to stands that might bring into question American Jewish loyalty to the United States and what they perceived as American mores.

Another ACJ partisan of Temple Sinai, Henry S. Jacobs, attempted to raise funds for a Reform summer camp for Jewish children in the Deep South.<sup>45</sup> Ironically, Jacobs found little financial support for his plan until after the Six-Day War and American Jews' increased identification with Israel. When the Henry S. Jacobs Camp for Reform Judaism opened in 1970, it did not espouse the anti-Zionist views of the largely fractured and declining ACJ.

*Hyman Schachtel After the ACJ*

After Israel's establishment in 1948, Schachtel ended his criticism of Zionism and claimed to do everything within his power to work for the Jewish state.<sup>46</sup> He formally dropped out of the ACJ, an organization of which he had been a charter member. Like some other charter members, Schachtel began to feel unimportant to the organization's activities. For instance, after World War II, with the question of displaced persons looming large for American Jewish organizations, the rabbi offered the ACJ twenty-five thousand acres of land in Mexico to settle five thousand European Jewish displaced persons as an alternative to their emigration to Palestine. However, the ACJ did not take any action on his offer.<sup>47</sup>

Schachtel spoke on behalf of the Jewish National Fund and B'nai B'rith. Illustrative of his change on the question of Zionism was his visit to Israel shortly before the Six-Day War began in 1967. Schachtel had a



close relationship with Lyndon B. Johnson and gave a prayer at the president's inauguration in 1965. Schachtel reportedly asked Israeli diplomats if they needed him to carry messages back to the president. By the 1970s, Schachtel was emphasizing how often he had asked President Johnson to support Israel. Like many other former anti-Zionists, he preferred to forget the past.<sup>48</sup>

In 1975, at the twilight of his rabbinical career, Schachtel gave an interview to Beth Israel researchers in which he attempted to explain his position on Zionism during the 1940s. In the interview, Schachtel stated that he arranged for weapons to be smuggled out of Galveston, Texas, for the Haganah's use during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.<sup>49</sup> Whether this claim is truthful or not, Schachtel appeared as a changed man. Unlike their failed Thanksgiving dinner over thirty years earlier, Beth Israel and Emanu El congregants finally held a symbolic dinner to honor Hyman Schachtel and Robert Kahn, their respective rabbis at the center of the controversies three decades earlier. Schachtel also received a Humanitarian Award from B'nai B'rith and a Human Relations Award from the AJCommittee in 1975.<sup>50</sup> In 1982, Hebrew Union College established a Kahn/Schachtel scholarship

*President Lyndon B. Johnson in the Oval Office  
with Rabbi Schachtel and his wife, Barbara, January 1965.  
(Courtesy of Congregation Beth Israel, Houston, TX.)*

for Christian scholars to pursue advanced degrees in Judaism. It is unlikely that these awards would have been bestowed on Schachtel if he continued to speak publicly against Zionism and later Israeli policies.

Other rabbis of Schachtel's former cohort faced marginalization from Reform bodies for their continued support of the ACJ. Morris Lazaron and William Fineshriber remained ardent ACJ members after the establishment of Israel. Both Fineshriber and Lazaron began their rabbinical careers as nominal cultural Zionists, but they both grew concerned with the Zionist movement's tactics, which they believed attempted to scare American Jews into immigrating to Palestine. This led them to oppose the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.<sup>51</sup> Lazaron was forced to resign from his congregation in Baltimore after World War II because of his ACJ activities. HUC resisted conferring honorary degrees on Lazaron and Fineshriber in the early 1950s. Lazaron remained an ACJ partisan until his death in 1979, as did Fineshriber. Other rabbis, like Ira Sanders of Little Rock, avoided criticism by leaving the organization at the end of World War II and downplaying their participation.<sup>52</sup> Still other older rabbis such as Solomon Foster of Newark and Henry Cohen of Galveston did not face as stern criticisms as Fineshriber or Lazaron, possibly because they were soon to retire from the pulpit. Schachtel's wife, Barbara, assumed that he received so much scorn in his early days in Houston because he was a young, eloquent speaker who some critics perceived as a threat to the cause of political Zionism. Barbara Schachtel and her second husband, Louis Green, also suggested that many more Reform figures agreed with Rabbi Schachtel and the ACJ in 1942 and 1943 but remained silent due to fears of facing attacks. Schachtel and Green cited Solomon Freehof as one of those who silently agreed with Hyman Schachtel's stand.<sup>53</sup>

Perhaps the greatest threat posed by the Basic Principles and the ACJ at its onset was that a new, distinctly anti-Zionist denomination of American Judaism would form.<sup>54</sup> Congregation Beth Israel might have served as a model for this new anti-Zionist denomination had the congregation not taken such a combative tone with Reform bodies. Another reason this did not happen was that the row in Congregation Beth Israel heightened national and local tensions during a period of extreme stress and conflict. Also, many of those who supported the congregation's actions were too hewed to official Reform bodies to consider leaving the denomination. Reform leadership successfully steered the movement through the crisis

*Rabbi Morris S. Lazaron.*  
 (Courtesy of the Jacob Rader Marcus  
 Center of the American Jewish  
 Archives, Cincinnati, OH.)

*Rabbi William Fineshriber,*  
*drawing by Harry S. Moskovitz.*  
 (Courtesy of Reform Congregation  
 Keneseth Israel, Elkins Park, PA.)

with its policy of individual choice on the question of Zionism. This policy helped limit the dissension in the movement by allowing for multiple interpretations of Reform. This resulted in the formation of some new congregations such as HCRJ and Emanu El. The HCRJ became the heir apparent of the Basic Principles after 1957. Houston during the mid-twentieth century displayed the fissures that the issue had caused in Reform. Three Reform congregations existed after 1957: Zionist Emanu El, anti-Zionist HCRJ, and ambivalent Beth Israel.

Many Beth Israel congregants of the late 1950s likely held ambivalent feelings toward Israel, taking note of Reform bodies' official statements lauding Israel's achievements yet still privately harboring concerns that Israel and America's interests would not always align and that this could raise questions about their race and loyalties to the United States.<sup>55</sup> The Suez Crisis likely alleviated fears of many Beth Israel congregants because the episode did not elicit public antisemitic sentiments even though the Eisenhower administration disapproved of Israel's military actions. Many

Americans came to see Israel as an important Cold War ally that shared American values.<sup>56</sup> By the late 1950s, American Jews were also more accepted as a white ethnic group, a trend that helps explain why many Jews who did not do so previously now expressed their Jewish identity and support for Israel publicly.<sup>57</sup> Consequently, the ACJ and its supporters in Houston saw a steeper, further decline in their position during the 1950s. American Jewish support for Israel was no longer problematic.

The distinctions between Beth Israel and Emanu El greatly diminished well before Beth Israel officially rescinded its Basic Principles in 1968. The differences between these congregations and HCRJ became blurred as time elapsed, and Reform became more homogenous in its support of Israel. I would also hazard the guess that today, many HCRJ congregants are unaware of their congregation's anti-Zionist founding. Today Jews in the United States divide over Israeli policies. Again, Jewish organizations and individuals oppose each other's positions. Although conditions are different from the 1940s and 1950s, Jews in the South continue to follow and lead these national trends.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Hyman Schachtel to Louis Wolsey, December 9, 1943, Louis Wolsey Papers, box 4, folder 7, Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati (hereafter cited as Wolsey Papers and AJA). Schachtel described this episode to Wolsey, one of the intellectual leaders of the American Council for Judaism, when discussing the substantial support for Zionism the seminary students harbored.

<sup>2</sup> "The Basic Principles of Congregation Beth Israel, Houston, Texas," in Israel Friedlander, *The History of the Official Adoption of "The Basic Principles" by Congregation Beth Israel* (Houston, TX, 1944), 1:234–36, Congregation Beth Israel Archival Materials, link "The Basic Principles," accessed June 10, 2019, <https://www.beth-israel.org/lifelong-learning/library/archival-materials>. See also Anne Nathan Cohen, *The Centenary History: Congregation Beth Israel of Houston, Texas, 1854–1954* (Houston, TX, 1954), 56–57.

<sup>3</sup> Solomon Freehof to Leopold Meyer, n.d., Solomon Freehof Papers, box 1, folder 4, AJA (hereafter cited as Freehof Papers).

<sup>4</sup> Cohen, *Centenary History*, 53, 58.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Bryan Edward Stone, *The Chosen Folks: Jews on the Frontiers of Texas* (Austin, TX, 2010), 148–49; Stuart Rockoff, "Deep in the Heart of Palestine: Zionism in Early Texas," in *Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas*, ed. Hollace Ava Weiner and Kenneth D. Roseman (Waltham, MA, 2007), 103–7.

<sup>6</sup> Jim Kessler, "A Study of the Split in Congregation Beth Israel, Houston, Texas 1942-44" (1971), AJA Small Collections SC-5249.

<sup>7</sup> Solomon Freehof to Barnett Brickner, September 13, 1943, Freehof Papers, box 1, folder 4. Some congregants may also have been concerned that attendance at services was diminishing and that Barnston, at seventy-four, had grown too old, was in poor health, and appeared shaky when he delivered his sermons. Such concerns could have contributed to the desire to remove him. See Hollace Ava Weiner, *Jewish Stars in Texas: Rabbis and Their Work* (College Station, Tex., 1999): 184.

<sup>8</sup> Dana Kaplan, *American Reform Judaism: An Introduction* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2003), 1-13.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Moses Rischin, "Germans vs. Russians," in *The American Jewish Experience*, ed. Jonathan D. Sarna (New York, 1997), 136-50; Gur Alroey, *Zionism Without Zion: The Jewish Territorial Organization and Its Conflict with the Zionist Organization* (Detroit, 2016), 197-204.

<sup>10</sup> Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (Detroit, 1995), 295. A further factor was that children of east European Jewish immigrants, more traditional and Zionist in inclination, were graduating from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, occupying the pulpits of Reform temples, and filling the ranks of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in sufficient numbers to influence policy.

<sup>11</sup> Howard Greenstein, *Turning Point: Zionism and Reform Judaism* (Chico, CA, 1981), 58.

<sup>12</sup> Cohen, *Centenary History*, 23.

<sup>13</sup> Harriet Rochlin and Fred Rochlin, *Pioneer Jews: A New Life in the Far West* (Bloomington, IN, 2014), 85-89.

<sup>14</sup> Cohen, *Centenary History*, 53.

<sup>15</sup> "Lack of Negro Training Called Defense Handicap," *Houston Post*, February 9, 1942, cited in Friedlander, *History of the Official Adoption*, 2:84, Congregation Beth Israel Archival Materials, link "Basic Principles 2," accessed June 10, 2019, <https://www.beth-israel.org/lifelong-learning/library/archival-materials>; I. Friedlander to Committee for a Jewish Army, February 9, 1942, in Friedlander, *History of the Official Adoption*, 2:85. In this article, Kahn urged that African Americans be trained in jobs to aid America's war efforts. In another article he was quoted comparing the plight of African Americans to Jews persecuted in Egypt during Biblical times. "Negro Wants Normal Life, Meeting Told," *Houston Chronicle*, February 9, 1942, in Friedlander, *History of the Official Adoption*, 2:84.

<sup>16</sup> Mark Grossberg, interview conducted by Gay Block and Linda May, January 8, 1978, Congregation Beth Israel Library, accessed June 10, 2019, <https://www.beth-israel.org/lifelong-learning/library>. Grossberg recounts a story about how his grandmother was attacked by Ku Klux Klan members in a town near Houston. Grossberg's grandmother hit one of the men with a skillet, rendering him unconscious. She later went to court because of this episode but was acquitted. This narrative highlights the precarious racial position in which Beth Israel congregants found themselves during the early twentieth century.

<sup>17</sup> Robert I. Kahn, "Oral Memoirs," May 30, 1977, AJA. See also, Weiner, *Jewish Stars in Texas*, 198-99.

<sup>18</sup> Mark K. Bauman, "Demographics, Anti-Rabbanism, and Freedom of Choice: The Origins and Principles of Reform at Baltimore's Har Sinai Verein," in *A New Vision of Southern Jewish History* (Tuscaloosa, 2019), 177–200.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Kolsky, *Jews Against Zionism* (Philadelphia, 1992), 62.

<sup>20</sup> Solomon Freehof to Barnett Brickner, September 13, 1943, Freehof Papers, box 1, folder 4.

<sup>21</sup> Barnett Brickner to Solomon Freehof, August 24, 1943, Freehof Papers, box 1, folder 4.

<sup>22</sup> Hyman Schachtel to Solomon Freehof, August 28, 1943, Freehof Papers, box 1, folder 4. Beth Israel board president Leopold Meyer also had a long correspondence with Freehof in which the two discussed the principles of Reform Judaism. Hyman Schachtel's father died of hypertension following a stroke. See Weiner, *Jewish Stars in Texas*, 186.

<sup>23</sup> Minutes of CCAR Meeting on Chaplaincy, June 22, 1944, Freehof Papers, box 1, folder 4.

<sup>24</sup> Israel Goldstein, "Pathological Jews," *New Palestine*, December 12, 1943, text in Friedlander, *History of the Official Adoption*, 1:147–48. The lay criticisms of Beth Israel and the ACJ were similar to that of Louis Newman, an influential Reform rabbi. Newman also compared ACJ members to German Jews who were excessively assimilated. See Howard Greenstein, *Turning Point*, 111–22.

<sup>25</sup> Members of Congregation Beth Israel opposed to the proposed "Basic Principles" of the Board, "To the Members of Congregation Beth Israel," n.d., in Friedlander, *History of the Official Adoption*, 1:211.

<sup>26</sup> Jack Ross, *Rabbi Outcast: Elmer Berger and American Jewish Anti-Zionism* (Lincoln, NE, 2011), 64. One of the most outspoken supporters of the Basic Principles was Rabbi David Goldberg of Sioux City, Iowa.

<sup>27</sup> David Mayer Gradwohl and Hannah Rosenberg Gradwohl, "That is the Pillar of Rachel's Grave Unto This Day: An Ethnoarchaeological Comparison of Two Jewish Cemeteries in Lincoln, Nebraska," in *Persistence and Flexibility: Anthropological Perspectives on the American Jewish Experience*, ed. Walter P. Zenner (Albany, NY, 1988), 223–59. The Gradwohls' essay details religious and cultural conflicts between the two Lincoln congregations, one Reform and one Conservative, over decades. David Mayer Gradwohl is the son of Bernard Gradwohl, an ACJ partisan who led the efforts to establish the American Reform Congregation in Lincoln.

<sup>28</sup> See Ellen Deutsch, "The Founders of Suburban Temple-Kol Ami" (master's thesis, Siegal College of Jewish Studies, 2002).

<sup>29</sup> Roosevelt was an American intelligence officer who later helped overthrow Iran's democratically elected government in 1953. He helped establish American Friends of the Middle East, an organization secretly funded by American intelligence agencies and oil tycoons. Geoffrey P. Levin, "Arab Students, American Jewish Insecurities, and the End of Pro-Arab Politics in Mainstream America, 1952–1973," *Arab Studies Journal* 25 (May 2017): 32.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Israel Levinthal to Robert Gordis, March 3, 1949, ACJ Collection, box 1, folder 7, Center for Jewish History at YIVO, New York. Levinthal and Gordis were active in the National Community Relations Advisory Council (NCRAC), whose purpose was to counter antisemitism as they saw it. One of their frequent targets was the ACJ and, in this

case, Beth Israel. The body was founded by the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds.

<sup>31</sup> Julian Feibelman to Label Katz, January 6, 1956, Julian B. Feibelman Papers, box 6, Folder 6, AJA (hereafter cited as Feibelman Papers). See also Bernard Gradwohl and Bert Reuler, Report of the ACJ's Religious Education Department for the Fourteenth Annual ACJ Conference, March 13–16, 1958, ACJ Collection, box 6, folder 6.

<sup>32</sup> Ben Gallob, "Council for Judaism School Program Making Progress" *National Jewish Post*, September 10, 1954.

<sup>33</sup> Current ACJ president Stephen Naman, interview conducted by Kyle Stanton, October 9, 2018. Naman grew up in Houston during the 1950s. His family ardently supported the ACJ and were founders of the HCRJ. Stephen's father, I. E. Naman, supervised the new religious school's activities while Stephen was a student.

<sup>34</sup> Ross, *Rabbi Outcast*, 90, 100–101.

<sup>35</sup> Gradwohl and Reuler, Report of the ACJ's Religious Education Department.

<sup>36</sup> Naman interview.

<sup>37</sup> Ross, *Rabbi Outcast*, 49.

<sup>38</sup> See Naomi W. Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee, 1906–1966* (Philadelphia, 1972); Marianne R. Sanua, *Let Us Prove Strong: The American Jewish Committee, 1946–2006* (Waltham, MA, 2007).

<sup>39</sup> William Catton to Elmer Berger, October 10, 1958, ACJ Collection, box 7, folder 4. Catton directed Project Concord, a three-year sociological study of the ACJ conducted by the University of Washington's sociology department.

<sup>40</sup> "Jewish Group Asks Convention to Muzzle Eisendrath," *National Jewish Post*, April 26, 1957.

<sup>41</sup> See Malcolm Stern, "The Year They Closed the Schools: The Norfolk Story," in *The Quiet Voices: Southern Rabbis and Black Civil Rights, 1880s to 1990s*, ed. Mark K. Bauman and Berkley Kalin (Tuscaloosa, 1997), 286–310. A chapter on Stern's time in Norfolk during the school integration crisis, including a transcribed 1966 interview with Stern, appears in P. Allan Krause, *To Stand Aside or Stand Alone: Southern Reform Rabbis and the Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Mark K. Bauman (Tuscaloosa, 2017), 165–186.

<sup>42</sup> Malcolm Stern Papers, box 4, folder 28, AJA. See also Leonard Sussman's address to the Thirteenth Annual ACJ Conference and Leonard Sussman to the Religious Education Department of the ACJ, May 14, 1957, in ACJ Collection, box 6, folder 7.

<sup>43</sup> Julian Feibelman to Louis Newman, December 28, 1948, Feibelman Papers, box 9, folder 5. See also Julian B. Feibelman, *The Making of a Rabbi* (Burlington, VT, 1980).

<sup>44</sup> Minutes of Temple Sinai's Brotherhood Board Meeting, October 18, 1955, ACJ Collection. See also Label Katz to Richard Schornstein, December 28, 1955, Feibelman Papers, box 23, folder 1.

<sup>45</sup> Henry S. Jacobs, "A Practical Look at a Religious School Program," report to the Eleventh Annual ACJ Conference, March 18, 1955, ACJ Collection, box 23, folder 1.

<sup>46</sup> Hyman Schachtel, interview conducted by Gay Block and Linda May, October 27, 1975, Congregation Beth Israel Library, accessed June 28, 2019, <https://www.beth-israel.org/life-long-learning/library>.

<sup>47</sup> Hyman Schachtel to Louis Wolsey, December 15, 1946, Wolsey Papers, box 4, folder 7. Louis Wolsey was in a position similar to Schachtel in the ACJ although he was one of the ideological leaders of the organization from its inception. By the end of World War II, Wolsey's role in the organization was greatly diminished, and he eventually resigned from it.

<sup>48</sup> Schachtel interview.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Barbara Schachtel and Louis Green, interview conducted by Hollace Ava Weiner, March 7, 1997, AJA.

<sup>51</sup> Jonathan D. Sarna, "Converts to Zionism in the American Reform Movement," in *Zionism and Religion*, ed. Shmuel Almog, Jehuda Reinharz, and Anita Shapira (Hanover, NH, 1997), 195.

<sup>52</sup> James L. Moses, *Just and Righteous Causes: Rabbi Ira Sanders and the Fight for Racial and Social Justice in Arkansas, 1926–1963* (Fayetteville, AR, 2018), 87–110. Other congregants in Sanders's congregation, like Noland Blass, Sr., and Betsy Blass, remained ACJ partisans after Sanders left the organization.

<sup>53</sup> Schachtel and Green interview.

<sup>54</sup> Ross, *Rabbi Outcast*, 64.

<sup>55</sup> Leopold Meyer, interview conducted by Gay Block and Linda May, August 19, 1975, Congregation Beth Israel Library, accessed June 28, 2019, <https://www.beth-israel.org/life-long-learning/library>. Meyer served as the president of Congregation Beth Israel during the Schachtel/Kahn episode. He explained his position on Israel and Zionism with ambivalence and also included a short diatribe about David Ben-Gurion.

<sup>56</sup> See Michelle Mart, *Eye on Israel: How America Came to View Israel as an Ally* (Albany, NY, 2007).

<sup>57</sup> See Barry Trachtenberg, *The United States and the Nazi Holocaust: Race, Refuge, and Remembrance* (New York, 2018).



*PRIMARY SOURCES*

A Foot Soldier in the Civil Rights Movement:  
Lynn Goldsmith with SCLC-SCOPE,  
Summer 1965

by

Miyuki Kita\*

**Excerpts from the Diary of Lynn Goldsmith,  
June–August, 1965.<sup>1</sup>**

Several Jews involved in the civil rights movement are well known by students of American Jewish history. These include Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, who marched with Martin Luther King, Jr., in the Selma–Montgomery March in 1965, and Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, who, along with their fellow worker James Chaney, were slain by local Ku Klux Klan members during the Mississippi Freedom Summer in 1964.

On June 12, 1965, three months after the Selma–Montgomery March and one year after the tragedy in Mississippi, Lynn Goldsmith departed from the Port Authority Bus Terminal near her hometown of Princeton, New Jersey. She had turned nineteen years old only two days prior. As one of twenty-three students from Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, she was planning to spend that summer in South Carolina as a volunteer serving the civil rights movement. The group belonged to the Summer Community Organization and Political Education Project (SCOPE), operating under the auspices of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Atlanta, where Goldsmith arrived after a twenty-two-hour bus ride, was the location of the SCOPE orientation.

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Recent studies of the history of the civil rights movement have increasingly emphasized the roles of ordinary, unsung people rather than prominent and vocal leaders.<sup>2</sup> In this sense, Goldsmith was a typical, ordinary foot soldier of the movement. Unusually, however, for seventy-nine days of noteworthy experiences during her SCOPE project participation, Goldsmith kept a detailed diary. Written in fine handwriting, it extends to more than 240 sheets of paper, presenting an honest perspective of the obstacles and challenges Goldsmith and her fellow workers confronted while canvassing and helping to register African Americans to vote. The diary also presents the realities of civil rights activities and local people's response in St. Matthews, a rural South Carolina town, even though those events never appeared as a mainstream episode of the history of the civil rights movement.<sup>3</sup> Through her diary, one comes to understand what a "very Reform" Jewish young woman working for civil rights experienced and thought in relation to social justice.<sup>4</sup>

#### *SCOPE*

Launched in 1965, the SCOPE project was intended to help African Americans register to vote. Specifically, it brought eight hundred student volunteers from northern and western colleges to a hundred counties in six southern states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia.<sup>5</sup> It resembled in some respects the Freedom Summer Project of 1964, the first large-scale voter registration drive to mobilize white youths from outside the South. Because Freedom Summer targeted only Mississippi, SCOPE was intended to cover other southern states in which African American voter registration was suppressed and where registration rates remained low because of barriers imposed by white residents. Although literacy tests were prohibited by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, local registration offices often used them to prevent African American citizens from registering to vote.

Recognizing the importance of voting rights, from fall 1964 the SCLC requested that the federal government revise the Voting Rights Act to better ensure everyone's right to vote. At the same time, the SCLC joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which had set voter registration as its main emphasis two years earlier in Selma, Alabama. Selma's registration rate was particularly low: in 1963, only 1 percent of fifteen thousand black residents of Dallas County,

where Selma is located, were registered to vote.<sup>6</sup> In this situation, another voter registration drive was advocated under the leadership of Hosea Williams, national director of the SCLC Department of Political Education and Voter Registration. The SCLC also offered citizenship education classes to help African Americans form community organizations and vote.<sup>7</sup>

The official recruitment for SCOPE got under way in April 1965. Hosea Williams, however, began to work even before receiving the official approval of the SCLC's executive board. In late January, he sent letters to nationwide civil rights organizations and colleges to explain that SCLC would conduct a large-scale voter registration drive by college students.<sup>8</sup> Learning from the Freedom Summer experience, SCLC staff tried to organize campus-based units comprised of students who already knew each other and would work together in assigned counties. Consequently, SCOPE was more college-oriented than the Mississippi Freedom Summer. Each college first formed a chapter, which dispatched students to the South after conducting extensive recruiting, selection, and fundraising. By assigning one school to one county, it was expected that it would be easier to build an ongoing connection and provide continuing support of that county's African American community after volunteers had returned to their home school.

Brandeis University's SCOPE chapter was formed soon after the project was officially announced.<sup>9</sup> Dean Leonard Zion spearheaded the arrangements. Maintaining close contact with SCLC offices in Atlanta, the Brandeis SCOPE chapter selected twenty-three students, including several from neighboring universities. It eventually became the second-largest group among fifty-eight SCOPE chapters, following the University of Minnesota, which sent twenty-five students.<sup>10</sup> The Brandeis chapter was assigned to Richland County, South Carolina. Before the end of the spring semester, and before traveling south, the volunteers held several meetings on campus. They studied the local government and social structure, past issues of local newspapers, and the history of race relations and conflicts within the community to determine whom they should contact and how to work effectively and safely.<sup>11</sup>

According to Willy Siegel Leventhal, a SCOPE volunteer from UCLA who worked in Macon, Georgia, the SCOPE Project is a lost chapter in the history of the civil rights movement.<sup>12</sup> In fact, among the numerous

studies and stories of the movement, even in studies specifically examining the SCLC or Martin Luther King, Jr., the SCOPE Project has been neglected.<sup>13</sup> Most textbooks end their accounts of the civil rights movement at the Selma–Montgomery March and subsequent passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. Alternatively, some accounts merely jump to August 11, 1965, only five days after the passage of Voting Rights Act, when the Watts riots began in Los Angeles, one of the worst racial uprisings in U.S. history, which eventually resulted in thirty-four deaths.

Although SCOPE has garnered little attention from scholars or the media, it was not without its own drama and danger. In anticipation of the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, the prevailing atmosphere was one of risk and fear for the safety of civil rights workers in the South. One can also argue that southern whites' rage became even fiercer during that period. Although no killings like those in Mississippi occurred, SCOPE volunteers faced danger from several directions.

In collaboration with local activists, leaders, and SCLC field staff, the SCOPE workers of six states had reportedly registered more than forty-nine thousand new African American voters when the project officially ended on August 28, 1965.<sup>14</sup> Among the concrete accomplishments of the Brandeis SCOPE project were the registration of some three thousand voters, the racial integration of two laundromats and a theater, the formation of a boy's club, and the organization of a group of local people to continue voter registration work. According to Brandeis SCOPE leader Bill Kornrich of the class of 1967, some members planned to volunteer again in South Carolina during the winter and the following summer.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, despite receiving little attention, the SCOPE Project is an important part of the civil rights movement and deserving of study as an early effort to fulfill the promise of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

*Lynn Goldsmith in Calhoun County, South Carolina*

How and why did Lynn Goldsmith readily and willingly become involved in this most dangerous project? After graduating from Princeton High School in New Jersey, Goldsmith got into Brandeis University in fall 1964. Princeton High School had a few black students and a chapter of the Friends of SNCC, in which Goldsmith was involved. Goldsmith's father, George J. Goldsmith, who taught physics at Princeton University, was deeply involved in campus student activities. He was the enthusiastic

*Lynn Goldsmith  
as a student, 1968.  
(Brandeis University yearbook,  
courtesy of Miyuki Kita.)*

leader of the Princeton Freedom Center, which had a strong connection with Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), whose leaders, Tom Hayden and Howard Zinn, were his friends.<sup>16</sup> With Goldsmith's participation in the SCOPE Project, her father tried to help her and her fellow workers in various ways. In August, Goldsmith's parents drove down to St. Matthews with a truckload of books, toys, and foodstuffs.<sup>17</sup>

Goldsmith was very involved in the Jewish Center in Princeton during her high school years. The rabbi, Everett Gendler, was very inspiring, the synagogue conducted numerous activities involving civil rights for young people, and he encouraged Jews to commit to the civil rights movement.<sup>18</sup> These surroundings naturally led Goldsmith to involvement in the SCOPE Project once she matriculated at Brandeis.

Lynn Goldsmith's diary entries started on the day of her departure and ended with her return to college. On June 12, she left home in Princeton, New Jersey. On June 14, she underwent orientation and training in Atlanta, where about three hundred student workers from across the country gathered. On June 19, she left for Columbia, South Carolina, to

start working in Richland County. On that day, each college group departed for its assigned county. The overly large and unwieldy Brandeis contingent was divided into smaller groups after arriving in Columbia. On June 29, Goldsmith and four other students formed an independent group and transferred to Calhoun County to start their own activities.<sup>19</sup> Goldsmith was stationed in St. Matthews, the Calhoun County seat, until August 28. With work finished, she left the county and arrived back home in Princeton on August 29.

During her stay, Goldsmith occasionally left Calhoun County. She, two other local volunteers, and Calhoun County civil rights leader Hope Williams traveled to Birmingham, Alabama, from the evening of August 10 to the morning of August 14 to attend the SCLC annual convention. There Goldsmith listened to the speech by Martin Luther King, Jr., and enjoyed communication with James Bevel, Hosea Williams, and other enthusiastic civil rights activists. In addition, during their stay in Calhoun County, Goldsmith and other workers often visited neighboring

*SCOPE orientation in Atlanta, June 14, 1965.*

*(Lynn Goldsmith Papers, courtesy of the Robert D. Farber University Archives & Special Collections Dept., Brandeis University, Waltham, MA. Used with permission.)*

Orangeburg County with SCOPE group volunteers from Columbia University and collaborated in every aspect of their work, including printing flyers, repairing cars, and procuring food.<sup>20</sup> On August 3, Goldsmith and other workers were arrested for trespassing into the courthouse, the registration site, and spent a night in the Orangeburg city jail.

The June 28 diary entry describes Calhoun as the most dangerous and difficult of South Carolina's counties.<sup>21</sup> Of its six thousand residents, slightly over 55 percent were African American. St. Matthews had about one thousand residents. Facilities such as libraries and swimming pools were segregated despite public and legal requirements that they be integrated. Private facilities such as laundromats, gas stations, restaurants, and movie theaters remained segregated as a matter of course. Almost all black residents in rural areas were illiterate tenant farmers. Expansive cotton fields and unpaved roads spread throughout the countryside. Along these unmapped roads were scattered the black tenant farmers' windowless and doorless shacks.

*Hope Williams in 1965.*  
*(Lynn Goldsmith Papers, courtesy of*  
*the Robert D. Farber University*  
*Archives & Special Collections Dept.,*  
*Brandeis University, Waltham, MA.*  
*Used with permission.)*

On most days, Goldsmith and her fellow workers went out canvassing. They visited black residents and explained how to register to vote. People in St. Matthews were often already registered and were even anxious to help the SCOPE project. Hope Williams had formed the Calhoun County Improvement League in 1964 to promote local African Americans' voter registration. Williams was then a fifty-five-year-old farmer. His like-minded friends included Furman Hart and Ham Federick.<sup>22</sup> They often invited students to meals, providing a tableful of food that was too much to consume. Floyd's Grocery Store, where students could help themselves to anything in the store, became the temporary SCOPE office.

In contrast, canvassing in rural areas entailed less pleasant difficulties. Workers sometimes had to walk many miles in the beating sun in temperatures higher than 100°F. In addition to physically harsh conditions, rural black people were suspicious or afraid of white people, including civil rights workers. Workers usually went out canvassing with local high school student volunteers who were able to assuage wariness against whites. Nevertheless, people remained frightened. Even when workers spoke to local people, the people had often been convinced or coerced into thinking that they were ineligible to register.

In addition to weekday canvassing, SCOPE workers went to local black churches on Sundays and sometimes on weekday evenings to give speeches encouraging people to register. Registration days were usually held every two weeks and were July 12 and August 2 in Calhoun County. The workers drove people from rural areas to the registration venue, the St. Matthews courthouse. They helped people fill out application blanks, teaching them what to write sometimes letter by letter. When the line moved slowly, they passed out cold drinks and candy bars to the prospective voters, who waited for hours in sweltering heat. Goldsmith remained busy arranging car pools and making phone calls. She stayed up as late as 4:00 A.M. before the registration days.<sup>23</sup>

Civil rights workers were often arrested. Goldsmith spent one night at a local jailhouse with fifty-two other workers. The arrest occurred on August 3, when Calhoun workers were helping with registration day in Orangeburg County. They had refused to leave the courthouse after 5:00 P.M. in protest of delaying tactics that had stalled the registration. As often happened, people were registered only very slowly by reluctant registrars.



*TOP: Lines of people waiting to register to vote at the Calhoun County Courthouse, 1965.*

*BOTTOM: Orangeburg City Jail, the "Pink Palace," where Goldsmith and other workers spent a night. (Lynn Goldsmith Papers, courtesy of the Robert D. Farber University Archives & Special Collections Dept., Brandeis University, Waltham, MA.*

*Used with permission.)*

Moreover, many were asked to take a literacy test, which usually served as an excuse to reject them.<sup>24</sup>

The SCOPE workers did an enormous amount of work for two and a half months. Aside from occasional visits to local restaurants and barbecue parties with local civil rights workers, SCOPE workers had vacations only twice on days following registration days. During day trips, they thoroughly enjoyed themselves at a nearby beach in Beaufort.

Local whites, including police and ordinary residents, were for the most part antagonistic toward the civil rights activists. After SCOPE workers began canvassing in Calhoun County on July 1, white residents immediately noticed their presence. The following morning, Carol Sable was stopped and questioned by a deputy sheriff. Terry Parsons was arrested for lacking a car registration, was released on twenty-seven dollars bail, and was asked to appear in court that afternoon.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, SCOPE workers' cars were often reported as "speeding," although they never drove above the speed limit. They often had to switch cars so that their license numbers would not be recognized by local whites. Even at a hamburger restaurant, shop clerks often deliberately took time before they served them because the SCOPE workers and local volunteers visited there as a racially mixed group.

In St. Matthews, the Ku Klux Klan was revived and held a meeting on August 14. Four days after that event, shots were fired through the picture window of the SCOPE house in which Goldsmith and her fellow workers resided. Fortunately no one was in the house, but shattered glass was strewn over every inch of the room.<sup>26</sup> Before and after the shooting, workers received threatening phone calls, presumably from local whites, with voices uttering, "You could all be dead tomorrow" or "You nigger lover." On the day after the shooting, the phone calls reached their peak: a worker hanging up the phone would immediately get another call.<sup>27</sup>

*Goldsmith's Encounter with Jews in St. Matthews*

Goldsmith's diary describes Calhoun County as rife with harassment and intimidation by local whites. Therefore, Goldsmith and her fellow workers continued with their activities on the assumption that all local whites, including those who "live in poorer houses than colored folk," were hostile to their efforts and the civil rights movement. For example, when Goldsmith knocked on a white person's door by accident

*Damaged window at SCOPE house in St. Matthews, SC, August 18, 1965.  
(Lynn Goldsmith Papers, courtesy of the Robert D. Farber University Archives  
& Special Collections Dept., Brandeis University, Waltham, MA.  
Used with permission.)*

during canvassing, she pretended to be a traveler asking for directions. Then she would “scoot” off after saying “Well, thank you. Good-bye.”<sup>28</sup>

A few local whites were concerned for the safety of SCOPE workers. Richard Banks, a county clerk, was one of them. After the shooting of the SCOPE house window on August 18, he came by to invite two SCOPE workers, Carol Sable and Terry Parsons, to drive with him. He told them what had been going on and what had been discussed among local whites—“there is quite a stir”—but he hoped SCOPE workers would get together with the whites. It is not clear whether Banks was merely concerned about the uproar and hoped things would settle down or whether he hoped for integration in St. Matthews and was willing to work together with SCOPE. Whichever was true, Goldsmith considered him to be on SCOPE’s side, something she was glad to know. Nevertheless, their encounter with Banks occurred on August 24, too late to establish a

relationship between them that was sufficiently strong to support civil rights efforts.<sup>29</sup>

Jews in St. Matthews had to contend with local white opposition to the civil rights movement. On July 15, Goldsmith and Mary Ann Efroymsen, another SCOPE worker, visited a Jewish person in St. Matthews, expecting some help. The owner of the Savitz Department Store, Daniel Savitz, was pleased to talk with them, especially after he learned that Goldsmith and Efroymsen were Jewish, but he said he was not brave enough to support their efforts. Although Goldsmith did not give up on him immediately and wrote that "this is a first step," neither she nor other workers visited him again.<sup>30</sup>

During the 1960s, a few Jewish families resided in St. Matthews, but the Jewish presence there extended to earlier times. In 1878, the town had nineteen Jewish residents among a total population of 524. In 1937, among the thirty-four Jewish residents were the Jarecky, Loryea, Rich, Mortiz, Lewisohn, Wetherhorn, Jacobson, Elosser, Cohen, Yelman, and Pearlstine families. Savitz was among them. How many Jews were in St. Matthews in 1965 is not clear, but the *American Jewish Year Book* did not list it as a community with a Jewish population of one hundred or more in 1965.<sup>31</sup>

*Former location of the Savitz Department Store in St. Matthews, SC,  
now the Town and Country Restaurant. (Courtesy of Miyuki Kita.)*

The Savitz family operated a store in St. Matthews from 1908 to 1992, starting with Solomon, a Latvian peddler who arrived in the United States in 1904.<sup>32</sup> From a general store, it evolved to selling dry goods only. Solomon and his wife, Ida, had six sons and two daughters. Their sons Maurice and Daniel ran the store after World War II. Being hard workers, the family ensured that every name brand of clothing for children, men, and women could be found in their store, along with a wide variety of shoes.<sup>33</sup> More importantly for SCOPE workers who shopped only at stores serving African Americans, the store catered to both African Americans and whites. Goldsmith bought a birthday present for her younger brother at the Savitz Department Store and sent it to her parents.<sup>34</sup>

The Pearlstine family owned a wholesale grocery store, founded in 1912 by Sheppard "Shep" Pearlstine, who was active in the community and who was known as "the good shepherd of St. Matthews." The local shoe store was run by Mr. Goldinger. Goldingers and Cohens ran stores as well. These four families could possibly be the only Jews residing in St. Matthews in 1965.<sup>35</sup>

Because the Jewish population in St. Matthews was so small, they did not establish a synagogue there. Most members of the Savitz family belonged to Temple Sinai in Orangeburg County, which had 105 Jews in 1965.<sup>36</sup> Temple Sinai, dedicated in 1956, offered Sunday school and Friday night services but never had a regular rabbi. The congregation brought in student rabbis for High Holiday services, and Rabbi David Gruber of Columbia's Tree of Life Synagogue came once a month to conduct worship services.<sup>37</sup>

The ease of access to Jewish worship in Columbia notwithstanding, one of the owners of the Savitz Department Store, Daniel, with whom Goldsmith talked on July 15, converted to Episcopalianism. All the Jewish-owned stores observed the same business days and hours as other stores in St. Matthews. They kept to the Christian calendar, opening on Saturdays and closing on Sundays.<sup>38</sup> Thus Jews in St. Matthews were well accepted as business people in the white community, while their presence as a religious group was quite invisible and almost nonexistent.

Historically, many southern Jews took a cautious attitude against desegregation. Especially in light of the Leo Frank case of 1913 to 1915, they remained acutely aware that they held a delicate position and could readily be targeted for discrimination, although they felt sympathy for African

Americans. When the civil rights movement became vigorous at the street level, attacks against Jews increased. From the late 1950s through the early 1960s, synagogues and Jewish community centers throughout the South, from Jackson, Mississippi, to Atlanta, Georgia, were bombed or were found rigged with dynamite.<sup>39</sup>

Rabbi P. Allen Krause described the three stances southern Jewry took on segregation: fighting friends, frightened friends, and foes of the Negroes. He argued that some 75 percent of southern Jews held the position of frightened friends, being ambivalent about discrimination issues but tending toward sympathy for African Americans. Fear of repercussions such as economic ruin and social ostracism silenced their sympathies.<sup>40</sup> In small towns such as St. Matthews or rural districts, human relations were narrow and awkward but important. Because their businesses had done well, Jews in St. Matthews hoped to avoid antisemitism and other difficulties, and they tended to be more “frightened friends” than Jews in large cities.

*After SCOPE*

Although Goldsmith did not commit herself in specific civil rights causes after coming back from the SCOPE project, she and her family continued communicating with people in Calhoun County. From the end of summer 1965, one of the local volunteers, Harold McKenzie, lived with Goldsmith’s parents in Princeton for a year to get a better high school education. Goldsmith has also continued to exchange letters and, in recent years, e-mails with Furman Hart, the SCOPE contact person in St. Matthews, and his family.<sup>41</sup>

Upon graduating from Brandeis in 1968, Goldsmith married Larry Goldberg, whom she had been dating. Although many student volunteers took jobs related to civil rights such as teachers, union organizers, social workers, and lawyers, she worked at a department store in Boston for a few years and then helped in her husband’s business while raising their children. Meanwhile, she has been pursuing basketry because, she argues, as an anthropology major she became interested in diverse people and their cultures in the world. In 2011, when there was an international exhibition of sweet grass baskets in Charleston, she had a chance to visit St. Matthews for the first time in forty-six years. In the same year, she lost her father, who exerted a great influence on her involvement in the civil rights

movement. Though her diary had been stored in her desk drawer until then, Goldsmith decided to donate it to the archives of her alma mater so that students and scholars could study this moment in history when Jewish students attending a secular university identified with its Jewish roots made a small but significant impact.<sup>42</sup> Currently the diary is in the Brandeis University archives as a part of the alumni collections, along with some pictures, maps, the program of the 1965 SCLC Annual Convention, and other documents.<sup>43</sup>

Although Goldsmith did not continue her civil rights work, Calhoun County became the scene of some progress. In October, after SCOPE workers left, the Calhoun-Orangeburg Community Development Association, an organization whose mission was to promote the civil rights of Calhoun residents, was established through the efforts of local civil rights leaders. Mary Ann Efroymsen, who had graduated in 1965 and remained in St. Matthews after the summer, and Earl Coblyn, an NAACP lawyer in Orangeburg, played central roles.<sup>44</sup> After some time, Beach Party, the bathing suit factory that had not hired any black workers, began hiring them. Similarly, the library that had not allowed African Americans to visit began admitting them.<sup>45</sup> Above all, one thousand more people had been newly registered to vote. The registration rate of black residents of Calhoun reached 50 percent by the end of 1965.<sup>46</sup>

#### *The Significance of Lynn Goldsmith's Diary*

Lynn Goldsmith's diary is significant for several reasons. It faithfully and diligently recorded her two-and-a-half month experience in the South. Written on letter-sized paper and sometimes on the reverse side of a flyer, her diary extends to 242 pages and 66,000 words. Although some volunteers tried to keep diaries during their participation in the civil rights movement, and although university officials told Brandeis University student workers to keep journals during their stay in the South, their diaries usually ended within one or two weeks and are two to three pages in total. In contrast, Goldsmith never skipped a day, and her diary meticulously documents her entire experiences in the SCOPE Project.

As previously indicated, Goldsmith's diary reveals details of voter registration drives in a rural county, a typical grassroots effort by foot soldiers of the civil rights movement. Through its pages, the reader learns about student workers who resided in a black community,

*Lynn Goldsmith's diary. (Courtesy of Miyuki Kita.)*

established face-to-face relationships with local people, and worked together to help African Americans register to vote. They visited houses of local black residents one by one, sometimes in unmapped cotton fields, preached the importance and necessity of participating in politics, and persuaded them to register. These tasks could not have been accomplished by mass meetings, marches, or speeches by renowned civil rights leaders because many local black people were unable to listen to King's "I Have a Dream" speech on TV or radio or could not read that news because of illiteracy. In this sense, the voter registration drive was an example of what ordinary, unsung foot soldiers were able to accomplish for social justice. By reading Goldsmith's diary, we can learn about the nature of their important work.

Goldsmith began writing the diary at the suggestion of her father, George J. Goldsmith, who was also a civil rights supporter. She sometimes mailed her diary entries to her father, who typed them out and distributed them as a part of the newsletters of the Princeton Freedom Center, of which he was the leader, presumably partly for fundraising.<sup>47</sup> Because she



knew her diary would be read, she precisely described her activities, daily experiences, and even what food students were offered by local African Americans.

Goldsmith's diary has remained untouched and unrevised. This enables readers and historians to capture vividly the bravery, sincerity, and idealism of the young civil rights workers, as well as their everyday experiences and concerns. The reflections of former civil rights activists, sometimes those of ordinary unsung workers in the form of diaries, have been increasingly published recently.<sup>48</sup> But such accounts often include some glorification or idealization, or at least some revision. Goldsmith's diary, although sometimes not well-organized or readily comprehensible, describes her experiences and sentiments as they were at the very time they were written.

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**Excerpts from the Diary of Lynn Goldsmith,  
June–August, 1965.**

*NOTE ON THE TEXT*

*Based on additional research and interviews with Goldsmith and other former workers, I have annotated and attached titles to each diary entry so that readers can grasp the outline. Omissions are indicated by ellipses. Upper cases, underlines, dashes, and other punctuation marks are all as Goldsmith recorded them.*

**Summer 1965**

**June 12 and 13: The Trip Down and Arrival**

The bus to Atlanta was scheduled to leave Port Authority in New York at 3:30 P.M. . . . [We] amused ourselves by singing to Phyllis Greenfield's guitar and digging into the box of food which had been given to us for the 22 hour trip. In Baltimore we had a dinner stop and we picked up one more member from our group. . . .

Our second stop was Richmond, Va., and we had entered the South. It was ten o'clock at night, so we went to get something to eat. None of us

had eaten any kind of a substantial meal since noon time, making do with occasional snacks. Integration had come, yes, but what met the eye was not. The Restaurant (Negro) and the cafeteria stood side by side. The former was a dimly lit, tiny room with only a counter. Its customers were all Negro. Our entrance, although it evoked some stares, was quietly accepted. The other room, in contrast, was large light, airy, and modern, and no Negroes are there. The bathroom had two doors, but only one is used and stands out, while the other is hidden away. It is strange in the South to note that one may not use the bathroom without paying a dime – rather hazardous.

We stopped again at Raleigh, N.C. at two in the morning and at Charlotte, N.C. at 6:30 (5:30 EST)<sup>49</sup> for breakfast. . . . The only visible evidence of real prejudice occurred in S. Carolina. The bus was entirely full except for one seat next to an elderly Negro woman. A white man got on and when he found there were “no” seats, he stood for the 30 or 40 miles of his journey.

There is something distinctly different about the South, although I have not been able to put my finger on it. The trees and other vegetation are very large, and the houses with their big front porches are nearly buried in it. The part of S. Carolina that we passed through was distinctly poorer than those parts of N. Carolina and Georgia. It was, in fact, quite ugly. The bare red soil (which is amazingly red all over these sections of the country) is eroded into mountains and valleys of waste. The billboards advertising Dixie names line the highways and numerous old cars lie in broken and dying states. . . .

We arrived at the meeting early, but the singing was in full force. Many of the songs were new to most of us, but they can be picked up in no time, and we sang so we were hoarse and clapped our hands. . . . The whole “family” of workers is a wonderful bunch of people. Their spirit is released when they lash into the songs and when they speak. Hosea Williams has gained my confidence as a truly great man. Our meeting was only to introduce the staff and resource people. Bayard Rustin did much to liven up the evening as we sat for hours sweltering in our chairs. He is an amazing man with quite a humor. Our meeting ended the usual way – freedom songs ‘til you can’t sing any more. Hosea Williams led us in many of the songs in his rich, deep voice. We closed by standing in a circle singing “We Shall Overcome” and with a prayer.

**June 21: Goldsmith's Separation from Brandeis Group Becomes Decisive, and She Contemplates the Fate of the Three Slain Workers in Mississippi**

Tonight was, I believe, the most significant night of this project. May I confess, dear diary, as you might be called, that I am very high, and our TV is distracting me. We attended a meeting of the Richland County Citizen's Committee. Near the end of the meeting two ministers walked in. They were welcomed (as all visitors, especially ministers, are) and (if I may prophesize) they will make the summer for six of us workers. . . .

We made arrangements for our big move to a rural county that needed real work. What excited us most was that someone had come to us and asked us for work. They want us and need us, and we want to go.

The two ministers got really hot, but we got some real good talk done. Our group (I may honestly say) is losing the three prettiest girls, and the six best and most willing workers. We are going to make a really worthwhile program. We were sooooo!!! Excited, we were all popping. Our voices got louder and louder, and we acted wilder and wilder. We will be working with three real men. We were very happy to have found a place. Most of all, we will each have our "own" family, and will live as part of it. . . .

This might be dangerous, but we felt our dedication tonight. We knew, at last, what we wanted. These men were our friends. Our effort will make a significant and visible difference.

This is the anniversary of the death of the three civil rights workers in Philadelphia, Miss. I feel that this is fitting for such a day. We have taken up where they were headed, and we will do what they wanted to do. The election, lost last year by just over 200 votes, will be won, and those people will see a change.

In the language of this country, may I say, "Amen."

**June 29: The Trip to St. Matthews**

We are now our own group; only slightly dependent on Brandeis SCOPE. At last I feel a part of the Civil Rights Movement, and not a part of a Brandeis (rah, rah!) project. We will be more in contact with other SCOPE groups, and most of all, we can make our own decisions.

We got to the county. It seems to be one enormous cotton field. I almost wondered if any people existed there at all. We saw Spanish moss

*Diary of Lynn Goldsmith, first page, June 12 & 13, 1965.  
(Lynn Goldsmith Papers, courtesy of the Robert D. Farber University Archives &  
Special Collections Dept., Brandeis University, Waltham, MA. Used with permission.)*

hanging from the trees, and knew we were really in the South. Our first stop was at the house of our leader, Hope Williams. Hope is the most wonderful man one could ever meet. He had had no more than a second grade education, and though it is hard to tell his age, he is by no means young. He works in the fields himself, but has found time to register people in his county. Everyone knows him and respects him. They really love him, and he has done an enormous amount of work. He also runs citizenship classes. . . .

[We] went to the “town” where we would be centered. St. Matthews, the county seat has about 1,000 inhabitants. The whole county has about 6,000 people, and is 55+ percent Negro. The three of us girls are living quite comfortably in the house of an ancient minister, Rev. Howell. There is no running water inside the house, and there is only a couple of wood stoves—one for cooking on. We will have to cook for ourselves. The boys did not have housing ready for them, so they will spend one night with Hope. They will be living near us, though, and we will have an office nearby, too. While they were investigating housing, we went to meet the neighbors. We stopped in some of the numerous tiny grocery stores and introduced ourselves. The people do not come up to us, but when we approach them, they quickly trust us, and are extremely friendly. It is hard for them to know how to react to whites, because they have little contact with them, and when they do, they often get in trouble for it.

. . .

Everyone is so anxious to help us—it seems as though they are competing to see who can give us the most. We had not eaten, so before Pat left us,<sup>50</sup> the Floyds brought our spoons and bowls, set up a table and told us to help ourselves to anything in the store. They sliced up baloney and cheese in thick slabs, and we made enormous sandwiches right in the store. They gave us sodas all day long.

Pat left us waiting for Hope Williams to come. Mary Ann, Carol and I walked up the street to the school to see if anyone from the Head Start Project there, was still around.<sup>51</sup> . . .

Two boys were at the store when we returned. They are NAACP workers in Orangeburg County. They have also been around in Calhoun County. Some work has already been done here, but we are the first civil rights people to be white. Time will tell what the reaction will be. Mike and Joe really know what is going on.

Later Hope appeared. He is a wonderful man. I can see why everyone likes him so much! I am proud to be helping this man who has so courageously been struggling on his own. We decided our first action was to drive around and see the countryside, and to get to know the county. We must get some cars immediately, and one will not be enough. Canvassing will have to be done by car. We will also need to increase our number with Negro helpers.

We three girls went in the car with Mike and Joe, and we followed the boys in Hope's powder blue pick-up truck. The county is very nice, but so spread out. One big problem will be the fear of the tenant farmers of their white bosses. We can almost always tell whether a man is a tenant farmer or not by observing if he drives a tractor, or walks behind a mule in the field.

Mike and Joe are very well educated. It seems that they were able to get quite a bit out of the Negro colleges. We talked about a lot of things during the drive. I hope they will be able to help us.

We returned to our headquarters in the store, and stood around discussing what we would be doing in the near future. It's really great how everyone gathers in the store, and sits around on upended soda cartons gossiping.

Mr. Floyd invited us into his house to sit down while we talked. All the houses are open to us to use whenever we want—relaxing, eating, bathrooms, etc. . . . [We] were brought heaping plates of food from a woman's café. An amazing assortment of side dishes came with our fried chicken.

### **July 8: Car Breaks Down and Evening Meeting**

Today was adventure day for me and Mary Ann. . . . She met us all at Harts, to start out on the morning canvass. I stayed with her in the car to cover some scattered areas we had missed canvassing before. Looking for a small road, we turned up a dirt path through some fields where we spied houses. The houses turned out to be deserted, so we went on around the soybeans and cotton. I had just suggested turning around when we came to a huge section of the path that was pure ooze. Mary Ann drove straight into it, and we stopped in the middle. Ugh! We took off our shoes, and stepped out calf-deep in mud. We dug the wheels out with our hands, and rocked the car. Nothing worked. After about half an hour and [using]

two of our posters, we managed to get the car out of the mire and into another. At last we got out of that too. We parked in the cotton, the only dry place. Mary Ann stepped out of the car, and suddenly, horrible noises issued out of the car. We had run out of water.

We hid the SCOPE material. With shoes in hand, we walked the half mile or so out to the road. What a sight! There was mud caked all over us. As it dried it cracked and fell off. When we reached the road no one was in sight. We started walking. Fortunately, Mary Ann had a white handkerchief and we flagged a car down after a while. The car was driven by a large white man with only one arm. Next to him was a huge shotgun. "You never know what you might find on these country roads." Mary Ann's answer was, "like a couple of stranded girls?" We played visiting vacationers, and he brought us to Creston, another booming town with all of one store. They were very nice (little did they know—I'm glad we were not a mixed group.) We were given a can of water. . . .

It took us a long time to get ready for the afternoon's canvassing. It is impossible to organize things except at the last minute. . . . Some of the kids are excellent canvassers—better than we are—because they know the people and can talk to them. They know how to reach the people. We canvassed a new area to the west of St. Matthews. . . .

The Andersons across from the Harts gave us dinner. It was another enormous meal with 15 vegetables to go with the fried chicken. We had to rush off to our first mass meeting in Calhoun County—what a success!! It started out with freedom songs. Then we explained SCOPE and voter registration. The meeting ran like a clock. People stood up and said wonderful things on our behalf. Our plea for support (especially cars for canvassing and registration) was answered by the community. The leaders and others pleaded with us. They asked for the people to take care of us while we do our work. Some really great speeches were made, and we know everyone was behind us. We were thrilled!

### **July 11: Preparing for Voter Registration Day**

Sunday—the day of rest as I've said before—Ha! We split up, and covered nine churches in groups of two or three. We took turns giving a fiery speech to get the people to register and to urge their neighbors to do the same. God has unlocked the door—you must open it. Register! . . .

At about 9:00, Carol, Butch and I went to the Jacket to pick up some fried chicken. What a riot! The people were so shocked at seeing us with a colored boy. We brought Butch home and returned to get our order. The lady took an incredibly long time. She stopped in the middle to make some phone calls, and made all kinds of excuses. Meanwhile we bothered her even more by talking to all the colored people who came up. We know almost everyone.

Carol and I made phone calls until after 1:30. We got home—Terry had come to pick us up because he was worried—and worked until quarter to four while everyone slept. We made signs for the car and played with Hope and Scope.<sup>52</sup> They are so much fun to have around, and quite a panic—always falling all over themselves.

### **July 12: Voter Registration Day**

It was raining when we woke up at 7—damn! . . . I drove our “Registration” covered Chevy out to Mack Hill with Carol and Harold. They went into the houses to get the people out. The pouring rain turned the unpaved roads (these people need to register!) into mires. The red clay is slippery and the road slopes into deep ditches along the sides. It was not too hard to get stuck—the car slid right into the side. The boys along in the car got covered with mud as they pushed me out. I’m glad they were there; they knew how to get the car out. . . .

We got to the courthouse and . . . I couldn’t believe it . . . a line of people wound down the stairway to the registration room. Such elation I felt I can’t describe. Wowee!! At least 30 people were already there.

Harold and I went out again to pick up some people out towards Cameron. Each car as it went out received a map and cards. The cards were marked as the houses were contracted. I picked up three people and brought them to St. Matthews. All dirt roads had to be forgotten about.

Panic prevailed at the courthouse. Many more people were needed to stay there. Sample forms were filled out again with most people. I went out to get gas in the car, and on the way stopped at Hart’s. Oh no! Two FBI agents were there—to interview us of all things. They could not have chosen a better time—ha! Agent Friday brought me out to his car to talk in private. . . . This took an hour each of our precious working time. . . .



I drove John back to the Harts' and picked up some pens. Then Dick Miles suggested I contact the U.S. District Attorney about the slow-up.<sup>53</sup> Back to the Harts' again. I told Terrell Glenn about the situation — only five people registered in the first hour. All sorts of illegal things were going on — even interpretation of the Constitution. Earl tried to stop it, but as soon as his back was turned they started again.<sup>54</sup> . . .

Terry and I went back to our house to get a camera to take pictures at the courthouse — the line was incredible; it wound down the stairs and down a hallway. The people stood all day or sat on the stairs. It is interesting to note that almost all of the people are older. An entire generation is missing — those in their 20's and 30's.

*Goldsmith's sketch of the interior of the Calhoun County Courthouse, indicating the crowds gathered there. Diary of Lynn Goldsmith, July 12, 1965. (Lynn Goldsmith Papers, courtesy of the Robert D. Farber University Archives & Special Collections Dept., Brandeis University, Waltham, MA. Used with permission.)*

At one point we brought Kool Aid down in large jars and passed it out, and another time we brought hundreds of candy bars. The workers had sandwiches on the job prepared by some of the women.

At two o'clock I began helping inside the registration room. The registrars found we were more help than bother, and we began the exhausting job of laboring with the people over the ridiculous form. Many people could barely write, and labored over each blank as we told them

what to write; sometimes letter by letter. It was sweltering in the room as the sun came out. I was about to faint as five o'clock approached. The registrars were nice enough to finish with all the people who were in the room at five. Anyhow, about sixty people were turned away at the end. The last people who go through at quarter to six had come at about noon. People waited about six hours and were not registered. I felt very distressed as these brave people, most of them hardly knowing what was going on, standing in that heat so patiently. I could not believe them. They want so little, and no one will give it to them. I wanted to cry. What poor, poor people.

I have never been so pooped!! After three hours of sleep the night before, and running all day long – whew, what a time! We said goodbye to all our helpers and went home.

### **July 15: Visiting a Jewish Person in St. Matthews**

It is fortunate St. Matthews is small – places can be walked to in 15 or 20 min. I walked to the Harts' to pick up some of our remaining material. It is so nice to walk through this area, and have everyone call out your name and wave. These people are so nice. It is hard to walk by without stopping to chat for a while.

Peanut butter and jelly sufficed for lunch. One car was at our disposal for the afternoon. Some people went out canvassing. Our new area – Caw-Caw township – has many white people who often live in poorer houses than the colored folk. That presents many problems. It's quite a shock to knock on a white person's door. "Where is route 19?" – "Well, thank you – good-bye," and then we scoot.

While they were out Mary Ann and I went up town. First stop was the telephone company. We will soon have a phone, thank goodness. Then we stopped to talk to Mr. Savitz, a Jew who owns the largest department store (if you can call it that). We were hoping to find some sympathetic whites. Well, Mr. Savitz was very nice, especially after he found out we were Jews. Actually, he is now an Episcopalian, which I suspect is not strange. He was willing to talk to us, which in itself is hazardous, as everyone is bound to know about it ten minutes later. He admitted, frankly, that he wasn't brave enough to take any stand supporting us. Well, what could we expect. We spent quite a while with him, and parted friends. This is a first step.

**July 16: Learning the Actual Circumstances about Anti-Interracial  
Marriage Laws**

Mr. Federick began talking about Southern sex codes. Amazing! It's such a shame he never had much education, but even without it, he is a match for any of us in an intellectual discussion – even politics. He told us much about the South. He blames the Negro women who have children by white men. I find it hard to believe that this still is going on, and right here in St. Matthews. A woman across the street has a child who has been over to our house. The baby is very light skinned and has light hair, but is Negro even so. What a beautiful child! These white man's children have an even worse place in society than the Negroes. They are slapped by their own father, and ignored by the Negroes. I can't understand what kind of a father this is. Apparently, the more educated Negroes find the women who lower themselves to the white man in this way are intolerable. White man can take a Negro girl, but Negro man and white girl are forbidden. Another thing I can't comprehend is that often white men live with colored women just as if they were married, and yet such a circumstance is forbidden by law in marriage. The Southern white man is sure strange.

The conversation turned to white harassment of colored people. Mr. Federick has been standing up for years for his rights. He and the other people laughed at the ridiculous behavior of the whites. The biggest source of annoying arrests is, of course, connected with cars. There is always a little something which can be jumped on.

This turned out to be a very edifying evening. We learned a lot about the South we are staying in.

**Tuesday, August 3: Calhoun Workers and Orangeburg Workers  
Are Arrested. Jailhouse Notes from the "Pink Palace" –  
Orangeburg City Jail**

We were arrested today. I was not scared. I cried when a two ton policeman stood on Al Ziegler's neck<sup>55</sup> while hauling another limp body (Lenni's). I am hoarse from singing and yelling. Why were we arrested – no charge. We were pulled from the courthouse. . . .

Today was another registration day. Mary Ann and Alan went down to help since we did not have extra days. At three the rest of us got a call –

come down by four. There had been only two registrars, and one left because he did not want to register any more niggers. People were being asked to read. Those bastards!! No—we won't put up with it. At five we would stay. Calhoun was asked to support the sit-in—of course we would.

We talked to the people, telling them to stay. We sang songs and marched around the courtroom when the officials left. We opened the windows and let the city hear us. There were posters with slogans—they went up on the windows. All the adults left except three because they could not be arrested.

Our decision meeting was short—we would stay 'til 9 tomorrow, or be arrested. The arrest was our own decision. Earl was there, and told us everything.

Sheriff Dukes came in. Suddenly, on both sides of the room, husky men in uniform poured in. They stood on each side as we announced our decision. They rushed on us as we sat and sang, jumping over the seats. We were 53, they must have been more.

I was picked up and thrown. Then I was grabbed and dragged outside. As I passed Earl he encouraged me to try to walk. In front of me John Babin and Al Ziegler were dragged by the hands down the stairs and thrown into the car in a heap. My picture was taken. Al's hands were bent 'til they almost broke. Dozens of cars pulled up to the courthouse, with all of us singing. We were piled, pushed and thrown into the jail. Then we were split, and some of us were led around another way. We stood and sang songs while we waited for them to get our names.

Fifteen girls are together in a revoltingly dirty cell with three beds. There is a toilet in the room that is disgusting. Also a sink and bathtub. We were finger printed and photographed. Juveniles were let out if they wanted.<sup>56</sup> Butch was arrested with us.

### **August 10: Trip to Birmingham, Alabama, and Harassment by Police**

At last we took off. Eliza and I sat in back, and Hope and Butch in front—good strategy, but we later found out—not good enough—you will hear. . . . [A]s we got to Douglasville we suddenly saw a flashing red light on our tail. Butch had been driving for about two miles. He stopped the car, and a large policeman pulled open the car door. He first asked to see license and registration. He began to shine the light in everyone's eyes. When he saw me—!! Keeping the light in my face he asked me who I was.

I could not see him, of course, and I could not understand him, so I did not answer. He went back to his car, talked in his little walkie talkie, and soon two more men drove up. The car was surrounded. Eliza, who had been sleeping all this time, woke up to find a light in her eyes and cops all around her. She said nothing.

A policeman yanked the door open next to me. "Do your parents know you're here?" "Yes, I just talked to them." "Did you run away from home?" "No." "Are you married to him?" (pointing to Butch—they immediately assumed I was, although we were not sitting together.) "No." "Are you dating him?" "No, I've never dated him in my life." He called over his shoulder to another cop, "She says she's not married to him, and has never dated him." At the same time they had taken Butch out of the car, and asked him questions about me, such as what nationality I was—I could not be American.

Next we were all taken from the car. They clearly wanted to arrest me. If I had not been there, there would have been no trouble. One cop began to lecture me, most likely so I would answer and talk back—certainly grounds for arrest. I did not say a word; I just stood there and quaked—I really shook. He gave me the same old shit about how I was a trouble-maker, and should be home minding my own business. The colored folk did not want me here—They're doing fine themselves. He threatened me—if I were his daughter, he'd shoot me through the face.

They could not create grounds to arrest me, so one of them said, "Well, you were speeding back there," to Butch. He had not been speeding—we had been careful to go five miles under the speed limit which is lowered, anyhow, to a ridiculous point. They took Butch, and told Hope to follow. They zoomed off, hoping Hope would follow, so he could be caught for speeding too. Our car crept into town. Naturally, we had lost the police cars. We had not the faintest idea where to go. We went up and down the main street, and finally stopped. Not much later a police car approached. "You were supposed to follow." We were led to the station, where Butch was already locked up. The fine was paid, and Butch was released. I thanked the police pleasantly, and we walked out.

Five minutes later, we were in the next town, crawling cautiously to Birmingham. Hope was driving this time. The first police were not kidding when they said they had called ahead to warn the towns of our approach. Hope did all the talking—boy, he knows how to talk to these

guys! He was charged with speeding – we were not! Hope got us off saying that the policeman had been going over the speed limit because he was catching up to us. He had not followed us. All the policeman could do was agree. The charge was dropped, and we went ahead. All of us except Hope fell asleep and woke up in Alabama, as the sky grew light. Hope does not plan his gas buying well – at this early hour of the morning he was about to run out of gas. It was fortunate we found a station that served us without incident.

### August 11: Ninth SCLC Annual Convention

I dozed again until Birmingham. It was not difficult to find the convention – after asking a few people, we found our way. Headquarters were in the 16th Street Baptist Church – yes – the church where the four little girls were killed in the bombing.<sup>57</sup> When we arrived it was 8:00, or so we thought, having ignored the change of time zones. So at 7:00, we had a couple of hours before we could register. We stopped in a shop for a cup of coffee. There were signs everywhere welcoming SCLC. . . .

Rev. Martin Luther King gave the annual President's Address. This is the 9th annual convention, and it is significant that it was the 10th anniversary of the Montgomery boycott. King spoke of all the present programs being carried out by SCLC-SCOPE, political education (citizenship schools + writing clinics), operation breadbasket (economic boycotts), Dialogue (to awaken the people and get them talking and thinking) and Vision (to prepare kids for college).

The word has changed – now it is “march.” March and demonstrate until more registration days are granted. It was stated that we must really struggle, and not relent until we have won. At the end of the speech the audience was asked to stand in support of what King had said, and in an endorsement of his policy.

A white man then got up and belted out a beautiful song. “I told Jesus it would be all right if he changed my name.”<sup>58</sup> Afterwards King introduced Rev. Andy Young for the keynote address. Andy is a very good speaker. He seems to talk to every person individually. He touched on many things. The convention was very concerned about the situation in Vietnam. As Andy put it, “There is no sense in integrating a society that is in danger of being blown out from under us.” This whole situation can be alleviated by an enlightened electorate.

Andy brought up the sense of the movement as SCLC now sees it. We need more than non-violence, as the blatant wrongs of the segregationists subside. Our own short comings will be more visible, and we must search even more for the truth. Nothing has turned us around – we have overcome the physical test of our convictions, we must now overcome the spiritual test. This will be more difficult. I really felt the transition we are in, as one phase of the civil rights movement is nearing the end. This speech was also endorsed by the gathering.

Butch and I went to get SCOPE meal cards, but it was so late, so we went to the restaurant where Hope and others were eating. I sat down across from Rosa Parks (!) and Septima Clark (!) They are both so nice. . . .

There were some unusual highlights though. A most impressive thing happened – Jimmie Lee Jackson’s family was honored – that isn’t the word – exalted.<sup>59</sup> First the sad and frightening story of the boy’s death was related as the pathetic old grandfather stood before us. He is a tiny, skinny man, with no teeth. I was horrified to think that this man had been attacked, and that his grandson had been killed trying to save him. The mother and sister were then brought up to the front. These poor people have been through so much. Everyone is trying to make martyrs of them.

SCLC is giving \$4000 to a fund being established to give the Jackson family a house and also to give the mother and grandfather \$70 a month for the next ten years. The sister also received a scholarship to continue her education however she wanted. As a final touch they were handed a check for \$1000 “so they could eat tomorrow.” I cried as everyone stood up to sing “We Shall Overcome,” the tragic family all holding hands with King in the middle. It was a good meeting.

### **August 18: The Shooting of SCOPE House’s Window**

Just as we were driving out Earl drove in with Mary Ann. So we waited for her to have dinner. I called up St. Matthews to tell them we would be about another ¾ hour. Shocking news!!!! Sometime between 8:00 and 9:00, when no one was home – our house had been shot at with a shotgun. Ulp! I was suddenly nervous. I ran back to the other SCOPE house and told Earl.<sup>60</sup> He did not believe it had been a shotgun. However, he hurried and offered to accompany us home. Three cars went to St. Matthews, filled with people. What a sight! A hole about a foot in diameter

was in the front picture window. The whole glass was cracked in all directions. The shade was drawn, and splattered with shot holes. But that was nothing — the inside was utterly unbelievable. Shattered glass was strewn over every inch of the room. Not a place was left uncovered. The back wall was dotted with holes. The whole place was a shambles. Everyone stood around — amazed.

The police had been by and looked things over. They said they would return with the Sheriff in the morning. FBI was contacted, and also UPI. We called Chief Strom for protection during the night. Matthew Perry was also informed of everything.<sup>61</sup> It was still scary. Earl and the Orangeburg kids left us making precautions for the night. Our beds were moved and windows blocked. Pleasant dreams!

### **August 23: Doubt Arises among African Americans on King's Non-Violence Policy**

The party was to say good-bye to Shelly and Lenni, who are leaving now. Dr. Thomas kindly donated his house, and the party was held in his car-port.<sup>62</sup> We had music and drinks, but we mostly just talked in small groups. I listened to a few conversations, and then Larry and I sat in one of the dozen or more cars around, and discussed non-violence. Larry is very upset at the destruction of Negro manhood which the system promotes. He can't feel a Negro is being a man if he sits and lets others abuse him and his loved ones. I wonder what kind of a civil rights worker he is.

### **August 28: Leaves St. Matthews. Farewell Party by Local People**

My last day, and a hard one! I got up at 9:00 — oh, exhaustion!! . . .

When we got to St. Matthews, everybody was cleaning up the house. What a chore! We certainly had not taken any pains to keep the place neat! It seemed like a hopeless task, but we did make some headway. The car, when we got around to loading it, was quite burdened with five people's baggage and other various belongings. It was a real rush to get finished in time for our last luncheon invitation. We did it, though.

Lunch was at the Floyds' house on Pou St. near Mack Hill, and very wild. Saturday is a big day, and every person is very high and in good spirits (excuse pun). The house was jammed with friends and relatives. The music was blaring so we could hardly speak. People pranced around, slapping each other and talking too loudly, like you do when you've had too much to drink.



*Diary of Lynn Goldsmith, final page, August 29, 1965.*

*(Lynn Goldsmith Papers, courtesy of the Robert D. Farber University Archives & Special Collections Dept., Brandeis University, Waltham, MA. Used with permission.)*

We were seated in the living room and offered beers. Dinner was late—but not surprising!—a spread to beat all meals we had had all summer. The team of women had gone all out to provide the most sumptuous meal ever prepared. Chicken, turkey, pig pieces, rice, noodles, beans, and endless other things. All we could do is taste some of the things. It was difficult to leave, because the people kept hanging on to us. The men wanted to dance and the women found lots they had to [say].

I was a wreck. One of the things I dislike most about this world is saying goodbye. I can't tolerate it. The only way I can remain sane is to say goodbye and leave. At this point I was hardly alive, and the worst was yet to come. I thought I would pass from the added commotion to our leave-taking.

### **August 29: Arriving Home in Princeton**

The last push! It was quite a push, too. Being me, I did not hear either alarm clock. Lesley got me up, and first I had to fight the freezing cold. That was quite a shock! Then I had to wake the others. That was not very easy.

Mrs. Straley was so nice to get up and make us hot pancakes for breakfast.<sup>63</sup> We struggled very hard, and were off by 6:30, with me driving. It was a long haul, and we were all anxious to get back to the North. A civil rights trip would not be complete without a flat tire—and we had one! It was certainly good we had stopped to get a spare which was usable. When we stopped it was COLD! The wind blew, and for the first time all summer we needed sweaters and coats. We continued on our way, stopping only for gas and food.

The first time I felt really out of the South was when we approached Washington—familiar territory—home of friends. I almost felt as though I knew everybody—people even looked different. I still had a feeling of comradeship with the Negroes, but the natural feeling of hostility towards all whites was growing less. . . .

I was very excited on the drive through New Jersey to good old home in Princeton. I did not have to worry about the fact that I was ready to drop from exhaustion—I could not relax.

At last I was home. Now to unwind and think, and to wish I were back again.

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 NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The diary (hereafter cited as Goldsmith Diary) is included in the Lynn Goldsmith Papers, Robert D. Farber University Archives and Special Collections, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA (hereafter cited as Lynn Goldsmith Papers). The author encountered Lynn Goldsmith's diary in 2012 when undertaking a visiting scholarship at the Near Eastern and Judaic Studies Department of Brandeis University. Maggie McNeely and Sarah Shoemaker of the university archives generously informed me that Lynn Goldberg, née Lynn Goldsmith, had donated her diary to the library the previous year. I greatly appreciate their assistance.

<sup>2</sup> For stories similar to Goldsmith's, see Debra L. Schultz, *Going South: Jewish Women in the Civil Rights Movement* (New York, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> What happened in South Carolina during the civil rights era has often been neglected or glossed over in favor of more widely publicized occurrences in Alabama, Mississippi, and other states. Winfred B. Moore, Jr., and Orville Vernon Burton, ed., *Toward the Meeting of the Waters: Currents in the Civil Rights Movement of South Carolina during the Twentieth Century* (Columbia, SC, 2008), xxi-xxii.

<sup>4</sup> Lynn Goldsmith Goldberg, interview conducted by Miyuki Kita, June 19, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> *New York Times*, April 2, 1965. When Martin Luther King, Jr., officially announced the project on April 1, 1965, Louisiana was included as a prospective target. SCOPE was supposed to be developed in seven states.

<sup>6</sup> Juan Williams, *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965* (New York, 1987), 252; David J. Garrow, *Protest at Selma: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Voting Rights Act of 1965* (New Haven, CT, 1978), 31.

<sup>7</sup> SCOPE materials can be viewed on a website, "Civil Rights Movement Veterans," run by Bruce Hartford, former SCLC staff member. "Civil Rights Movement Documents: SCLC's SCOPE Project, June 1965-March 1966," accessed February 26, 2019, <https://www.crmvet.org/docs/scopdocs.htm#scopelists>.

<sup>8</sup> "SCOPE Student Volunteer Recruitment," January 27, 1965, Records of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 1954-1970, box 168, folder 15, microform edition (hereafter cited as SCLC Records).

<sup>9</sup> Brandeis University was established in 1948 as the first Jewish-sponsored, secular university in the United States. It not only provided opportunities for higher education to Jewish students who had been rejected by other universities because of anti-Jewish quotas, but also became a model of a nondiscriminatory university by adopting a nonquota admission policy, i.e., by never asking its applicants about their race or religion. Since its early days, it has accepted African American faculty and students. Encouraged by the university's uncompromising manner of nondiscrimination, Brandeis students have been involved in political and social activism. These circumstances are described in Miyuki Kita, "Seeking Justice: The Civil Rights Movement, Black Nationalism and Jews at Brandeis University," *Nanzan Review of American Studies, Journal of the Center for American Studies*, 31 (2009): 101-120.

<sup>10</sup> "Orientation Material," SCLC Records, box 169, folders 7-8; "Recruiting," no date, SCLC Records, box 169, folder 14. From April through May 1965, the list of students' names and the counties where they were going to work seem to have been revised a few times. In the SCLC records, one can find several versions of the list. Because these lists lack dates and are missing pages, the actual number of students involved and the number of counties in which they served cannot be accurately determined.

<sup>11</sup> "SCLC Voter Project Asks Campus Aid," *The Justice*, March 9, 1965; "Civil Rights and Welfare Groups Prepare for Summer Field Work," *The Justice*, April 13, 1965.

<sup>12</sup> Willy Siegel Leventhal, *The SCOPE of Freedom: The Leadership of Hosea Williams with Dr. King's Summer '65 Student Volunteers* (Montgomery, AL, 2005), 35.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-46. Leventhal's *SCOPE of Freedom* is, however, a compilation of historical documents rather than a study of SCOPE. Even in the most comprehensive studies below, the fact that the SCLC started it in 1965 is the only thing that is mentioned about SCOPE. Taylor Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965-1968* (New York, 2006); David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York, 1986).

<sup>14</sup> Leventhal, *SCOPE of Freedom*, 43; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to Hosea Williams, Memorandum: Quarterly Report, November 6, 1965, SCLC Records, box 145, folder 29.

<sup>15</sup> "SCOPE Registers Successes in South: Civil Rights Group Campaigns in Boston," *The Justice*, October 5, 1965.

<sup>16</sup> Goldberg interview, June 19, 2013.

<sup>17</sup> Goldsmith Diary, August 14, 1965.

<sup>18</sup> Lynn Goldsmith Goldberg, e-mail interview conducted by Miyuki Kita, May 12, 2019.

<sup>19</sup> The other four members were John Babin, Mary Ann Efrogmson, Arthur "Terry" Parsons, III, and Carol Sable. On July 14, Alan Venable joined the Calhoun County activities. Additionally, another five students moved to Kershaw County, South Carolina, on July 12. Alan Venable, "Brandeis SCOPE in Richland, Kershaw, and Calhoun Counties, South Carolina," unpublished personal memorandum, September 16, 2015, 6, 10. Courtesy of Alan Venable. Later Venable published *Hope's Kids: A Voting Rights Summer* (San Francisco, 2017), which describes the entire Brandeis group and all three counties in which they worked. While quoting extensively from Goldsmith's diary, Venable was able to contact other volunteers in the Brandeis group. By virtue of communication with them, he captured some accounts of what they had experienced without relying solely on Goldsmith's diary and his memories. He also visited South Carolina to reconnect with the people they worked and lived with. Venable's close examinations have made *Hope's Kids* the most unique and extensive research of a SCOPE group.

<sup>20</sup> The names of Mickey Shur, Lenni Brody, Shelly Rosen, Pat Ryan, Steve Press, and Marie Guillemain often appear in Goldsmith's diary.

<sup>21</sup> Goldsmith Diary, June 28, 1965.

<sup>22</sup> Venable, "Brandeis SCOPE," 10.

<sup>23</sup> Goldsmith Diary, July 11, 1965.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, August 3, 1965.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, July 2, 1965.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, August 18, 1965.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, August 19, 1965.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, July 15, 1965.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, August 24, 1965.

<sup>30</sup> Venable, *Hope's Kids*, 176.

<sup>31</sup> Ernest L. Marcus, "The Good Sheppards of St. Matthews," *Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina* 20 (Fall 2015): 17; Jacob Rader Marcus, *To Count a People: American Jewish Population Data, 1585–1984* (Lanham, MD, 1990), 206; Jack D. Diamond, "Jewish Population in the United States, 1965," *American Jewish Year Book* 67 (1966): 90.

<sup>32</sup> E. L. Marcus, "Good Sheppards of St. Matthews," 18.

<sup>33</sup> "Jewish Families Contributed to Calhoun County's History," *Times and Democrat* (Orangeburg, SC), accessed April 16, 2019, [https://thetandd.com/news/jewish-families-contributed-to-calhoun-county-s-history/article\\_66774c47-73c5-55ea-b587-8eb2888cef64.html](https://thetandd.com/news/jewish-families-contributed-to-calhoun-county-s-history/article_66774c47-73c5-55ea-b587-8eb2888cef64.html).

<sup>34</sup> Goldberg interview, June 19, 2013.

<sup>35</sup> Venable, *Hope's Kids*, 176; E. L. Marcus, "Good Sheppards of St. Matthews," 17; Martin Banks, e-mail interview conducted by Miyuki Kita, May 4, 2019. Martin Banks is a cousin of Richard Banks.

<sup>36</sup> Diamond, "Jewish Population in the United States, 1965," 90.

<sup>37</sup> "Orangeburg, South Carolina," Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL), *Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities*, accessed April 15, 2019, <https://www.isjl.org/south-carolina-orangeburg-encyclopedia.html>.

<sup>38</sup> Banks interview; Alan Venable, e-mail interview conducted by Miyuki Kita, May 4, 2019.

<sup>39</sup> See Clive Webb, *Fight Against Fear: Southern Jews and the Civil Rights Movement* (Athens, GA, 2001).

<sup>40</sup> P. Allen Krause, "Rabbis and Negro Rights in the South, 1954–1967," in *Jews in the South*, ed. Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Dale Palsson (Baton Rouge, 1973), 362–63.

<sup>41</sup> Lynn Goldsmith Goldberg, "St. Matthews, SC and Fifty-one Years," July 23, 2016, *Civil Rights Movement Veterans*, accessed May 3, 2019, <https://www.crmvet.org/comm/scope16.pdf>.

<sup>42</sup> Goldberg interview, June 19, 2013; Lynn Goldsmith Goldberg, interviews conducted by Miyuki Kita, October 1–3, 2015.

<sup>43</sup> Brandeis University's Robert D. Farber University Archives and Special Collections exhibits some portions of Lynn Goldsmith's diary online. "Lynn Goldsmith Papers: The Diary and Papers of a Young Civil Rights Worker," accessed February 23, 2019, <https://lts.brandeis.edu/research/archives-speccoll/exhibits/scope/index.html>.

<sup>44</sup> "Progress Report: Orangeburg and Calhoun Counties' Community Action Program," n.d., 3, Lynn Goldsmith Papers.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 4

<sup>46</sup> Venable, "Brandeis SCOPE," 16.

<sup>47</sup> Newsletters of Princeton Freedom Center, July 8, 1965, and August, 2, 1965, Lynn Goldsmith Papers.

<sup>48</sup> For examples of published reflections by former civil rights workers see Maria Gitin, *This Bright Light of Ours: Stories from the Voting Rights Fight* (Tuscaloosa, 2014); Sherie

Holbrook Labedis, *You Came Here to Die, Didn't You: Registering Black Voters One Soul at a Time, South Carolina, 1965* (Roseville, CA, 2011); Mary Swope, *My Summer Vacation, 1965* (n.p., 2011); and Edward K. Kaplan, "Two Civil Rights Testimonies," *Southern Jewish History* 17 (2014): 181–215.

<sup>49</sup> Until 1966, states and cities were free to choose whether or not to observe Daylight Savings Time.

<sup>50</sup> Pat Gandy was a twenty-eight-year-old white man and a field director for SCLC in charge of Richland County, South Carolina. Venable, "Brandeis SCOPE," 2.

<sup>51</sup> Head Start is a program of the Department of Health and Human Services providing comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families. Launched in 1965, it was originally conceived as a catch-up summer school program that would teach low-income children in a few weeks what they needed to know to start elementary school.

<sup>52</sup> Stray puppies they adopted.

<sup>53</sup> Richard Miles, a white man who was then twenty-seven years old, served as the field director of the South Carolina Voter Education Project from 1964 to 1967. He entered the Foreign Service in 1967 and served as U.S. ambassador to Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

<sup>54</sup> Earl Coblyn was an African American native Bostonian who had brought his family south around 1960 to practice law. He immersed himself in civil rights in Orangeburg and neighboring counties in South Carolina. Venable, "Brandeis SCOPE," 12.

<sup>55</sup> Al Ziegler was a Canadian and civil rights activist dispatched by the American Friends Service Committee working in Orangeburg County.

<sup>56</sup> High school students or those who were let out for delinquency because they were not old enough.

<sup>57</sup> The 16th Street Baptist Church was used as the strongpoint of the Birmingham Civil Rights Movement Project C (for *Confrontation*) in 1963. The bombing happened on the morning of September 15, 1963.

<sup>58</sup> Lyric from Nina Simone, "If He Changed My Name," released in 1962.

<sup>59</sup> Jimmie Lee Jackson was an African American civil rights activist in Marion, Alabama. On February 18, 1965, while participating in a voting rights march, he was beaten and shot by an Alabama state trooper. Jackson died eight days later. His death was part of the inspiration for the Selma–Montgomery march.

<sup>60</sup> When she heard the news of the shooting, Goldsmith was at Orangeburg's SCOPE office. Orangeburg SCOPE used two houses next to each other as its offices.

<sup>61</sup> Matthew James Perry, Jr., was an NAACP lawyer from Columbia. In 1979, he was appointed as the first African American United States district judge in South Carolina.

<sup>62</sup> Charles H. Thomas was a professor at South Carolina State University, South Carolina's historically black university, and the head of the Orangeburg NAACP.

<sup>63</sup> She was the mother of Lesley Straley, a Brandeis SCOPE worker stationed in Richland County. On the way from South Carolina back north, Calhoun workers were allowed to stay at her parents' house in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

## Book Reviews

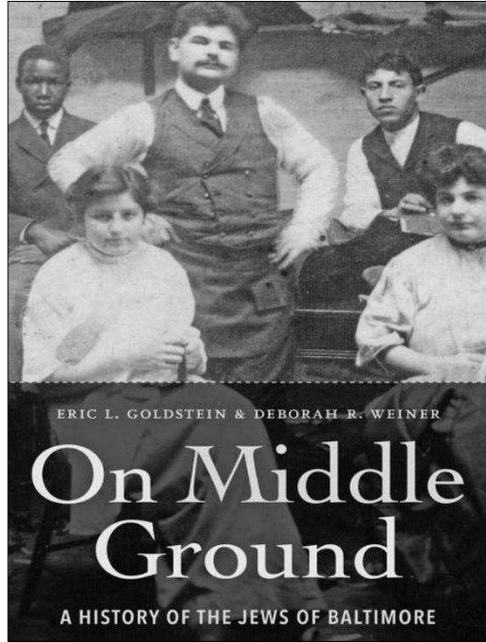
**On Middle Ground: A History of the Jews of Baltimore.** By Eric L. Goldstein and Deborah R. Weiner. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018. 400 pages.

In 1968 more than 90 percent of Baltimore Jews lived in the northwest corridor of the metropolitan area. Extensive postwar suburbanization produced this unprecedented degree of residential concentration. The extreme segregation of Baltimore Jews distinguished them from other Jewish communities in metropolitan areas with Jewish populations of roughly one hundred thousand. "Jews were not in the minority in their new locales and most did not join new synagogues since their old ones moved along with them," write Eric L. Goldstein and Deborah R. Weiner in their excellent new book (264).

In many ways, this transformation of Baltimore Jews from urban to suburban represented the culmination of processes of socioeconomic change that started at the turn of the twentieth century. Yet such extraordinary residential segregation hardly could have been anticipated based on the previous history of Baltimore's Jews. Rather, it was a product of the confluence of two forces: residential discrimination against the city's relatively large African American population and pervasive social antisemitism that flourished among the white population. As a result, Jewish social mobility translated into social segregation in the postwar decades. There did not seem to be any other choice for Jews if they did not want to live next door to African Americans and if white Christians did not want to live next door to Jews. Indeed, even Jewish builders ad-

hered to restrictive policies put in force after World War I and refused to open their housing to fellow Jews or African Americans.

A measure of irony accompanies this residential concentration. For much of Baltimore's history, Jews lived in diverse neighborhoods around the city. Their dispersion reflected the work they pursued, starting in commerce and trade, then turning to manufacturing. In the nineteenth century, Jews lived near their stores catering to the city's immigrant



and African American residents. With wealth, some Jews built impressive houses in the prestigious Eutaw Place neighborhood. New immigrants, by contrast, mostly lived in the run-down section of East Baltimore. At the same time, other sections of the city also housed Jews. However, by the postwar era, fewer and fewer Jews owned small businesses, and more and more Jews worked as professionals, in sales, or as executives. Prosperity did not erase economic distinctions among Jews, but economic gaps between them narrowed. Almost all could afford new homes in the northwest suburbs.

The history of Baltimore Jews, as Goldstein and Weiner so deftly show, often proves to be exceptional, challenging accepted narratives of American Jewish history. *On Middle Ground* persuasively demonstrates the value of a Jewish urban history that draws heavily on urban social, economic, and political studies of the past several decades. Most previous Jewish communal histories had employed a sociological community study model. By contrast, *On Middle Ground* raises questions about religious change, immigration, community development, socioeconomic patterns—including those of gender—and political activity within the urban context.



Several reinterpretations deserve recognition. First, Goldstein and Weiner argue for a new understanding of the Maryland Jew Bill of 1826. Rather than seeing it as a product of protest against discrimination toward Baltimore Jews, they contend that it actually reflected the acceptance and integration of several leading Jewish men in the city's political life. The struggle to rewrite the Maryland constitution occurred as part of a tussle among rural and urban political figures, Federalists and Democrats. Second, they urge historians to revisit the account of religious conflict that produced Baltimore's first Reform congregation. "In getting past the conventional view that the founding of Har Sinai represented a clear ideological rift between traditional Jews and a newly self-conscious liberal group," they write, "it is helpful to note that there was nothing approaching a 'traditional' consensus among Baltimore Jews before 1842" (78). In short, articulated religious differences emerged only gradually.

Third, they emphasize that the rise of social discrimination toward wealthy Jews accompanied their integration into city and state politics. Jews received positive public recognition for their contribution to civic affairs and won election to important political offices in Baltimore and Maryland. Nonetheless, they could not overcome white gentile social exclusivity. Finally, Goldstein and Weiner detail the economic history of Jewish involvement in Baltimore's growth as a city. In the early nineteenth century, Baltimore rivaled New York and Philadelphia as a burgeoning port. Jewish entrepreneurial activities, including efforts to construct the Baltimore and Ohio railroad as well as commercial trade with the South, helped Baltimore overcome the economic upheavals after the War of 1812.

Goldstein and Weiner pay attention to slavery and race relations and the effect of a large free black population on city politics prior to the Civil War. In fact, that population influenced the language of the Jew Bill, because white politicians did not want to empower African Americans. The authors chose the title *On Middle Ground* in order to situate Baltimore as part of both southern and northern history. As a slave state that did not join the Confederacy, Maryland faced south for trading partners and in its politics, but Baltimore also shared features with northern industrialized immigrant cities. Thus Baltimore Jews complicate southern Jewish history.

The authors avoid apologetics when they discuss racial conflict over civil rights in the twentieth century. For example, they mention the refusal of Jewish department store owners to treat blacks equally with whites. They also discuss Democratic Jewish politicians who supported black disenfranchisement at the turn of the twentieth century. However, immigrant Jews helped to defeat this proposed constitutional change. How much prejudice, discrimination, and racism did these Jewish immigrants and their children absorb as part of the American way of life? What did it mean to become American in Baltimore? On the one hand, Jews were legally considered "white"; on the other hand, antisemitism categorized them as undesirable.

Baltimore attracted a substantial number of Orthodox Jews. Goldstein and Weiner credit several innovative rabbis who established yeshivas in the interwar years. These institutions laid a foundation for the growth of an ultra-Orthodox community in the late twentieth century. Their leaders managed to rescue several hundred young Jews from the onslaught of Nazism by providing them opportunities to study in Baltimore. Subsequently, another generation of rabbis similarly helped Iranian Jewish youth.

Goldstein and Weiner begin their book with the story of Gus Brunn, a Jewish immigrant from Germany. Brunn achieved local renown when he invented and marketed Old Bay, a spice that became popular among Marylanders who used it to flavor steamed crabs. Brunn's story is a distinctively Baltimore one, especially since steamed crabs are a favorite dish. At the same time, his tale can be seen as a classic Jewish immigrant saga. Brunn came to Baltimore as part of a chain migration; he experienced antisemitism when he tried to obtain employment; he received help from fellow Jews; and finally, he established a successful family business. Goldstein and Weiner use Brunn's narrative to emphasize their approach: they consider the history of Baltimore Jews relevant equally to Baltimore and American Jews. Throughout the book, they juggle these two intersecting trajectories. The result proves stimulating and rewarding.

The book is lavishly illustrated with portraits, both formal and informal, as well as pictures of architecture, secular and religious. Missing, however, is a map or two that would help those unfamiliar with Baltimore navigate the many place names and streets that are referenced.

Two of the more amazing aspects of this book are its index and footnotes. The latter are detailed and dense, revealing a wide range of secondary sources along with an enormous collection of primary documents. The former is dotted with many, many names, a tribute to Goldstein and Weiner's skill in personalizing their history. Countless individual accounts illustrate the authors' larger arguments and help to transform the history of Baltimore Jews into a readable narrative.

Goldstein and Weiner set out to provide a fresh perspective on Baltimore as a multiethnic city. They contend that it is impossible to grasp the city's growth without considering Jewish entrepreneurs and their trading networks. Their new Jewish urban history should inspire others to revisit this important genre for understanding American Jewish history.

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**Play It Again, Sam: The Notable Life of Sam Massell, Atlanta's First Minority Mayor.** By Charles McNair. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2017. 218 pages.

Sam Massell, Jr., played an important and transitional role in Atlanta's history as the city's first Jewish and last white mayor. Elected in 1969 for a four-year term, Massell was involved with major issues such as civil rights, transit expansion, city development, and diversity in city government. His life mirrored that of Atlanta in terms of business growth, political turmoil, and Sunbelt leadership. Charles McNair provides a full biography, beginning with Massell's early years, his family, schooling, entrepreneurship, and ambition. An affluent family deeply involved in the city's real estate business, the Massells were known throughout Atlanta, and Sam was well poised to eventually move into real estate.

The Massell family was also notable within the city's Jewish community, and Sam's presence was felt within this tight-knit group. His membership in the Standard Club, the most prominent Jewish social club in the city, and The Temple, the Reform synagogue of old Atlanta's Jewish families, illustrated the Massells' lofty position. Such ties to fellow

Jews and Judaism were important, but McNair does not emphasize this aspect of Sam's background, although it comes up at various points in the story: in college, early businesses, and politics.

Massell's business and his ambition, innovative ideas, and interpersonal skills are the book's central focus. He was destined for business success, ready-made for a growing city that idealized entrepreneurs. Starting in real estate, particularly in medical office buildings, Massell began to make his fortune and find his expertise. "If politics had not come along," the mayor once commented, "I would probably still be in real estate" (72).

McNair describes Massell as a natural politician who was easily likable. He exhibited a proclivity toward civic service, making important contacts and showing good leadership qualities, and he had—he admitted—a big ego. He also made friends in the black community when it was demanding political representation. Massell's involvement came with the end of the white Democratic Executive Committee, the reconstitution of that committee, and Massell's place on it. This position allowed him to help bring blacks into elected city jobs. His post also set the stage for later election as vice-mayor (officially called the president of the Atlanta Board of Aldermen) and mayor with strong black support. He took office after the mayoralty of Ivan Allen, Jr., who favored civil rights during the 1960s.

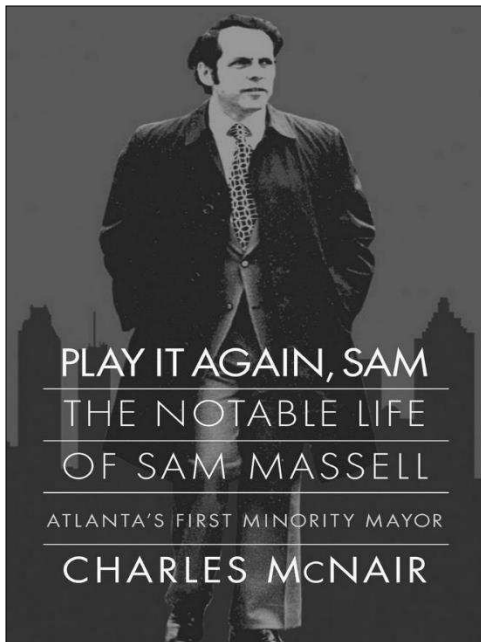
Massell's role in city politics and his service as mayor from 1970 to 1974 constitute the most important parts of *Play It Again, Sam*. The book provides a good summary of those years, during which he continued and expanded Allen's progressive racial politics. Relations between the two were not especially friendly; Massell did not represent the city's entrenched business elite. But their racial policies flowed smoothly from one to the other. Massell was responsible for strengthening the Community Relations Commission and for hiring more blacks in the city government—including the head of the city personnel board, the director of the Department of Public Works, the intergovernmental program coordinator, and the contract compliance officer. Such efforts in desegregating important jobs in city government earned him continued strong support from the black community.

By the time blacks became a majority of Atlanta's population, Massell faced opposition from those who thought that the moment had

arrived for a black mayor. The 1973 campaign between Massell and Maynard Jackson brought racial issues to the fore and put the mayor in a defensive stance. How to win reelection in a city with a black majority against a black candidate became Massell's dilemma. McNair hardly misses a beat in defending the mayor's actions. Massell's plans to expand the city's boundaries, ostensibly to grow the tax base, would also bring in more white voters. Under Massell's concept, Atlanta, with its newly annexed areas, would become 53 percent white. The author calls this proposal a misstep but only because it failed unexpectedly, as McNair relates, due to the segregationist governor Lester Maddox's opposition. With more research, the author would have understood the complex factors in the governor's decision, largely based on his being at odds with the plan's legislative supporters on other issues. However, the plan was mainly a failure due to the introduction of a clear racial factor into the campaign. A further indication of this tactic was a Massell ad that claimed that "Atlanta was too Young to Die" (162). Massell continued to assert that the ad was not meant to be racially inflected, but in the midst of a campaign pitting white and black candidates against one another and in the shadow of Atlanta's racist past, the ad was seen as making a

racial appeal to whites: elect a black mayor and the city will die. Other issues, particularly Massell's 1971 aldermanic committee changes, which engendered conflict with black leaders, resulted in some loss of black support. McNair fails to mention these issues. Massell went on to lose this election.

*Play It Again, Sam* covers Massell's later business career in his travel agency years and in his leadership in the city's important Buckhead section, which McNair finds praiseworthy. Massell has



displayed many fine qualities, and McNair focuses sharply on every one. But such an emphasis is the book's problem and ultimate failure. The author is too uncritical. Massell is continually described in glowing terms. Some mistakes are noted but are always explained away. The book's theme is stated in the subtitle. Biographers need to be less partisan. McNair has written a hagiographic study which fails to provide a more nuanced presentation. This starts from the first page, where McNair writes: "Does anyone love Atlanta more than Sam Massell? Does any human being draw breath today who has worked harder, longer, and more productively at the betterment of the major city of the South than its 89-year-old former mayor?" (1).

And the same holds true for Atlanta. McNair is overly complimentary toward the city, partly because he fails to provide full details in depicting some events in the history of Atlanta. For example, the author very briefly writes about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Nobel Peace Prize award reception in Atlanta. McNair states that the dinner sold out, and that "whites and blacks stood together at the end of the night and sang 'We Shall Overcome'" (108). Left out of the story is the hostility from the white business elite, which opposed holding a dinner at all, until Paul Austin, president of Coca-Cola, with the backing of former president Robert Woodruff, whispered loudly into Mayor Ivan Allen's ear at a planning meeting that King had to be honored to protect Atlanta's reputation as a progressive city and not embarrass Coke. Austin also subtly warned that while Atlanta needed Coca-Cola, the soft drink empire did not need Atlanta. Only after that threat did the tickets sell out. McNair tends to fudge or obscure other episodes that cast doubt on Atlanta's progressive record as well.

The author's bibliography indicates that he depended largely on interviews, but he provides neither footnotes nor endnotes to enable readers to understand who said what, an omission that results in a book of limited value to future researchers. One of them should undertake to write a more impartial and a more comprehensive biography of this seminal figure in the history of Atlanta.

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**Just and Righteous Causes: Rabbi Ira Sanders and the Fight for Racial and Social Justice in Arkansas, 1926–1963.** By James L. Moses. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2018. 232 pages.

James L. Moses offers an important biography of Rabbi Ira Sanders, longtime religious leader of the Little Rock, Arkansas, Jewish community. His volume proves important for scholarship about Jews in the South, regionalism as an important lens for interpreting U.S. and American Jewish history, and the causal significance of identity markers such as religion, race, and class in our understanding of ethnic history. By integrating the particular story of his subject with the larger historical narratives that surrounded Little Rock's rabbi, Moses succeeds in dramatizing the complexities and nuance inherent in a study of movements for social justice in the mid-twentieth-century South. Although sometimes leaning towards hagiography, *Just and Righteous Causes* offers a critical lens to view the nearly impossible life choices of a southern rabbi seeking to take public stands against Jim Crow.

As Moses argues, the career of Rabbi Sanders helps fill a "curious absence in the extant literature on southern Jewry, southern rabbis, and their involvement (or lack thereof) in the fight for racial equality in America and in the modern civil rights movement" (6). Navigating a Jewish ethic demanding activism against the realities of racism, the story of Little Rock's rabbi animates the "precarious position" of a Jewish religious leader intent on engaging the quest for racial equality at a time and place where acts of violence proved all too common. Framed within the larger historiography of southern Jews and civil rights, Moses stresses "the particularity of Little Rock in comparison to the oft-studied communities of Birmingham, Montgomery, Nashville, and Jackson" (6).

Moses opens his eight-chapter book by detailing Sanders's life before he took the pulpit in Little Rock. Born in 1894, Sanders grew up in Kansas City prior to enrolling at age seventeen at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. During his first appointment in Allentown, Pennsylvania, Sanders earned an advanced degree in sociology at Columbia University. Developing a theme that would resonate in chapters to come, Moses describes how Sanders, like so many of his Reform colleagues in this era, opposed Zionism and the creation of a Jewish state. During a failed, short-lived stint as a congregational rabbi in New York City, Sanders met

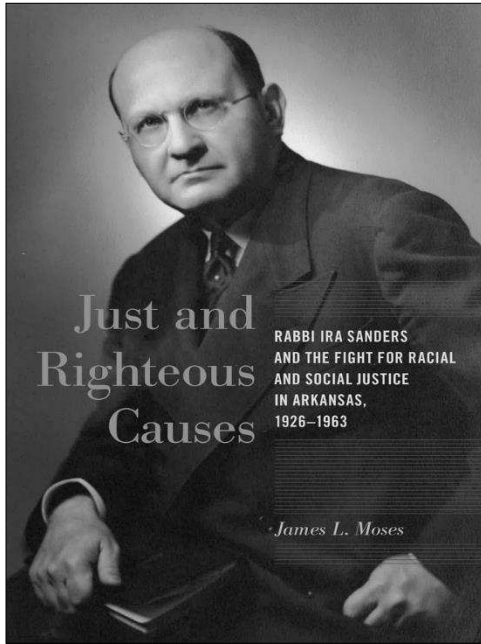
and partnered with Lillian Wald. This experience with the famed social worker informed much of his later work in Little Rock.

Chapter 2 describes his first years at Little Rock's Temple B'nai Israel, 1926 through 1934. Navigating the racial and religious dynamics of his newfound home, Sanders spent his first years learning local culture while simultaneously navigating ways to challenge it. When his unintentional decision to take a seat in the back of a streetcar led to an altercation with the conductor, the rabbi fashioned his first anti-Jim Crow sermon. After local police did nothing to investigate the lynching and public dismemberment of an African American, John Carter, Sanders joined the NAACP and agreed to sit on the advisory committee of the Arkansas council of the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching. In 1927, Sanders leveraged his training in sociology by creating the Little Rock School of Social Work, a platform he would later deploy to address larger social concerns in the city.

The Great Depression, covered in chapter 3, wreaked havoc on Little Rock. Not only did residents suffer unemployment and wage loss, they faced a severe drought and the rebuilding necessary after the Mississippi River flooded its banks in 1927. In a state that counted some eighty percent of its rural population in poverty, Sanders sought to serve both the religious needs of his congregants and the larger demands at the city and state levels. In Little Rock especially, he understood how systems of white supremacy denied most of the few resources available to African American citizens. This awareness led Sanders to cofound a local branch of the Urban League. In one of his career highlights, the rabbi engaged in a public debate on morality with famed attorney Clarence Darrow.

Moses complicates his narrative of Sanders in chapter 4, which describes the rise and popularity of the birth control and eugenics movements between 1931 and 1958. Sanders founded the predecessor organization to Planned Parenthood, as well as the Arkansas Eugenics Association, both fighting for the rights of the state's poor to gain access to birth control. While most of his early work focused on providing access to contraception across the city's population, Sanders later led efforts to provide voluntary sterilization to patients considered mentally ill, even as the very question of consent proved impossible for such individuals.





In chapter 5, we learn of Sanders's wartime work and especially his attitudes towards the Shoah, Zionism, and the Cold War. Faced with the challenges of Hitler's rise in Europe alongside worsening race relations at home, Sanders struggled to effect change. He continued his Urban League work to address racial inequality while also moderating his anti-Zionist position in order to rally in behalf of Jewish victims of Nazism. In the early postwar years, he joined others who embraced Cold

War liberal anti-Communism while accelerating the domestic movement for civil rights.

The most developed historiography centers on southern rabbis and their involvement in the postwar civil rights movement, the subject of chapter 6. Moses paints a sympathetic portrait of Sanders, arguing the rabbi's preference for "moral suasion rather than direct action protests" (115). Navigating a careful path between a desire to end segregation and the rabbinic obligation to protect the business, social, and physical safety of his congregants, Sanders stepped ahead of southern colleagues who often refused to take any sort of public position on civil rights. Surveying historical scholarship on other southern rabbis, Moses lauds his subject for staking out a stronger public stance.

Best known to most students of the civil rights era, the Central High School crisis pushed Little Rock into the national spotlight when Governor Orval Faubus opposed the desegregation of the city's white public high school. Engaging what Moses described as "dramatic leadership," Sanders stood out as the only Jew to make public his opposition to the governor's resistance to the law of the land (127). Henceforth Sanders enjoyed strong support from African American cler-

gy in Little Rock's Ministry of Reconciliation. Moses closes his book with reflections on Sanders in the years after his retirement until his death in 1985.

*Just and Righteous Causes* succeeds in presenting an activist whose story needs to be added to the historiography of the region's Jewry. While much scholarly attention has focused on the deep South, where so many high-profile confrontations occurred, Sanders's career in Little Rock offers important nuance. With such a long tenure at Temple B'nai Israel, a career that spanned some of the most important issues and debates of the century, and a Classical Reform rabbinate that emphasized the reconciliation of one's religious background with the complexities of the modern world, Sanders makes an excellent subject illustrative of numerous significant trends.

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**A Story of Jewish Experience in Mississippi.** By Leon Waldoff. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2018. 218 pages.

**A** *Story of Jewish Experience in Mississippi* begins with the author's effort to trace his family's migrations from eastern Europe, through New York and Baltimore, to Hattiesburg, Mississippi. As Leon Waldoff wrote that story and considered how it had been transmitted in family memories, he felt compelled to situate his parents' experiences in relation to Jewish histories, from transnational migrations to local and regional encounters with white supremacy. As a result, the book addresses several topics and themes: it is an immigration story based largely on his parents' early correspondence; a family history and memoir based on personal experiences and conversations with relatives; an exploration of narrative and memory; and an attempt to reckon with Jewish responses to racism and the civil rights movement in and around Hattiesburg. Trained as a literary scholar rather than a historian, Waldoff achieves greater success in some of his tasks than others, but *A Story of Jewish Experience in Mississippi* ultimately serves as a useful contribution to the field of southern Jewish history.

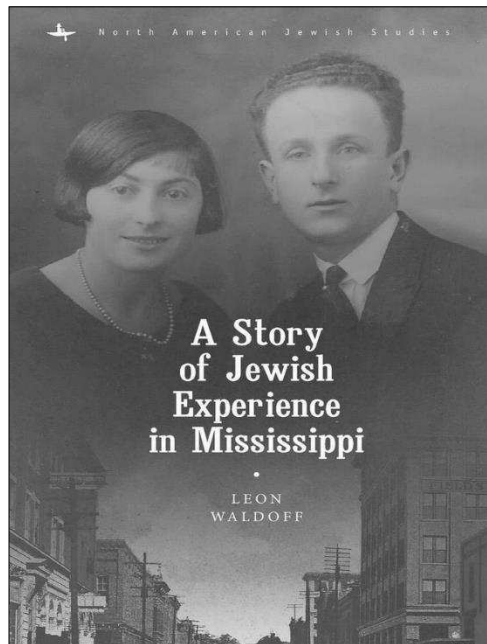
The book begins with Waldoff's parents' courtship. His father and mother, Paul Waldoff and Eva Stolin, both grew up in the small, majority-Jewish city of Belaya Tserkov, not far from Kiev. But they met in Bucharest in 1921 after both left the Soviet Union to make their way to the United States. The book chronicles their separate migrations—Paul to New York City and Eva, afterward, to Baltimore—through letters that the pair exchanged during subsequent periods of separation. Paul and Eva's correspondence reflects the precarious state of Jewish migrants in the early 1920s, as Eva's circuitous route to the United States took her from Romania to Germany and then to Turkey before she crossed the Atlantic. The letters also reveal the chance connections and personal motivations that led newcomers like the Waldoffs to settle in a relatively remote town like Hattiesburg. Eva's uncle, Abe Stein, had immigrated through Galveston prior to World War I, lived for a time in Hattiesburg, and returned there after living in Baltimore for a few years. Eva was drawn to the small southern city by family connections, while Paul desired space from his parents and a new start. The couple's detailed story, as outlined by their son, adds another rich account to our collective knowledge of Jewish immigration to the South. Additionally, Waldoff's attention to their ongoing communications with overseas relatives in subsequent years underscores the fact that southern Jews maintained strong connections to transnational Jewish networks well after settling in such seemingly unlikely locales as Hattiesburg.

Chapters two through five draw from family stories and the author's personal experiences, supplemented by archival research. Waldoff writes about his father's business, family and Jewish communal life in the 1930s and 1940s, and the effects of national and international events on local Jews. His research shows, for instance, that the world-renowned cantor Yossele (Josef) Rosenblatt performed in Hattiesburg in 1933. Although there is no evidence that Paul and Eva Waldoff attended the concert, it seems unlikely that they would miss such an event, especially because Rosenblatt was born in the same Ukrainian city from which they came. Personal memories and reflections include details about his parents' differing uses of and relationships to Yiddish, which Eva tended to use more often in the course of her domestic work. In a later chapter on Rabbi Charles Mantinband, the author's memories of visiting with Man-

tinband as a curious teenager frame the rabbi's well-known civil rights activities and give a stronger sense of the spiritual leader's humanity.

In addition to providing new first-person material, Waldoff attends to questions of narrative and memory, not only reporting family stories, but noting omissions, inaccuracies, and discrepancies in and between various accounts. This tendency reflects the author's background in literary studies, and it enriches the text, especially in the chapter on Paul Wexler, a young Jew convicted as an accessory to murder in 1932. He died in prison before the state could carry out the death sentence. Waldoff not only provides details of the crime and its aftermath based on newspaper and court records but also notes its significance for the psychological life of local Jews. He recalls, for instance, how his father had misremembered aspects of the story—placing Wexler's young, Jewish girlfriend at the scene and omitting the actions of Wexler's African American accomplice—and how a cousin recalled seeing Wexler brandish a knife years before the murder. Waldoff argues convincingly that the murder and Wexler's trial caused heightened anxiety for Hattiesburg Jews even as the events were largely suppressed from collective memory in later decades. Both Waldoff's version of this history and his interpretation suggest new material and directions for southern Jewish history, which might benefit from a closer look at exceptions to Jewish upward mobility and from greater attention to issues of memory and commemoration.

The final two chapters center on Mantinband and Adolphe Ira Botnick, known as "B," significant figures among progressive Deep South Jews whose activism drew mixed responses from the local Jewish community as well as condemnation, intimidation, and outright



threats from ardent segregationists. Mantinband served as spiritual leader of Hattiesburg's Temple B'nai Israel from 1951 to 1963, and Waldoff knew him personally as a high school student. Botnick, on the other hand, was married to Waldoff's sister, Fay, and served as the regional director of the Anti-Defamation League for Louisiana, Mississippi, and Arkansas from 1964 to 1992. Waldoff bases his Mantinband chapter largely on the Rabbi Charles Mantinband papers, now held by the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, so some of the material there will be new to historians of southern Jews and civil rights. The Botnick chapter offers Waldoff's personal reflections on his relationship with "B," which are interesting to read. Overall, this discussion of southern Jews and black civil rights does not significantly rethink prior scholarship, but it does add some new information. As Waldoff notes, the story of his family's history in Hattiesburg would not be complete without sustained attention to the broader relationship between local Jews and the ever-present issue of race.

As a whole, *A Story of Jewish Experience in Mississippi* succeeds as a blended family history and memoir. Waldoff competently retells a specific, multigenerational story that speaks at once to the local conditions of Jewish life in Hattiesburg and to regional, national, and transnational developments in Jewish life and culture. Passages are rich and detailed, and his emphasis on memory and narrative suggests the possibilities of a more interdisciplinary approach to the Jewish South. (The text also offers a few tantalizing leads that scholars in the field may wish to pursue.) At times, however, readers deeply familiar with this and related fields may notice Waldoff's lack of formal training in either history or Jewish studies. For example: the book often shifts focus from its specific and local narrative to broader trends and events, and, while the added context will likely prove useful for lay readers, the exposition of such topics as the Galveston Plan or Jewish responses to the civil rights movement is sometimes awkward. Still, Waldoff's task is to piece together a coherent story with the information at hand. He deserves credit for incorporating a wide range of material—personal, familial, and scholarly—and for sharing aspects of that process with the reader.

*Joshua Parshall*, Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life  
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## Exhibit Reviews

**The National Memorial for Peace and Justice.** Equal Justice Initiative. Montgomery, Alabama. On permanent display.

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice sits on a hilltop over Montgomery, Alabama. It is sited in a neighborhood cleared by urban renewal and overlooking both civil rights sites and the few extant remains of one of the largest centers of the American domestic slave trade. The memorial builds on this complicated sense of place. It is a powerful site of interpretation and remembrance essential for scholars of the Jewish South for its overlaps with both global and regional patterns of violence, remembering, and forgetting.

The new memorial builds on the work of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), a stalwart of social justice advocacy for the past three decades. Engagement with the memorial site is typically preceded by a visit to the nearby EJI-run museum, which opened simultaneously with the memorial in April 2018. The academically named space (The Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration) forthrightly announces its uncharacteristically specific argument. There is very little ambiguity in either the title or the well-crafted, densely informational exhibits. The museum makes generally excellent use of digital exhibition and storytelling tools. For example, a series of holograms of enslaved people rendered into jail cells greet visitors as they enter the museum. They tell not historically verified stories but rather composites of the experience of enslavement and particularly of the slave market. It serves as a powerful and visceral tool, although I found myself wanting the familiar if flawed “true” story of real historic individuals rather than these anonymous ciphers. The rest of the museum offers more specificity. After a timeline that progresses through historical eras, the museum leads visitors into a

*The caption reads: "Thousands of African Americans are unknown victims of racial terror lynchings whose deaths cannot be documented, many whose names will never be known."*

*(Courtesy of Jeremy Katz.)*

series of semi-open spaces populated with reproduced historical texts, digital exhibits, and first-hand testimony from currently incarcerated individuals. This provides a good balance of the aggregate and the individual, although the timeline does little to mitigate the chronological collapse of the many historical eras covered by the museum. More overtly argumentative than almost any other museum I have been to, the space carries the intentions of its parent organization in its DNA.

The memorial likewise wears those influences. At my last visit, the entrance was marked by a memorial garden in full bloom, illustrating the paradox of the landscape of remembrance as one of both beauty and trauma. The first steps inside more fully encompass the latter. A powerful series of statuary shows enslaved people in chains. This abstraction of the individual here prepares the visitor for the stark presence of the memorial markers. Aside from brief explanatory text as you wind your way



*(Courtesy of Jeremy Katz.)*

up a gravel path toward the memorial, there is very little of the almost overwhelming context of the previous site. Instead visitors are presented with the monuments – large, hanging slabs of metal engraved with various county names and enumerating the names and dates of people lynched there. Hundreds of these columns hang at various levels throughout the core of the memorial. It is a unique form of memorialization for the United States, akin more to abstract European representations of the Holocaust. The path through the memorial takes you through additional artwork and a series of doubles of the hanging markers, here lying in ordered rows resembling coffins. Part of perhaps the most unique component of the memorial, this section attempts to extend the space of commemoration beyond the confines of its location by engaging communities in the process of accounting for their lynching histories. The idea is that one by one the markers will be removed

and placed in these communities as part of efforts at reconciliation and remembrance.

Scholars of the Jewish South will perhaps be disappointed not to see commemoration for Leo Frank or other, less infamous, prejudicial murders of Jewish southerners. It is an omission in one sense, but the memorial also offers a provocation to visitors. It asks that we continue and extend its work into our communities and into the new contexts that they invite. This is a memorial that demands that its viewers bring their own historical lens and cultural experience. For those studying the Jewish South, that experience encompasses both the significant acts of ethnic prejudice and violence that Jews have faced in this region and the complicity or participation by Jews in the injustices of Jim Crow. The memorial asks us to reckon with these complicated entanglements. It is a call to action as a form of remembrance.

*Elijah Gaddis*, Auburn University

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**Gone 2 Texas: Two Waves of Immigration, Soviet and South African.**  
 Congregations Beth-El and Ahavath Sholom, Fort Worth, Texas, continuing at  
 Ahavath Sholom through May 2020. Curated by Hollace Ava Weiner.

These two exhibitions intertwine the histories of Jewish migration from South Africa and the Soviet Union from the 1970s to the 1990s. Global advocacy exerted pressure on the Soviet Union to allow Jews to leave the country. Eventually, nearly five hundred thousand Jews, known as refuseniks, left. In South Africa, racial politics led to tension, riots, and international economic sanctions. More than sixty thousand of the country's 120,000 Jews emigrated. Curator Hollace Ava Weiner intersects these distinct narratives with the immigrants' arrival in Texas. What likens the Jews of Johannesburg with the refuseniks was not only their wish to leave their former homes behind, but that they made Texas their new home.

The exhibit begins with a timeline that parallels the history of Jews in the two countries. The pogroms of the 1880s, World War I, the Russian Revolution, the Holocaust, and the political and cultural reorientation of

*Copper kettles carried from Poland to South Africa by  
Zilla and David "Pincus" Zilberg in about 1920.  
(Courtesy of the Fort Worth Jewish Archives.)*

the 1970s and 1980s shaped both chronologies. The assassination of Alexander II in 1881 ushered in the mass migration of eastern European Jews across the Atlantic, but also about forty thousand Jews exchanged tsarist Russia for South Africa. Hitler's rise to power brought Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany to the United States and to South Africa.

Much of the exhibit is actually not about the traditional push and pull factors of immigration. The small, almost intimate exhibition

*Suitcase containing items taken to Texas by immigrants from the Soviet Union. The caption asks, "What would YOU take?"  
(Courtesy of the Fort Worth Jewish Archives.)*

illustrates how relocating involves not only change and the retooling of both old and new cultures and identities but demonstrates continuities as well. On display are paintings by two Texas-based artists. Denis Benjamin's watercolor subject and his color palette are reminiscent of South Africa, whereas Izakil Goldin's "Girls Gathering Mushrooms in Forest" is modernist and invokes Russian landscapes. Beyond notable differences, there are also similarities. The itinerary of the Zilberg family

showcases an almost global Jewish middle-class culture. There is Pincus Zilberg dressed in a suit in a photo before he fled Lithuania after the Bolshevik Revolution. He arrived in Cape Town and brought along a set of copper pots. His son, the young Bernard Zilberg, standing next to his father in Wellington, South Africa, in 1939, poses wearing *tallit* and knee-length pants. Other relatives are seen in fashionable clothing in Cape Town in the 1930s.

The exhibit is also about the items immigrants brought with them. Russian Jews could bring two hundred pounds of household goods to the United States. What immigrants pack says much about their past and the way they envision their future. Some objects help them remember, others are intended to have a role in their new home. Passports on display, for example, serve as reminders of the immigrants' former selves. One family shipped several kitchen stools, which were small and easy to fit into whatever space would be available to the family. A Russian manual meat grinder would have proven useful also in Texas. There is a suitcase filled with Russian toys, dolls, and towels that invites visitors to think about what they would take if they had to leave their homes. At Ahavath Sholom, in the smaller exhibit, a similar suitcase is displayed; here religious objects instead of cultural artifacts fill the trunk.

The carefully curated exhibitions showcase many smaller objects, and there is much for visitors to explore. These objects connect beyond the parallel timelines the distinct experiences of Jews in both the Soviet Union and South Africa. They illustrate how much objects furnish not just our homes but fashion also our cultures and identities.

*Nils Roemer*, University of Texas at Dallas

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## Website Review

**Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence Jewish Kentucky Oral History Project**, Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries, <https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/ark:/16417/xt7w6m33529z>.  
Reviewed March 11, 2019.

The Jewish Kentucky Oral History Project (JKOHP) is a distinct collection housed in the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky (UK) Libraries in Lexington. The Nunn Center has an international reputation for collecting, preserving, and presenting oral histories, and the more than eleven thousand interviews in its collection focus largely on Kentucky history. Since 2008, the Nunn Center has provided digital access to oral history interviews through an online system called the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer (OHMS), which helps make the Jewish Kentucky Oral History Project a standout collection in southern Jewish oral history. The project was cofounded by Janice W. Fernheimer, Zantker Professor and director of Jewish studies and associate professor of rhetoric, writing, and digital studies; and Beth L. Goldstein, associate professor of educational policy studies and evaluation. They collaborated with Douglas A. Boyd, director of the Nunn Center, and Sarah Dorpinghaus, director of digital services at the UK Libraries Special Collections Research Center.

As of March 2019, the JKOHP consisted of ninety-one interviews, nearly all of which were conducted between 2015 and 2018. Fifty-two interviews were available online, and thirty-nine were available by request from the library. Narrators (interviewees) include college students, business people, historians, and a former University of Kentucky basketball player.

Interview with Lee Shai Weissbach, October 20, 2015

Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries  
Janice W. Fernheimer, Interviewer | 2015OH433\_1K009  
Jewish Kentucky Oral History Project

0:00 - Family and upbringing  
13:45 - Immediate family and arrival in Louisville, Kentucky  
24:29 - Jewish life and the Jewish Studies program at the University of Louisville  
35:35 - Working in the field of Jewish history  
45:41 - Researching small-town Kentucky Jewish communities  
62:12 - Kentucky Judaism  
83:16 - Personal and Jewish community life  
100:40 - Family's Jewish observance

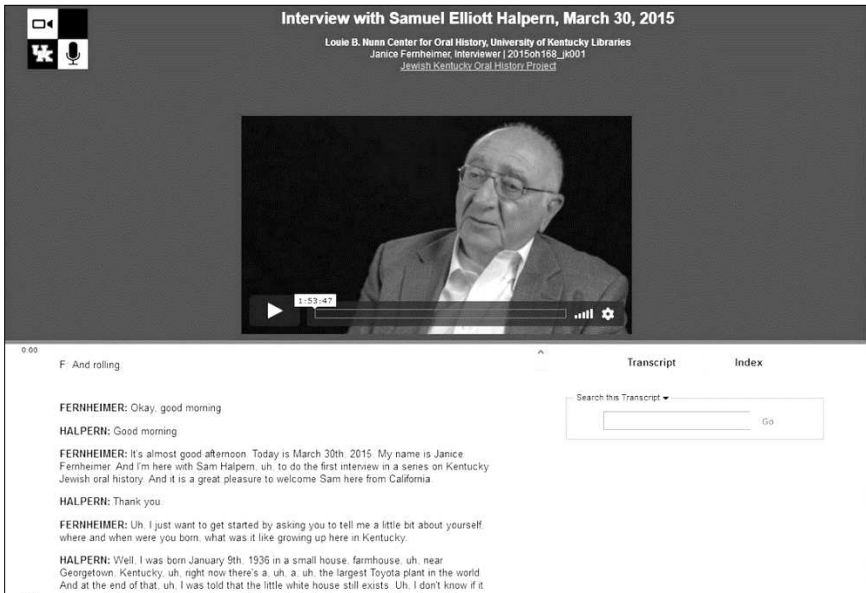
Transcript  Index

Search this index

*Interview with Lee Shai Weissbach, showing interview index.  
(Jewish Kentucky Oral History Project.)*

The OHMS interface is easy to navigate. Each interview includes an abstract, keywords, and a subject index, so that users can preview the content or search for pertinent subjects. The “Play Interview” tab brings up an embedded video with a panel below that displays index and transcript information. Users can toggle between the full, time-coded transcript (when available) and an index of interview topics. Each index breaks the interview into segments and provides a time code, synopsis, key words, and subjects for each segment. The index segment may also include GPS coordinates and links to related external websites. Additionally, the index system allows users to jump to the beginning of a specific segment or copy a link to play the segment in isolation. A search box below the transcript/index toggle provides full-text searches of the transcript or index. The keyword system is helpful and well organized, and the interview indexes facilitate quick browsing by topic, even when full transcripts are not available.





Interview with Samuel Elliott Halpern, March 30, 2015

Loie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries  
Janice Fernheimer Interview | 2015oh158\_j001  
Jewish Kentucky Oral History Project

0:00 F And rolling Transcript Index

Search this Transcript  Go

**FERNHEIMER:** Okay, good morning

**HALPERN:** Good morning

**FERNHEIMER:** It's almost good afternoon. Today is March 30th, 2015. My name is Janice Fernheimer. And I'm here with Sam Halpern, uh, to do the first interview in a series on Kentucky Jewish oral history. And it is a great pleasure to welcome Sam here from California.

**HALPERN:** Thank you.

**FERNHEIMER:** Uh, I just want to get started by asking you to tell me a little bit about yourself, where and when were you born, what was it like growing up here in Kentucky.

**HALPERN:** Well, I was born January 9th, 1936 in a small house, farmhouse, uh, near Georgetown, Kentucky, uh, right now there's a, uh, a, uh, the largest Toyota plant in the world. And at the end of that, uh, I was told that the little white house still exists. Uh, I don't know if it

*Interview with Samuel Elliott Halpern, showing interview transcript.  
(Jewish Kentucky Oral History Project.)*

The system does have a few shortcomings. First, the interview listings do not immediately identify which recordings are accompanied by full transcripts. Instead, users have to navigate to the interview page and then check. Second, there is no easy way to browse interviews by geographical location, which would be useful for users interested in a particular place. Third, the full-screen link is located somewhat out of the way, above the right side of the interview frame. Additionally, some users might be disappointed that the OHMS system does not provide downloadable transcripts. Up to now, OHMS has prioritized recordings over transcripts, thereby encouraging users to engage with the orality of the historical testimony, which is, after all, the distinguishing feature of oral history. The Nunn Center does plan to update the system with downloadable transcripts in the near future.

In terms of content, the interviews document the experiences of Kentucky Jews of different generations and denominational affiliations, and

the collection features both Kentucky natives and those who have moved to the state from elsewhere. Natives include Sam Elliott Halpern, who grew up as a white, Jewish sharecropper in Georgetown, Kentucky, and went on to practice and teach medicine in California. (Halpern also wrote a novel, *A Far Piece to Canaan*, based on his experiences as a child, and his son Justin was the originator of “Sh\*t My Dad Says,” a popular Twitter account that spawned a book and a short-lived sitcom.) Non-natives include Lee Shai Weissbach, who taught history for many years at the University of Louisville and wrote the books *Synagogues of Kentucky: Architecture and History* and *Jewish Life in Small-Town America*. The interview topics vary according to narrators’ life experiences. Jack Miller of Lexington discusses his family’s involvement in the Reform Jewish community and the former social divide between members of their congregation and the more traditional Ohavay Zion Synagogue. John and Jean Rosenberg describe their decision to move to eastern Kentucky in 1970, where he served as the founding director of the Appalachian Research and Defense Fund. Other interviews touch on Jewish history in Louisville, Jewish fraternity and sorority life at the University of Kentucky, Jewish Kentuckians’ relationships with African Americans, and Jewish involvement in the bourbon business.

At present, interviews about north central Kentucky—especially Louisville and Lexington—dominate the collection. This is not surprising, as Louisville is by far the largest Jewish center in the state, and the project is based in Lexington. Recent and upcoming interviews from Paducah and eastern Kentucky will add to the collection’s geographic range, according to JKOHP cofounder Janice Fernheimer.

In addition to the JKOHP, the Nunn Center also hosts two related collections: the Camp Shalom 50th Year Reunion Recollections Oral History Project, which was completed under the auspices of the JKOHP, and the Lexington Jewish Community Oral History Project. The thirteen Camp Shalom interviews, all available online, took place in August 2018, and, although they do not all boast the same audiovisual quality as the JKOHP collection, the short interviews provide interesting reflections on the history and significance of the Jewish day camp in the Lexington area. The Lexington Jewish Community Oral History Project, comprising thirty-eight interviews, combines a series of audio interviews from the early and mid-1980s with more recent oral histories related to the local Jewish

community. Half of the Lexington Jewish interviews, all from the older tapes, are accessible through the website.

In total, the Nunn Center's holdings on Jewish history in Kentucky represent a significant collection that will grow in importance with the addition of new interviews from across the state. The OHMS interface makes the interview recordings more accessible, navigable, and searchable than any other Jewish oral history collection in the South and sets the standard for online oral history dissemination. Additionally, the JKOHP team has developed a "sustainable stewardship" model for the collection that engages undergraduate and graduate students in the collection and processing of interviews. As a result, the project may serve not only as a useful classroom tool and scholarly resource, but also as an example for instructors, researchers, and archivists who wish to conduct oral history interviews elsewhere in the Jewish South.

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## Glossary

**Haganah** ~ the Zionist paramilitary organization in Palestine that became the Israel Defense Forces after Israel achieved independence in 1948

*Haskalah* ~ Jewish Enlightenment

**High Holidays** (*also High Holy Days*) ~ Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the two most important holidays on the Jewish calendar

*Judenrat* ~ councils of Jewish community leaders, principally in twentieth-century eastern Europe, that acted as local governments in the ghettos established by the Nazis

*Kristallnacht* ~ literally *night of broken glass*, November 9–10, 1938; Nazi-sponsored pogrom throughout Germany and Austria bringing widespread arrests, escalated violence against Jews, and destruction of synagogues, businesses, and property

**Passover** ~ spring holiday commemorating the deliverance of the ancient Hebrews from Egyptian bondage

**Refuseniks** ~ Jews in the Soviet Union who were denied permission to leave the country. Many were granted exit visas beginning in the 1970s following worldwide protest and behind-the-scenes intervention

**Seder** ~ ceremonial meal, usually held on the first and second evenings of Passover, commemorating the exodus from Egypt

**Shalom** ~ literally, *peace*; used in Hebrew as a greeting or expression of good will

**Shoah** ~ the Holocaust, from the modern Hebrew word for catastrophic destruction

*Tikun olam* ~ literally, *repairing the world*; the Jewish ideal that each individual acts in partnership with God in behalf of social justice to improve the world

*Wissenschaft des Judentums* ~ literally, *the science of Judaism*; the modern critical study of Jews and Judaism that began in nineteenth-century Germany

## Note on Authors

**Ronald H. Baylor** (Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania) is emeritus professor of history at Georgia Tech. He is the author of *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*, and, most recently, *Encountering Ellis Island: How European Immigrants Entered America*, among numerous other books.

**Charles L. Chavis, Jr.**, is assistant professor of history and conflict resolution and director of the Program for History, Justice and Racial Reconciliation at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University. Chavis's work focuses on the history of racial violence and civil rights activism in the American South and the ways in which the historical understanding of racial violence and civil rights activism can inform current and future approaches to peacebuilding and conflict resolution throughout the world. In 2016, Chavis was awarded the Rabbi Joachim Prinz Memorial Fellowship by the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives. He is the author of two upcoming books, *For the Sake of Peace: Africana Perspectives on Racism, Justice, and Peace in America* (2020) and *"Maryland, My Maryland": The Lynching of Matthew Williams and the Politics of Racism in the Free State* (2020). He is currently working on a biography of Rabbi Edward L. Israel of Baltimore's historic Har Sinai Congregation. He holds a Ph.D. in history from Morgan State University and a M.T.S. in black church studies from Vanderbilt University.

**Marc Dollinger** earned his Ph.D. in history from UCLA. He serves as the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Chair in Jewish Studies and Social Responsibility at San Francisco State University. He is author of four scholarly books, most recently *Black Power, Jewish Politics: Reinventing The Alliance in the 1960s* (2018) and is currently at work on *Campus Anti-Semitism, A Memoir*.

**Elijah Gaddis** is an assistant professor of history at Auburn University, where he teaches courses on public history, material culture, and the U.S. South. He holds a Ph.D. in American studies from the University of

North Carolina, Chapel Hill and is currently working on a book tentatively titled "Gruesome Looking Objects: The Material Culture of Lynching."

**Miyuki Kita** is professor of American studies at the University of Kitakyushu, Japan. She was a Fulbright Visiting Scholar affiliated with the Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies at Brandeis University from 2012 to 2013. During the 2018 academic year, she served in the history department of Queens College, City University of New York, as a visiting scholar. She researches antisemitism in higher education and Jewish involvement in the civil rights movement. Her scholarly works include *Half-Opened Golden Door: American Jews' Quest for Color-Blindness in College Admission* (2009, in Japanese); "Breaking the 'Gentleman's Agreement': Jews and the 1945 New York Fair Employment Practices Act," in *New York and the American Jewish Communal Experience*, ed. Fruma Mohrer and Ettie Goldwasser (2013), and *Foot Soldiers in the Civil Rights Movement: The Diary of a Jewish Student Volunteer* (2016, in Japanese).

**Deborah Dash Moore** is Frederick G. L. Huetwell Professor of History and Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. She has published an acclaimed trilogy on American Jewry examining the years from 1920 to 1960, including the experience of Jewish soldiers in World War II, as well as *To the Golden Cities: Pursuing the American Jewish Dream in Miami and LA*, among numerous other works. Moore served as general editor for the award-winning, three-volume *City of Promises: A History of Jews in New York City*. Her most recent book, *Jewish New York: The Remarkable Story of a City and a People* (2017), synthesizes those three volumes. Currently she is editor-in-chief of the ten-volume Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization published by Yale University Press.

**Jacob Morrow-Spitzer** has worked for the Institute of Southern Jewish Life, the Maine Historical Society, the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, and the Phi Beta Kappa Society. He graduated with a B.A. in history and Jewish studies from Tulane University in 2018, where he wrote an honors thesis titled "The Appointee, The Democrat, and the Redeemer: Three Jewish Mayors in Post-Civil War Louisiana and Mississippi and Their Roles in the Shifting Politics of Reconstruction." The thesis received the Montgomery History Prize, the Dr. Bernard Kaufman Essay Contest Award, and the S. Walter Stern 1905 Memorial Medal and was



supported by the Newcomb-Tulane College Liberal Arts Grant and the Jean Danielson Memorial Grant. He will begin his Ph.D. studies at Yale fall semester 2019, where he will study Jewish immigration and politics in the nineteenth century.

**Joshua Parshall** is the director of the history department at the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL). He holds a Ph.D. in American studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where his dissertation research focused on southern branches of the Arbeter Ring (Workmen's Circle). In addition to his ongoing interest in Yiddish culture and Jewish politics in the South, he has recently completed the Florida section of the ISJL's online Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities.

**Nils Roemer** is the Stan and Barbara Rabin Professor at the University of Texas at Dallas and director of the Ackerman Center for Holocaust Studies. He has published *Jewish Scholarship and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Germany: Between History and Faith* (2005), *German City, Jewish Memory: The Story of Worms* (2010), numerous articles, and several coedited volumes.

**Edward S. Shapiro** earned a Ph.D. in history from Harvard University. He taught at the University of Maryland, St. John's University (Collegeville, Minnesota), and Seton Hall University. He is the author of *A Time for Healing: American Jewry Since World War II* (1992), *We Are Many: Reflections on American Jewish History and Identity* (2005), and *Crown Heights: Blacks, Jews, and the 1991 Brooklyn Riot* (2006). His areas of interest are American Jewish history and the history of World War II.

**Kyle Stanton** is an independent scholar who earned a masters in history from Central European University. Stanton most recently published a coauthored piece in the *Journal of Palestine Studies* titled, "Shifting Sands: Zionism and American Jewry." Stanton's research interests include Zionism, identity politics, and the history of the Cold War.



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## *Errata*

The following corrects an error found in *Southern Jewish History*, volume 20, published in 2017:

Page 61, line 21: "Harry S. Jacobs Camp" *should read* "Henry S. Jacobs Camp."

The following corrects errors found in *Southern Jewish History*, volume 21, published in 2018:

Page 11, line 17: *Sentence should read*, "This was in line with his education work as a school commissioner (to which he had been appointed by the city council) and as future president of the Bureau of Jewish Education."

Page 44, caption: The man on the left was misidentified as Hyman S. Jacobs. The identity of the individual in this picture is unknown.

Page 196, line 29: The reviewer stated that Orlando Jews began holding services "using a Torah they brought from Pittsburgh." The exhibit in fact never stated where the Torah came from. Israel Shader and his son, who were from Pittsburgh, went north to get a Torah for the community, but where they obtained it is unknown.

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## *Purchasing Journals and Articles*

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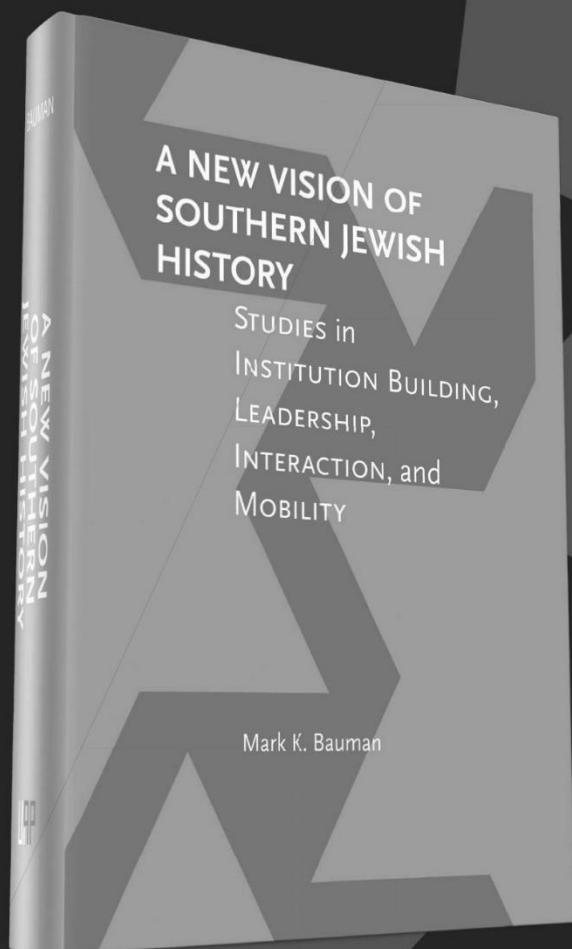
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