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

by

Edward S. Shapiro*

World 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.¹

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.²

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.³ 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.⁴

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.⁵

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.⁶

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.⁷ 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."⁸

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 1973.⁹ 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.¹⁰

*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.¹¹

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.¹² 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.¹³ 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.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶

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.¹⁷

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.¹⁸

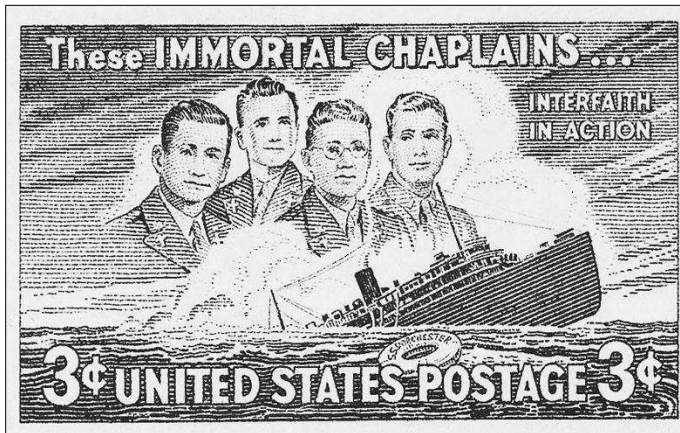
It took several weeks for news of the sinking to circulate in America, but when it did the response was swift, unambiguous, and electric. The four chaplains became national heroes and a collective symbol of patriotism, democracy, religious pluralism, interfaith harmony, and the unity necessary for military 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."¹⁹ 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.²⁰

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."²¹

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.²² 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.²³ 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.²⁴ 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.”²⁵

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.²⁶

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.²⁷ 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.²⁸

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."²⁹

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*.³⁰

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."³¹ 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.³²

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.³³ 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.³⁴

Lefkowitz, Gittelsohn, and Rothschild were all involved in interfaith work after the war, and Goode undoubtedly would have been had he survived.³⁵ 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.³⁶ 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."³⁷

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."³⁸

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.³⁹

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."⁴⁰ 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."⁴¹ 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.⁴² 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.⁴³

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."⁴⁴ 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.”⁴⁵

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!”⁴⁶

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.⁴⁷ 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."⁴⁸ 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.⁴⁹

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."⁵⁰ 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.⁵¹

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.⁵² 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.⁵³

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."⁵⁴

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."⁵⁵

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.⁵⁶ 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."⁵⁷

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.⁵⁸ 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.⁵⁹

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.⁶⁰

If Jews had entered the war as American Jews, they came out of it as Jewish Americans.⁶¹ 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).⁶²

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.⁶³

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."⁶⁴

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.⁶⁵ 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."⁶⁶ 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."⁶⁷

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."⁶⁸ 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.⁶⁹

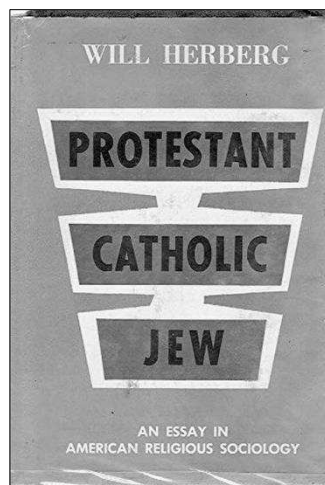
In addition, Germany's war against the Jews, which revealed what could result when bigotry was joined to political power, intensified the commitment of American Jews to combat all forms of prejudice. Meier Steinbrink, a New York judge and national chairman of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 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.”⁷⁰ 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.⁷¹ 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.⁷² 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.⁷³

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."⁷⁴ 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."⁷⁵ 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.⁷⁶

NOTES

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

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

³ 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).

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

⁵ Rosenthal had converted to Roman Catholicism prior to the war.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

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

⁹ 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.

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

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 191–92.

¹² *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).

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

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

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ USAT stands for United States Army Transport.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ Kurzman, *No Greater Glory*, 54.

²⁰ 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).

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

²² 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.

²³ 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.

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

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ 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.

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

²⁹ 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."

³⁰ *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.

³¹ "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.

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

³³ 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.

³⁴ 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.

³⁵ 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.

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

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

³⁸ 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.

³⁹ Mandel, *Unlikely Warrior*, 58, 98.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 207–209; Gittelsohn, *Here Am I*, 93–95.

⁴¹ Mandel, *Unlikely Warrior*, 168–69.

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

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

⁴⁴ 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.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Stahl, *Enlisting Faith*, 85–86.

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

⁴⁷ 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.

⁴⁸ 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.

⁴⁹ 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.

⁵⁰ 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.

⁵¹ 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.

⁵² 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.

⁵³ 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.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 482–85.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 492–500.

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

⁵⁷ Stahl, *Enlisting Faith*, 206–207.

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

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

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

⁶¹ 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.

⁶² "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.

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

⁶⁴ 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).

⁶⁵ 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.

⁶⁶ Gleason, *Speaking of Diversity*, 154, 166, 196.

⁶⁷ 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.

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

⁶⁹ 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.

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

⁷¹ 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*

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*.

⁷² Stahl, *Enlisting Faith*, 74–82.

⁷³ 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).

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

⁷⁵ 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.

⁷⁶ Stahl, “Jewish America,” 447; Shapiro, *Time for Healing*.