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This essay provides an overview of the history of the black-Jewish relationships in the twentieth century. The record shows quite clearly that Jewish organizations as well as a great number of individual Jews contributed enormously to the success of the movement to increase the power of blacks and alter the racial hierarchy of the United States. I also discuss the more difficult question of how to understand Jewish motives in the black-Jewish alliance.

It is important to realize that blacks and Jews are two very different groups. From the ancient world to the present, Jewish populations have repeatedly attained a position of power and influence within Western societies. The Ashkenazi Jews that dominate the American Jewish community have the highest average intelligence of any human group, and they have shown an extraordinary ability to create and participate in highly effective groups in pursuit of their interests.<sup>1</sup> Despite rather widespread anti-Jewish attitudes (although quite mild by historical standards), and despite arriving typically as impoverished immigrants, Jews rapidly achieved social status, wealth, power, and influence in the United States far out of proportion to their numbers. Jewish power was already visible during the public debate on whether to enter World War II on the side of England; indeed, as early as during the immigration debates of the 1920s (although they were not on the winning side). But it increased dramatically after World War II, and since the 1960s, Jewish Americans have become an elite group with a great deal of influence on public policy.<sup>2</sup> Although there are important divisions within the American Jewish community, there has been wide consensus on a number of critical public policy issues, particularly in the areas of support for Israel and the welfare of other foreign Jewries, immigration and refugee policy, church-state separation, abortion rights, and civil liberties.<sup>3</sup>

There was a broad Jewish consensus of sympathy and support for movements that empowered black Americans, at least until the 1970s,

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<sup>1</sup> See *A People that Shall Dwell Alone* and ch. 2 above “Background Traits for Jewish Activism.”

<sup>2</sup> *The Culture of Critique*.

<sup>3</sup> Goldberg 1996, 5.

when Jewish neoconservatives—a small minority within the Jewish community—began to dissent from some of the more radical forms of legislating black advancement, and called for limiting welfare and curtailing some of the more extreme forms of affirmative action and group rights for blacks. In common with the mainstream organized American Jewish community, however, the neoconservatives supported the civil rights revolution of the 1960s.

Blacks have a completely different history and racial profile. In the South, blacks were subjected to slavery and, following emancipation, racial segregation resulted in a well-defined racial hierarchy. In the North blacks have also been relatively impoverished and powerless, but, when controlled for IQ, blacks have achieved the same level of occupational success as whites since the end of the first phase of the civil rights movement—around 1960. Since that time, controlled for IQ, blacks have been much more likely to be in high-IQ occupations than whites with the same IQ. For example, in a study performed on data from 1990, whites with professional jobs had an average IQ of 114, while blacks holding these jobs had an average IQ of 94.<sup>4</sup> The average black IQ is 85, one standard deviation below the mean for American whites and at least two standard deviations below the mean Jewish-American IQ of 115.<sup>5</sup>

Reflecting this disparity in IQ and achievement, the relationship between blacks and Jews has always been one-sided. Jews have played an important role in organizing, funding, and promoting black causes, but blacks have played no role in running the affairs of the organized Jewish community.<sup>6</sup>

### **A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BLACK-JEWISH ALLIANCE**

Jewish activities in support of blacks have involved litigation, legislation, fund-raising, political organizing, and academic movements opposed to the concept of biologically based racial differences.

Jews have played a prominent role in organizing blacks beginning with the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909 and, despite increasing black anti-Semitism, continuing into the present. The NAACP was founded by wealthy German Jews, non-Jewish whites, and blacks led by W. E. B.

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<sup>4</sup> Herrnstein and Murray 1994, 321–22, 488–92.

<sup>5</sup> *A People that Shall Dwell Alone*, ch. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Cruse 1967.

DuBois.<sup>7</sup> The Jewish role was predominant:

By mid-decade [c. 1915], the NAACP had something of the aspect of an adjunct of B'nai B'rith and the American Jewish Committee, with the brothers Joel and Arthur Spingarn serving as board chairman and chief legal counsel, respectively; Herbert Lehman on the executive committee; Lillian Wald and Walter Sachs on the board (though not simultaneously); and Jacob Schiff and Paul Warburg as financial angels. By 1920, Herbert Seligman was director of public relations, and Martha Gruening served as his assistant.... Small wonder that a bewildered Marcus Garvey stormed out of NAACP headquarters in 1917, muttering that it was a white organization.<sup>8</sup>

Until after World War II, the Jewish-black alliance essentially involved wealthy German Jews aiding black organizations financially and through their organizational abilities; Jewish lawyers also played a prominent role in staffing the legal departments of black activist organizations. Thus the Spingarn brothers were part of this German-Jewish aristocracy. Except for brief periods when he resigned to protest the attitudes of the board, Joel Spingarn was chairman of the NAACP from 1914 to 1934, when the first black assumed the position. Wealthy Jews were important contributors to the National Urban League as well, most notably Jacob Schiff, the premier Jewish activist of the first two decades of the twentieth century, and Julius Rosenwald, whose wealth derived from the Sears, Roebuck Company.<sup>9</sup> Louis Marshall, the most prominent Jewish activist of the 1920s and leader of the American Jewish Committee (AJCommittee), was on the board of directors of the NAACP and was a principal NAACP attorney. Other prominent Jewish attorneys who participated in NAACP lawsuits included Supreme Court Justices Louis Brandeis and Felix Frankfurter, the latter playing a major role in the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision. Another Jewish attorney prominent in NAACP affairs was Nathan Margold, described as having "a burning social conscience";<sup>10</sup> Margold developed the legal plan for the successful assault on the legal basis of segregation. Jack Greenberg, chairman of the NAACP Legal Defense

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<sup>7</sup> Friedman 1995, 45.

<sup>8</sup> Levering-Lewis 1984, 85

<sup>9</sup> Levering-Lewis 1984, 85

<sup>10</sup> Friedman 1995, 106.

Fund in the 1960s, was also instrumental in the origin of MALDEF, bringing together Mexican activist Pete Tijerina with the Ford Foundation.<sup>11</sup>

Blacks played little role in these efforts until the late 1930s: For example, until 1933 there were no black lawyers in the NAACP legal department, and through the 1930s around half of the NAACP's legal department were Jews.<sup>12</sup> At the height of the black-Jewish alliance, in the 1960s, more than half of the lawyers defending students and other participants in the protest movement in the South were Jews.<sup>13</sup> Heavily Jewish organizations like the National Lawyers Guild, which had ties to the Communist Party,<sup>14</sup> and the American Civil Liberties Union also provided legal talent for these endeavors.

In the post-World War II period the entire gamut of Jewish civil service organizations was involved in black issues, including the AJ-Committee, the American Jewish Congress (AJCongress), and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL): "With professionally trained personnel, fully equipped offices, and public relations know-how, they had the resources to make a difference."<sup>15</sup> By the end of the 1940s the ADL had designated the South as particularly in need of change; the ADL monitored instances of racial tension and violence and increasingly sought intervention by the federal government in the affairs of the region, including racial segregation.<sup>16</sup>

Jews contributed from two thirds to three quarters of the money for civil rights groups during the 1960s.<sup>17</sup> The AJCongress, the AJCommittee, and the ADL worked closely with the NAACP to write legal briefs and raise money in the effort to end segregation. Jewish groups, particularly the AJCongress, played a leading role in drafting civil rights legislation and pursuing legal challenges related to civil rights issues mainly benefiting blacks.<sup>18</sup>

Jewish support, legal and monetary, afforded the civil rights movement a string of legal victories.... There is little exaggeration

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.maldef.org/about/founding.htm>

<sup>12</sup> Friedman 1995, 48, 106.

<sup>13</sup> Friedman 1995, 183.

<sup>14</sup> See Friedman 1995, 182.

<sup>15</sup> Friedman 1995, 135.

<sup>16</sup> Greenberg 1998, 140.

<sup>17</sup> Kaufman 1997, 110.

<sup>18</sup> Svonkin 1997, 79–112.

in an American Jewish Congress lawyer's claim that "many of these laws were actually written in the offices of Jewish agencies by Jewish staff people, introduced by Jewish legislators and pressured into being by Jewish voters."<sup>19</sup>

A watershed period in Jewish support for blacks was the aftermath of World War II. Jews emerged from the war in a much more powerful position than before. Anti-Jewish attitudes that had been common before the war declined precipitously, and Jewish organizations assumed a much higher profile in influencing ethnic relations in the US, not only in the area of civil rights but also in immigration policy. Significantly, this high Jewish profile was spearheaded by the American Jewish Congress and the ADL, both dominated by Jews who had immigrated from Eastern Europe between 1880 and 1920 and their descendants.<sup>20</sup> As indicated below, an understanding of the special character of this Jewish population is critical to understanding Jewish influence in the United States from 1945 to the present. The German-Jewish elite that had dominated Jewish community affairs via the AJCommittee earlier in the century gave way to a new leadership made up of Eastern European immigrants and their descendants. Even the AJCommittee, the bastion of the German-Jewish elite, came to be headed by John Slawson, who had immigrated at the age of seven from the Ukraine. The AJCongress, a creation of the Jewish immigrant community, was headed by Will Maslow, a socialist and a Zionist. Zionism and political radicalism typified the Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe.<sup>21</sup>

As an indication of the radicalism of the immigrant Jewish community, the 50,000-member Jewish Peoples Fraternal Order, an affiliate of the AJCongress, was listed as a subversive organization by the US Attorney General. The JPFO was the financial and organizational "bulwark" of the Communist Party USA after World War II and also funded the *Daily Worker*, an organ of the CPUSA, and the *Morning Freiheit*, a Yiddish communist newspaper.<sup>22</sup> Although the AJCongress severed its ties with the JPFO and stated that communism was a threat, it was "at best a reluctant and unenthusiastic participant" in the Jewish effort to develop a public image of anticommunism—a position reflect-

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<sup>19</sup> Levering-Lewis 1984, 94.

<sup>20</sup> Friedman 1995, 133; Greenberg 1998, 136.

<sup>21</sup> *The Culture of Critique*, ch. 3 and ch. 4 above "Zionism and the Internal Dynamics of the Jewish Community."

<sup>22</sup> Svonkin 1997, 166.

ing the sympathies of many among its predominantly second- and third-generation Eastern European immigrant membership.<sup>23</sup> Concern that Jewish communists were involved in the civil rights movement centered around the activities of Stanley Levison, a key advisor to Martin Luther King who had very close ties to the Communist Party (as well as to the AJCongress) and may have been acting under communist discipline in his activities with King.<sup>24</sup>

Jews were also instrumental in creating the intellectual context that made possible the revolution in racial relationships in the US David Hollinger notes “the transformation of the ethnoreligious demography of American academic life by Jews” in the period from the 1930s to the 1960s,<sup>25</sup> and I have described the development of a “culture of critique” in the United States produced by intellectual and political movements dominated by people who identified as Jews and viewed their efforts as aiding Jewish causes, particularly in ending anti-Semitism.<sup>26</sup> These movements collectively resulted in a decline of evolutionary and biological thinking in the academic world, and they pathologized racial identity among whites.

There were several strands to these intellectual endeavors. Beginning with Horace Kallen, Jewish intellectuals have been at the forefront in developing models of the United States as a culturally and ethnically pluralistic society. This conception that the United States should be organized as a set of separate ethnic-cultural groups was accompanied by an ideology according to which relationships between groups would be cooperative and benign: “Kallen lifted his eyes above the strife that swirled around him to an ideal realm where diversity and harmony coexist.”<sup>27</sup>

During the 1930s, the AJCommittee funded the research of Franz Boas, who was instrumental in eradicating the idea that biological race was an important source of differences among people. (While leading this battle, Boas himself never completely rejected the view that there were racial differences in brain size favoring whites. Even at the end of his life, in the 1938 edition of *The Mind of Primitive Man*, Boas advanced the idea that there would be fewer men of high genius among blacks; however, he argued that mean group differences should not be

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<sup>23</sup> Svonkin 1997, 132.

<sup>24</sup> See Friedman 1995, 110–11, 117.

<sup>25</sup> Hollinger 1996, 4.

<sup>26</sup> *The Culture of Critique*.

<sup>27</sup> Higham 1984, 209.

applied to individuals because of variation within each race.<sup>28</sup>) Boasian anthropology was a Jewish intellectual movement that by the 1920s came to dominate American anthropology.<sup>29</sup> (As above, by “Jewish intellectual movement” I mean a movement dominated by people who identified as Jews and saw their involvement in the movement as advancing Jewish interests.) Boasian anthropology was enlisted in post-World War II propaganda efforts distributed and promoted by the AJ-Committee, the AJCongress, and the ADL, as in the film *Brotherhood of Man*, which depicted all human groups as having equal abilities. In the postwar era, the Boasian ideology denying racial differences, as well as the Boasian ideology of cultural relativism and the belief in the importance of preserving and respecting cultural differences deriving from Horace Kallen, were important ingredients of educational programs sponsored by these Jewish activist organizations and widely distributed throughout the American educational system.<sup>30</sup>

The AJCommittee also supported the efforts of refugee Jewish social scientists who fled Germany in the 1930s, particularly those centered around the Frankfurt School of Social Research (Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm, T. W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse). This group combined elements of Marxism and psychoanalysis—both of which are considered Jewish intellectual movements.<sup>31</sup> Fundamentally, *The Authoritarian Personality* and the other works produced by this group (collectively termed the Studies in Prejudice) resulted from a felt need to develop an empirical program of research that would support a politically and intellectually satisfying *a priori* theory of anti-Semitism and other forms of ethnic hostility in order to influence an American academic audience. *The Authoritarian Personality* attempts to show that the group affiliations of non-Jews, and in particular membership in Christian religious sects, nationalism, and close family ties, are indications of psychiatric disorder. At a deep level the work of the Frankfurt School is addressed to altering Western societies in an attempt to make them resistant to anti-Semitism by pathologizing group affiliations of non-Jews.

In 1944 the AJCongress organized the Commission on Community Interrelations under the leadership of Kurt Lewin, a strong advocate of group identity for minority groups. Lewin epitomized the confronta-

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<sup>28</sup> See discussion in Williams 1998.

<sup>29</sup> *The Culture of Critique*, ch. 2.

<sup>30</sup> Svonkin 1997, 63, 64.

<sup>31</sup> *The Culture of Critique*, chs. 3, 4.

tional attitude of the leftist AJCongress in advocating the importance of legislation against discrimination rather than relying on propaganda and activist social science alone.<sup>32</sup> The activists/scientists recruited to this group included Kenneth Clark, whose doll study with black children purportedly showing the psychic damage inflicted by segregation was an important component of the landmark 1954 decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education*. Another member was Marie Jahoda, co-author of *Anti-Semitism and Emotional Disorder*, a volume in the *Studies in Prejudice* published by the AJCommittee.<sup>33</sup> This book consisted of a set of ad hoc psychodynamic proposals whose only similarity is that anti-Semitism involves the projection of some sort of intrapsychic conflict. The book is a good illustration of the usefulness of psychoanalysis in constructing theories of anti-Semitism or other expressions of ethnic hostility as reflecting psychological inadequacy rather than real conflicts of interest.

The general term for this multifaceted effort by Jewish organizations to alter ethnic relations in the US is the intergroup relations movement.<sup>34</sup> This effort included legal challenges to bias in housing, education, and public employment. Jewish organizations also drafted legislative proposals and attempted to secure their passage into law in state and national legislative bodies. Another prong of the offensive was shaping messages in the media, promoting educational programs for students and teachers, and, as noted above, promoting efforts to reshape the intellectual discourse on race in the academic world. The Anti-Defamation League was centrally involved in these efforts, “utilizing radio and television spots, clever jingles, filmstrips and other media efforts.”<sup>35</sup> The ADL recruited celebrities such as Bess Myerson who toured the country with the pitch that “you can’t be beautiful, and hate.”<sup>36</sup> Hollywood movies such as *Gentleman’s Agreement* and *The House I Live In* also disseminated these messages, and the play *South Pacific*, by Rodgers and Hammerstein, included a theme of interracial marriage and a song stating that children had to be taught to hate. As with Jewish involvement in immigration policy and a great many other instances of Jewish political and intellectual activity in both modern

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<sup>32</sup> Friedman 1995, 144.

<sup>33</sup> Ackerman and Jahoda 1950.

<sup>34</sup> See Svonkin 1997.

<sup>35</sup> Friedman 1995, 140.

<sup>36</sup> In Friedman 1995, 140.



and premodern times,<sup>37</sup> the intergroup relations movement often worked to minimize overt Jewish involvement.<sup>38</sup>

The ideology of intergroup animosity developed by the intergroup relations movement derived from the Studies in Prejudice series sponsored by the AJCommittee, particularly the Frankfurt School's *The Authoritarian Personality*. This work explicitly viewed manifestations of ethnocentrism or discrimination against outgroups as a mental disease and thus literally a public health problem. The assault on intergroup animosity was likened to the medical assault on deadly infectious diseases, and people with the disease were described by activists as "infected."<sup>39</sup> A consistent theme of the intellectual rationale for this body of ethnic activism emphasized the benefits to be gained by increased levels of intergroup harmony—an aspect of the idealism inherent in Horace Kallen's conceptualization of multiculturalism—without mentioning that some groups, particularly European-derived, non-Jewish groups, would lose economic and political power and decline in cultural influence.<sup>40</sup> Negative attitudes toward groups were viewed not as the result of competing group interests but rather as the result of individual psychopathology.<sup>41</sup> Finally, while ethnocentrism by non-Jews was viewed as a public health problem, the AJCongress fought against Jewish assimilation and was a strong supporter of Israel as a Jewish ethnostate.

The rhetoric of the intergroup relations movement stressed that its goals were congruent with traditional views of America, but this is misleading at best. Their rhetoric emphasized the Enlightenment legacy of individual rights. However, rather than seeing the legacy of individual rights as a unique product of Western culture, the intergroup relations movement interpreted these rights as congruent with Jewish ideals originating with the prophets. This conceptualization ignored the fact that Jewish tradition itself is profoundly collectivist rather than individualist; it also ignored the fact that hostility toward outgroups has always been central to the Jewish group evolutionary strategy.<sup>42</sup> Jewish rhetoric during this period thus relied on an illusory view of the Jewish past that was tailor-made to achieve Jewish objectives in the modern world,

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<sup>37</sup> *Separation and its Discontents*, ch. 6.

<sup>38</sup> Svonkin 1997, 45, 51, 65, 71–72.

<sup>39</sup> Svonkin 1997, 30, 59.

<sup>40</sup> Svonkin 1997, 5.

<sup>41</sup> Svonkin 1997, 75.

<sup>42</sup> Svonkin 1997, 7, 20.

where the Enlightenment rhetoric of universalism and individual rights retained considerable intellectual prestige.<sup>43</sup>

The intergroup relations movement ignored or vilified other traditional sources of American identity. There was no mention of the republican strand of American identity as a cohesive, socially homogeneous society.<sup>44</sup> Also ignored or vilified was the idea that America was a northwestern European culture created by people from a specific ethnic group. This “ethnocultural” strand of American identity as a racial/ethnic group had become quite influential between 1880 and 1920 with the theories of Madison Grant, Lothrop Stoddard, and others. These theories were strongly influenced by Darwinism, and they were the particular target of Boasian anthropology and the other Jewish intellectual movements discussed above.

By the early 1960s an ADL official estimated that one-third of America’s teachers had received ADL educational material based on the ideology of the intergroup relations movement.<sup>45</sup> The ADL was also intimately involved in staffing, developing materials, and providing financial assistance for workshops for teachers and school administrators, often with the involvement of social scientists from the academic world—an association that undoubtedly added to the scientific credibility of these exercises. It is ironic, perhaps, that this effort to influence the public school curriculum was carried on by the same groups that were endeavoring to remove overt Christian influences from the public schools. The ADL continues to be a major promoter of diversity education through its A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute.<sup>46</sup> Since 1985 this institute has trained more than 230,000 elementary and secondary school teachers in diversity education and has conducted workplace diversity training programs for workers and college students in the United States. Teacher training programs have also been instituted in Germany and Russia.

### **JEWISH MOTIVES IN PROMOTING BLACK CAUSES**

It is always difficult to measure influence in complex social transformations such as the enormous changes in ethnic relations that have occurred in the last fifty years. Whatever the exact contribution of Jews and Jewish organizations, one must acknowledge that there was coop-

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<sup>43</sup> Svonkin 1997.

<sup>44</sup> Smith 1988; see *The Culture of Critique*, ch. 8.

<sup>45</sup> Svonkin 1997, 69.

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.adl.org/education/>.

eration among mainstream Jewish organizations, black activists, and a vast number of whites who came to internalize the ideological premises of this revolution. Indeed, at this time it is fair to say that there is a consensus of elite opinion across the political spectrum on the moral foundations of the revolution in civil rights for blacks. This consensus comes out in stark relief on occasions such as the broad-based censure that followed remarks in December 2002 by Trent Lott that America would not have many of its current problems if Strom Thurmond had been elected in 1948. Thurmond had run on a segregationist platform.

The evidence reviewed briefly here certainly suggests that Jewish activism was a critical force in leading, organizing, and funding the revolution in ethnic relations that has occurred in the US since World War II. Even Harold Cruse, a trenchant black critic of the black-Jewish alliance, has noted that "The truth was (and is) that the American Jewish Committee and its intellectual adherents pioneered in ways never equaled by their white Protestant allies."<sup>47</sup> (A similar statement could be made regarding Jewish involvement in opening up US immigration to all the peoples of the world.<sup>48</sup>) This is not to say that blacks would not have eventually attempted to alter their situation in the absence of an alliance with Jews.

However, it is difficult to believe that these efforts would have been so effective and so quickly successful in the absence of Jewish involvement. After all, at least until the 1960s blacks had not shown themselves able to develop effective organizations without Jewish input. Blacks, as a low-achieving group, continue to have relatively little power and influence in ethnic relations in the United States and remain underrepresented in all the elite institutions of society. Because of their high intelligence, their high level of mobilization, and their overrepresentation in elite institutions of the government, the media, business, and the academic world, Jewish influence is far out of proportion to their numbers.<sup>49</sup> White non-Jews have relatively little influence compared to Jews because of their lack of mobilization to achieve their ethnic interests.<sup>50</sup>

Moreover, continuing Jewish involvement in the media and in funding black organizations remains an important ingredient in black suc-

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<sup>47</sup> Cruse 1987, 122.

<sup>48</sup> See *The Culture of Critique*, ch. 7.

<sup>49</sup> Salter 1998; see also ch. 2 above on "Background Traits for Jewish Activism."

<sup>50</sup> Salter 1998.

cess, long after the leadership of these organizations passed to blacks. For example, Murray Friedman notes that after 1955 blacks assumed the leadership of the movement: "No longer would Jewish leaders and other outsiders call the shots. They would work behind the scenes, providing money and advice to [Martin Luther] King and his lieutenants, who would head the movement, win the headlines, and endure the jail sentences."

Despite the high profile of Jewish neoconservatives who dissent from some of the more extreme forms of affirmative action and other elements of the black political agenda, the great majority of Jews remain on the left/liberal wing of American politics. Indeed, the effort to turn nondiscrimination in employment into a results-oriented quota system was spearheaded by a heavily Jewish brain trust, most notably Alfred W. Blumrosen, at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.<sup>51</sup> Despite representing only 2.5 percent of the population, Jews provide over half of the funding of the Democratic Party, and in the 2000 election, eighty percent of Jews voted for Gore.<sup>52</sup> In general Jewish congressional representatives support liberal programs along with their black colleagues,<sup>53</sup> and Jewish organizations continue to endorse strong, quota-type affirmative action programs, at least if it can be shown that there has been a past history of discrimination.<sup>54</sup>

Jewish support for the Democratic Party appears to be declining. In the 2000 election younger Jews, age 18–29, voted 59 percent to forty percent for Bush. Nevertheless, this portending shift probably does not indicate significant defection of Jews from the achievements of the post–World War II revolution in ethnic affairs. For example, at this writing, support of large-scale multiethnic immigration to the United States characterizes the entire Jewish political spectrum, from the far left to the neoconservative right.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, younger ADL leaders were more likely to endorse a lower threshold for affirmative action policy in which race could be used as a factor in employment and university admissions in the absence of a finding of discrimination.<sup>56</sup> Older Jews tend to view affirmative action through the lens of the quota systems designed to regulate the number of Jews in elite universities in the

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<sup>51</sup> See Graham 1990, 194–96.

<sup>52</sup> Lipset and Raab 1995; Friedman 2002.

<sup>53</sup> Friedman 1995, 351.

<sup>54</sup> See Chanes 1997; discussed below.

<sup>55</sup> *The Culture of Critique*, ch. 7.

<sup>56</sup> Chanes 1997, 307.

1920s and 1930s.

Jewish involvement in altering the racial hierarchy of the United States did not stem from Judaism per se. That is, there is nothing in Judaism as a religion or ethnicity that would dictate that Jews would ally with blacks as racial underdogs in European America. Throughout history a common pattern has been for Jews to make alliances with elites, and often with alien and oppressive elites. In the ancient world, in the Muslim world, and in Christian Europe from the Middle Ages to post-World War II Eastern Europe, Jews have allied themselves with rulers and have often been seen as oppressors of the common people.

Indeed, I have argued that an important contrast between Eastern and Western Europe was that exploitative economic systems involving the collaboration between Jews and non-Jewish elites continued far longer in Eastern Europe.<sup>57</sup> There “Jewish estate managers became the master of life and death over the population of entire districts, and having nothing but a short-term and purely financial interest in the relationship, was faced with the irresistible temptation to pare his temporary subjects to the bone.”<sup>58</sup> The theme of oppressive Jewish money lending and tax farming was characteristic of anti-Jewish attitudes for centuries.

Moreover, Jewish law condones slavery and elaborates distinctions between the treatment of Jewish and non-Jewish slaves (much to the detriment of the latter). Jews dominated the slave trade in the ancient Roman world,<sup>59</sup> and Jews were involved in financing the African slave trade to the New World as a mercantile elite in Spain, Portugal, and Amsterdam. In the US, Southern Jews traded and owned slaves,<sup>60</sup> probably at least at levels commensurate with their wealth and their percentage of the population.

Given this history, it is perhaps not surprising that in the US, Jews in the South were typically reluctant participants in the civil rights movement.<sup>61</sup> The Southern Jewish community was relatively small compared to the much larger Jewish population that came from Eastern Europe between 1880 and 1924, and had relatively little national influence. Southern Jews arrived in the nineteenth century, mainly from Germany, and they tended toward political conservatism, at least com-

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<sup>57</sup> *Separation and its Discontents*, Preface to the paperback edition.

<sup>58</sup> Davies 1982, 444; see also Subtelny 1988, 124.

<sup>59</sup> *The Culture of Critique*, ch. 3.

<sup>60</sup> Friedman 1995, ch. 1.

<sup>61</sup> Greenberg 1998.

pared to their Eastern European brethren. The general perception of Northern Jews and Southern blacks and whites was that Southern Jews had adopted white attitudes on racial issues. Moreover, Southern Jews adopted a low profile because Southern whites often (correctly) blamed Northern Jews as major instigators of the civil rights movement and because of the linkages among Jews, communism, and civil rights agitation during a period when both the NAACP and mainstream Jewish organizations were doing their best to minimize associations with communism.<sup>62</sup> (Jews were the backbone of the Communist Party USA, and the CPUSA agitated on behalf of black causes.<sup>63</sup>) It was common for Southerners to rail against Jews while exempting Southern Jews from their accusations: “We have only the high-type Jew here, not like the kikes in New York.”<sup>64</sup>

Jewish businessmen adopted the segregationist mores of the South and often assumed an economic role of exploitation of blacks. A 1946 comment on the ADL Committee on Labor Relations noted: “It must be stated bluntly that with respect to [African Americans] Jews are vulnerable in the South. The only Jew a Negro meets in the city is a pawn broker, grocer, insurance agent or landlord. The only Jew a sharecropper meets is a storekeeper or tradesman.”<sup>65</sup> A journalist reported in 1946 that blacks in the South often had anti-Jewish attitudes; they took a “grim satisfaction from the Nazi persecution of the Jews. They contend that their local Jews have been indistinguishable from the ‘crackers’ in their attitude toward Negroes.”<sup>66</sup> Though there were some exceptions, the vast majority of Southern Jews did not involve themselves in the civil rights movement even after the struggle intensified in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>67</sup>

Similarly, the great majority of Jews in South Africa cooperated with the apartheid system. Between 1948 and 1970, most Jews gave their political allegiance to the United Party, which “was quite as committed to white supremacy as were the Afrikaner nationalists.”<sup>68</sup> By the

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<sup>62</sup> Greenberg 1998, 153.

<sup>63</sup> *The Culture of Critique*, ch. 3.

<sup>64</sup> In Greenberg 1998, 126.

<sup>65</sup> In Greenberg 1998, 128.

<sup>66</sup> In Greenberg 1998, 129.

<sup>67</sup> Greenberg 1998, 134. Nevertheless, a 1965 survey of Southern Jews found that they were twice as likely as white Southern Protestants to feel that the end of segregation was inevitable and desirable. Greenberg does not state what the actual percentages were.

<sup>68</sup> Shimoni 2003, 58.

1970s Jews were turning more to the Progressive Party, which advocated a gradual dismantling of apartheid, but “there appeared to be a grain of truth in the then current cynical quip that most Jews spoke like Progressives, voted for the United Party, and hoped that the Nationalist Party would remain in power.”<sup>69</sup>

However, the most striking feature of Jewish political behavior under apartheid was that Jews were vastly overrepresented among those banned by the government because of their opposition to apartheid. For example, Jews represented more than half the whites arrested in the Treason Trial of 1956 and almost half of whites suspected of being members of the Communist Party in 1962; in the public mind therefore, “Jews were inordinately prominent in the ranks of those who were attempting to subvert the state.”<sup>70</sup>

The best predictor of Jewish participation in radical politics in South Africa was exposure to the political radicalism of the Eastern European Jewish subculture as a child.<sup>71</sup> As indicated below, it is the special character of this Jewish group that has been so critical to the revolution in race relations in the US since World War II.

In the North, at least through the 1960s, Jews were seen more as exploiters than promoters of blacks because of their role as businessmen in the black community. From Marcus Garvey to Malcolm X, Julius Lester (“We got to take Harlem out of Goldberg’s pocket”), Louis Farrakhan, and Khalid Muhammad (Jews were “bloodsuckers of the black nation”), black nationalists have routinely denounced Jews as economic exploiters of blacks because of their role as businessmen in the black community.<sup>72</sup> During the 1930s, as tensions rose with the Great Depression, a black newspaper declared, “If the Jewish merchants in Germany treated German workers as Blumstein’s [a Jewish-owned de-

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<sup>69</sup> Shimoni 2003, 58.

<sup>70</sup> Shimoni 2003, 60, 61, 62.

<sup>71</sup> Shimoni 2003, 82–94. Most of the South African Jewish community came from Eastern Europe, but from a particular area where Zionism divorced from political radicalism held sway. This was not characteristic of most of Eastern Europe, where both ideologies had powerful influence. Shimoni (p. 94) notes that in general the powerful Zionist commitment of South African Jews did not result in opposition to apartheid, but he notes that some anti-apartheid radicals may have been influenced by the socialist ideas common in the Zionist Youth Movement.

<sup>72</sup> Friedman 1995, 220, 222, 346. Muhammad made his statement in 1994 at Howard University.

partment store] is treating the people of Harlem, then Hitler is right.”<sup>73</sup> Perceptions of Jews as exploiters often led to black violence against Jews, as during the Detroit race riots of 1943, when Jewish stores were a prime target of blacks, and in Harlem and Chicago, where black leaders often complained that Jewish-owned stores did not employ blacks.<sup>74</sup> In the 1940s, according to one observer, “to Harlem, it had become a way of life to blame the Jew for discrimination and abuse.”<sup>75</sup> Jewish merchants were also targeted in the black riots of the late 1960s and early 1970s; for example, between 1968 and 1972, 22 Jewish merchants were killed by black rioters in Philadelphia and 27 shot or beaten.<sup>76</sup> Charges of rent and price gouging were commonplace.

Nevertheless, although these incidents certainly show that blacks have often perceived Jews negatively, they may be more a symptom of black failure to develop their own businesses than of something uniquely exploitative about Jewish businessmen. In more recent times, blacks targeted Korean-owned stores during the 1993 riots in Los Angeles after Koreans had replaced Jews as owners of businesses serving the black community.

When interviewed about their own motivations, Jews tend to see themselves as altruists in aiding black causes, or they “believe that Jewish concern for black people was ‘natural,’ growing out of parallel experiences of suffering and oppression.”<sup>77</sup> During the high point of the civil rights movements, Jews and Jewish organizations “redefined Judaism as synonymous with liberalism.”<sup>78</sup> A commonly expressed attitude was that Jewish work on behalf of civil rights reflected the “universalist ethics” of Judaism.<sup>79</sup> This view ignores the history of the Jewish people as a closed ingroup with a profoundly particularist moral outlook, with very different moral standards for ingroup members and outgroup members.<sup>80</sup>

In the contemporary world the most egregious example of Jewish moral particularism is the reality of Israel as an expansionist apartheid

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<sup>73</sup> In Friedman 1995, 92.

<sup>74</sup> Friedman 1995, 102; see also McDowell 1998; Trotter 1998.

<sup>75</sup> In Friedman 1995, 103.

<sup>76</sup> Friedman 1995, 214.

<sup>77</sup> Diner 1977, xiii.

<sup>78</sup> Greenberg 1998, 162.

<sup>79</sup> E.g., Greenberg 1998, 143.

<sup>80</sup> *A People that Shall Dwell Alone*, ch. 6; *The Culture of Critique*, Preface to the first paperback edition.



state. Jews in Israel have subjected the Palestinians to a brutal occupation aimed ultimately at expanding their territory to include the land conquered in the 1967 war; American Jews have been strong supporters of Israel, and in recent years the organized American Jewish community has favored Israel's rightist Likud party and its aggressive policies toward the Palestinians. Many of the supporters of the Likud are hyper-ethnocentric members of the settler movement and other forms of Jewish fundamentalism.<sup>81</sup>

Another tack has been to acknowledge that Jews furthered their own interests in advancing black causes, but to restrict these interests to a general interest in securing Jewish civil rights. For example, in 1954, Will Maslow, a Jewish activist with the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, wrote that lawsuits brought by the NAACP for black plaintiffs benefited Jews, particularly in ending restrictive housing covenants and the ability to discriminate on the basis of race in hiring decisions.<sup>82</sup> In a 1920 letter, Louis Marshall noted that restrictive housing covenants could be used not only against blacks but "those of every race and of every nationality or origin."<sup>83</sup>

However, the interests of blacks and Jews have increasingly diverged, especially since the high point of the black-Jewish alliance in the 1960s. In the late 1960s Jews bitterly opposed black efforts at community control of schools in New York because they threatened Jewish hegemony in the educational system, including the teachers' union.<sup>84</sup> Black-Jewish issues also diverged when affirmative action and quotas for black college admission became a divisive issue in the 1970s.<sup>85</sup> The main Jewish groups—the AJCommittee, the AJCongress, and the ADL—sided with Bakke in the landmark case on racial quota systems in the University of California–Davis medical school, thereby promoting their own interests as a highly intelligent minority in a meritocracy.

Nevertheless, in recent times Jewish groups have endorsed the use of race as a factor in hiring and university admissions, especially in cases where previous discrimination is demonstrable. In 1995, the ADL rejected a resolution that would have allowed race to be a factor even

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<sup>81</sup> See ch. 4 above on "Zionism and the Internal Dynamics of the Jewish Community."

<sup>82</sup> Greenberg 1998, 158–59.

<sup>83</sup> In Friedman 1995, 72.

<sup>84</sup> See Friedman 1995, 257ff.

<sup>85</sup> Friedman 1995, 72.

without “egregious discrimination” or “token presence.”<sup>86</sup> During the same period, the AJCongress supported court-ordered goals and timetables “given a finding of discrimination.”<sup>87</sup> Major Jewish organizations supported affirmative action in the recent Supreme Court case dealing with admissions policy at the University of Michigan. The AJ-Committee noted in its amicus brief that “Diversity not only provides all students with a richer educational experience, but also prepares them for participation in our pluralistic democracy.”<sup>88</sup> The ADL favored law school admissions policies that did not assign race a specific point value in admission, declaring that the decision was an “attempt to strike a delicate balance.” The ADL further “called upon university admissions offices to recognize that the Court has not authorized the use of race as ‘a substitute for individualized consideration of their applicants.’”<sup>89</sup>

Since the 1960s, the Jewish ethnic interest in promoting Israel also conflicted with the views of many radical black activists who saw Israel as a Western colonial power and the Palestinians as a downtrodden Third World Muslim people. For example, in the late 1960s, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) described Zionism as “racist colonialism.”<sup>90</sup> In Jewish eyes, a great many black leaders, including the late Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Touré), Jesse Jackson, Louis Farrakhan, and Andrew Young, have been entirely too pro-Palestinian. (Young lost his position as US ambassador to the United Nations as a result of Jewish pressure because he engaged in secret negotiations with the Palestinians.) During the 1960s, expressions of solidarity with the Palestinians by radical blacks, some of whom had adopted the Muslim religion, resulted in many Jewish New Leftists leaving the movement.<sup>91</sup> The origins of neo-conservatism are linked partly, if not largely, to the fact that the left, including the Soviet Union and leftist radicals in the United States, had become anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish. Indeed, surveys beginning in the 1960s have consistently found that blacks are more likely to hold anti-Jewish attitudes than whites. The most recent ADL survey, from 1998, found that blacks were nearly four times more likely than whites to have anti-Jewish atti-

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<sup>86</sup> Chanes 1997, 307.

<sup>87</sup> Chanes 1997, 301.

<sup>88</sup> American Jewish Committee 2003.

<sup>89</sup> Anti-Defamation League 2003.

<sup>90</sup> Friedman 1995, 230.

<sup>91</sup> Liebman 1979, 561; *The Culture of Critique*, ch. 3.

tudes (34 percent to nine percent).<sup>92</sup>

Harold Cruse, a black intellectual, presents a particularly trenchant analysis of the role of Jewish self-interest in their role in Jewish-black coalition: “Jews *know exactly what they want in America.*” Jews want cultural pluralism because of their long-term policy of nonassimilation and group solidarity. Cruse notes, however, that the Jewish experience in Europe has shown them that “*two can play this game*” (i.e., develop highly nationalistic ethnocentric groups), and “when that happens, woe be to the side that is short on numbers.”<sup>93</sup> Cruse observes that Jewish organizations view white nationalism as their greatest potential threat and that they have tended to support pro-black integration (i.e., assimilationist, individualist) policies for blacks in America, presumably because such policies dilute white power and lessen the possibility of a cohesive, nationalist anti-Jewish white majority. At the same time, Jewish organizations have opposed a black nationalist position while pursuing an anti-assimilationist, nationalist group strategy for their own group.

This suggestion about Jewish motivation must be taken seriously. The Jewish role in black affairs must be seen as part of the broader picture of Jewish strategizing in the period following World War II. We have seen that the central thrust of Jewish activity in the postwar era was the propaganda and political activism of the intergroup relations movement. This “full court press” of educational programs, media messages, legislative initiatives, legal challenges, and protests was aimed at altering the ethnic attitudes and behaviors typical of traditional America. As Stuart Svonkin notes, Jewish activists “saw their commitment to the intergroup relations movement as a preventive measure designed to make sure ‘it’—the Nazis’ war of extermination against European Jewry—never happened in America.”<sup>94</sup>

Besides the movement to alter ethnic relations discussed here, Jewish organizations took the lead in altering US immigration policy in the direction of large-scale multiethnic immigration.<sup>95</sup> Mass multiethnic immigration continues to be a consensus position within the US Jewish community, and several Jewish activists have noted the advantage to be gained by Jews from an America where white political and demographic hegemony has declined and whites are unable to control their own

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<sup>92</sup> Friedman 1995, 319ff.; Anti-Defamation League 1998.

<sup>93</sup> Cruse 1967/1992, 121–22; italics in text.

<sup>94</sup> Svonkin 1997, 10.

<sup>95</sup> *The Culture of Critique*, ch. 7; Graham 2002, 56–57.

political destiny.<sup>96</sup> Most recently, Leonard S. Glickman, president and CEO of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, stated, “The more diverse American society is the safer [Jews] are.”<sup>97</sup> Having run out of Russian Jews, the HIAS is now deeply involved in recruiting refugees from Africa—a new twist on the black-Jewish alliance.

Also consistent with this interpretation is that in recent years Jewish organizations have made alliances with other non-white ethnic activist organizations. For example, groups such as the AJCommittee and the Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington have formed coalitions with organizations such as the National Council of La Raza and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC).<sup>98</sup> A prominent aspect of this effort is the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding, cofounded by Rabbi Marc Schneier, president of the North American Boards of Rabbis.<sup>99</sup> The Foundation is closely tied to the World Jewish Congress, which cosponsors the Foundation’s Washington, DC office and several of its programs. Typical of the Foundation’s efforts was a meeting in August 2003 of the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the Jewish Congressional Delegation, and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. The Foundation’s many programs include organizing the Congressional Jewish/Black Caucus; the Corporate Diversity Award, given to “a major Fortune 500 company committed to building a diverse work force”; the Annual Latino/Jewish Congressional Awards Ceremony; the Annual Black/Jewish Congressional Awards Ceremony; and the Annual Interethnic Congressional Leadership Forum. The latter project organizes an annual meeting of the NAACP, the National Council of La Raza, the World Jewish Congress, and the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium. Quite clearly the various non-European ethnic groups are developing close ties and Jewish organizations are taking the lead in this effort.

Jewish motivation need not be seen in defensive terms, of course, but rather as aimed at maximizing Jewish power. The reality is that the rise of the Jews in the United States, as well as the rise of their black allies and the millions of post-1965 non-white immigrants has been accompanied by a consequent decline in the power of the old white Protestant elites. This is motivation enough, certainly, but it leaves out

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<sup>96</sup> See *The Culture of Critique*, ch. 7.

<sup>97</sup> In Cattan 2002.

<sup>98</sup> Amann 2000.

<sup>99</sup> <http://www.ffeu.org/index.htm>.

an important psychological component. Throughout this essay I have noted the contrast between the German-Jewish immigrants who came to the US in the mid-to late nineteenth century and the massive Eastern European Jewish immigration that completely altered the profile of US Jewry in the direction of political radicalism and Zionism. The former group of immigrants rather quickly became an elite group, and their attitudes, as in Germany, were undoubtedly more liberal than those of similarly situated non-Jews of the time.<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, they tended toward political conservatism, and, whether living in the North or the South, they did not attempt to radically alter the folkways of the white majority, nor did they engage in radical criticism of non-Jewish society. I rather doubt that in the absence of the massive immigration of Eastern European Jews between 1880 and 1920, the US would have undergone the radical transformations of the last fifty years.

The Eastern European immigrants and their descendants were and are a quite different group.<sup>101</sup> These immigrants originated in the intensely ethnocentric, religiously fundamentalist *shtetl* communities of Eastern Europe. These groups had achieved a dominant economic position throughout the area, but they were under intense pressure as a result of anti-Jewish attitudes and laws. And because of their high fertility, the great majority of Eastern European Jews were poor. Around 1880 these groups shifted their focus from religious fanaticism to complex mixtures of political radicalism, Zionism, and religious fanaticism, although religious fanaticism was in decline relative to the other ideologies.<sup>102</sup> Their political radicalism often coexisted with messianic forms of Zionism as well as intense commitment to Jewish nationalism and religious and cultural separatism, and many individuals held various and often rapidly changing combinations of these ideas.<sup>103</sup>

The two streams of political radicalism and Zionism, each stemming from the teeming fanaticism and passionate ethnocentrism of threatened Jewish populations in nineteenth-century Eastern Europe, continue to reverberate in the modern world. In both England and America the immigration of Eastern European Jews after 1880 had a transforming effect on the political attitudes of the Jewish communities there in the direction of radical politics and Zionism, often combined with reli-

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<sup>100</sup> See *Separation and its Discontents*, ch. 5.

<sup>101</sup> See ch. 4 above on “Zionism and the Internal Dynamics of the Jewish Community” for a more complete discussion.

<sup>102</sup> Vital 1975, 314.

<sup>103</sup> See Frankel 1981.

gious orthodoxy.<sup>104</sup> The immigrant Eastern European Jews demographically swamped the previous Jewish communities in both countries, and the older communities grew deeply concerned at the possibility of increased anti-Semitism. Attempts were made by the established Jewish communities to misrepresent the prevalence of radical political ideas among the immigrants. However, there is no doubt that immigrant Jews formed the core of the American left at least through the 1960s; as indicated above, Jews continue to be an important force on the left into the present.

One expression of the passionate ethnocentrism of the immigrant Jews and their descendants is hatred directed at the non-Jewish world. In other words, at the conscious level, the Jewish activists who had such a large effect on the history of racial relations in America were motivated to a considerable extent by their hatred for the white power structure of the US because the white power structure represented the culture of an outgroup. I have tried to describe the intense hatred of Jews toward the non-Jewish social world in several places,<sup>105</sup> but perhaps John Murray Cuddihy says it best:

From Solomon Maimon to Normon Podhoretz, from Rachel Varnhagen to Cynthia Ozick, from Marx and Lassalle to Erving Goffman and Harold Garfinkel, from Herzl and Freud to Harold Laski and Lionel Trilling, from Moses Mendelssohn to J. Robert Oppenheimer and Ayn Rand, Gertrude Stein, and Reich I and II (Wilhelm and Charles), one dominating structure of an identical predicament and a shared fate imposes itself upon the consciousness and behavior of the Jewish intellectual in *Galut* [exile]: with the advent of Jewish Emancipation, when ghetto walls crumble and the *shtetlach* [small Jewish towns] begin to dissolve, Jewry—like some wide-eyed anthropologist—enters upon a strange world, to explore a strange people observing a strange *halakah* (code). They examine this world in dismay, with wonder, anger, and punitive objectivity. This wonder, this anger, and the vindictive objectivity of the marginal nonmember are recidivist; they continue unabated into our own time because Jewish Emancipation continues into our own time.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Alderman 1983, 47ff.; *The Culture of Critique*, ch. 3.

<sup>105</sup> *The Culture of Critique*, *passim*; chs. 2 and 4 above “Background Traits for Jewish Activism,” “Zionism and the Internal Dynamics of **the Jewish Community**.”

<sup>106</sup> Cuddihy 1974, 68.

Consistent with what we know of the psychology of ethnocentrism, this implies that a fundamental motivation of Jewish intellectuals and activists involved in social criticism has simply been hatred of the non-Jewish power structure, perceived as anti-Jewish and deeply immoral. This hatred is typically combined with the specific complaint that the pre-World War II US culture was deeply anti-Jewish. A particular focus of Jewish anger was the Immigration Law of 1924, which closed off immigration of Eastern European Jews to the US. There is no question that the 1924 law was partly motivated by a consensus in the US opposed to the political radicalism and clannish ways of the recent Jewish immigrants.<sup>107</sup> The emotional intensity of Jewish involvement in the black-Jewish alliance is mirrored in Jewish involvement in altering US immigration policy; both of these movements had strong overtones of hatred against the entire white, Christian culture of the US, which was viewed as anti-Jewish and profoundly immoral.

The Yiddish-speaking Jewish subculture viewed white America through the lens of the Eastern European *shtetl* Jew surrounded by a sea of hostile non-Jews ever ready to ignite an anti-Jewish pogrom. Indeed, in the 1920s and 1930s the Yiddish press routinely referred to lynchings and other manifestations of racial animosity as pogroms or *autos-da-fé* (i.e., the trials of the Inquisition in which many secret Jews were convicted of being insincere Catholics).<sup>108</sup> Both terms place the Jew in the position of the black as victim of white aggression. Whites in the American South were seen as no different than marauding Cossacks attacking Jews in eighteenth-century Poland or inquisitors torturing and executing Jews in sixteenth-century Spain—an indication of the profound sense of historical grievance typical of strongly identified Jews.<sup>109</sup>

This deep antipathy toward the non-Jewish world can be seen in the comments of Michael Walzer, a Princeton University sociologist and member of the New York Intellectuals, on the “pathologies of Jewish life.” Walzer describes “the sense that ‘all the world is against us,’ the resulting fear, resentment, and hatred of the *goy*, the secret dreams of reversal and triumph.”<sup>110</sup> These emotions were quite apparent in Jewish activities on behalf of blacks after World War II. Walzer himself orga-

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<sup>107</sup> See *The Culture of Critique*, Preface to the first paperback edition and chapter 7.

<sup>108</sup> Diner 1998, 33.

<sup>109</sup> *Separation and its Discontents*, ch. 6; 2003a.

<sup>110</sup> Walzer 1994, 6–7.

nized picketing at stores whose Southern branches practiced segregation and marched in the protests of the 1960s; he was also a major donor to the civil rights movement of the 1960s.<sup>111</sup> He notes that Jews involved in the civil rights movement were not leftists who happened to be Jews:

In the civil rights movement, we were emphatically Jewish leftists. Our personal identities, self-knowledge, understanding of our own past, and, most important, our deepest feelings were more engaged in this fight than in any of [the other leftist causes].... We had our own memories of Passover seders [and its theme of Jews as slaves], and we could quote the prophets and tell stories of Jewish persecution. Southern sheriffs with dogs looked to us like Cossacks...or Nazis. Things that we didn't think about and didn't talk about in the other movements came easily to mind and tongue in this one. We surprised ourselves with the extent of our identification: of American blacks as Jews, of ourselves as blacks. Civil rights, we thought, was our fight.<sup>112</sup>

Jewish motivation in the black-Jewish alliance must also be seen within the general context of Jewish involvement on the left, a topic I have discussed extensively elsewhere.<sup>113</sup> The following summarizes this discussion:

1. Jews benefited directly from leftist activity by improving their economic situation, as in the black-Jewish alliance, where there were challenges to discrimination in hiring and housing. In Eastern Europe, a great many Jews were impoverished, and Jews benefited from the Bolshevik Revolution because it ended anti-Jewish practices of the government. In their early decades in the US, Jews involved in the labor movement fought for better economic conditions for Jewish workers.

2. Jews were different from others in the labor movement be-

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<sup>111</sup> Friedman 1995, 180–81, 232.

<sup>112</sup> Walzer 1997, 402–403. The second ellipsis is in the original. As someone who spent considerable time with Jewish radicals in the 1960s, I can attest to the intense, emotionally charged hatred of Jewish activists toward segregation and other manifestations of white power during the period. I discuss my experiences among Jewish radicals in Endnote 83 of *The Culture of Critique*.

<sup>113</sup> *The Culture of Critique*, 79–96.



cause of their intense hatred toward the entire social order, which they viewed as anti-Jewish, and the expression of an alien people and culture. This hatred did not change after they achieved upward social mobility in the United States. For example, sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset described typical Jewish “families which around the breakfast table, day after day, in Scarsdale, Newton, Great Neck, and Beverly Hills have discussed what an awful, corrupt, immoral, undemocratic, racist society the United States is.”<sup>114</sup> For many Jewish New Leftists “the revolution promises to avenge the sufferings and to right the wrongs which have, for so long, been inflicted on Jews with the permission or encouragement, or even at the command of, the authorities in prerevolutionary societies.”<sup>115</sup> Interviews with New Left Jewish radicals have shown that many had destructive fantasies in which the revolution would result in “humiliation, dispossession, imprisonment or execution of the oppressors”<sup>116</sup> combined with the belief in their own omnipotence and their ability to create a nonoppressive social order.

3. As noted above, several commentators have remarked that Jews involved in the alliance with blacks saw themselves as altruists and as expressing a universalist ethic deeply embedded in Jewish tradition. In general, studies of Jewish radicals by Jewish social scientists have tended to gratuitously attribute Jewish radicalism to a “free choice of a gifted minority”<sup>117</sup> when economic explanations failed. Leftist ideology did indeed provide a veneer of universalism, but closer examination of Jewish radicals reveals that the great majority had very strong identities as Jews and left the movement when it was seen as compromising Jewish interests. Jewish activists often had a great deal of self-deception regarding their own Jewish commitments. Leftist universalism provided a critique of institutions that promote group ties among non-Jews (such as nationalism and traditional Christian religious associations), while Jews themselves continued to retain a powerful sense of group identity. Jews mouthed universalist sentiments while erecting subtle barriers between themselves and non-Jews:

[Non-Jewish intellectuals] really are not totally accepted into

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<sup>114</sup> Lipset 1988, 393.

<sup>115</sup> Cohen 1980, 208.

<sup>116</sup> Cohen 1980, 208.

<sup>117</sup> Rothman and Lichter 1982, 118.

even the secularist humanist liberal company of their quondam Jewish friends. Jews continue to insist in indirect and often inexplicable ways on their own uniqueness. Jewish universalism in relations between Jews and non-Jews has an empty ring.... Still, we have the anomaly of Jewish secularists and atheists writing their own prayer books. We find Jewish political reformers breaking with their local parties which stress an ethnic style of politics, and ostensibly pressing for universal political goals—while organizing their own political clubs which are so Jewish in style and manner that non-Jews often feel unwelcome.<sup>118</sup>

4. Leftist political movements recreated the psychological atmosphere of traditional Jewish society: a strong sense of ingroup pride and moral superiority, messianic fervor aimed at a utopian future, ingroup/outgroup thinking, hierarchical social structure, and exclusion of dissenters.

The above comments apply to the Eastern European immigrants and their descendants who came to dominate the American Jewish community after World War II rather than to the German Jewish elite of the previous era. The motivations of the German Jewish elite certainly contained elements of these characteristics. However, Hasia Diner's review of the German Jewish media of the period shows that they were far more concerned about forms of discrimination against blacks that could also impact Jews, such as restrictive housing covenants, than they were about forms that only applied to blacks, such as segregated public transportation.<sup>119</sup> Their strategy was essentially aimed at securing civil rights via the legal system rather than through the confrontational style that emerged after World War II. Although they undoubtedly had a sense of social marginality and feeling of estrangement from American culture—virtually a defining characteristic of being a Jew<sup>120</sup>—one does not see the intense hatred of the entire non-Jewish social order among them. Political radicalism and Zionism—the twin pillars of the Eastern European Jewish subculture that have had such enormous effects on the modern world—were not characteristic of this group. As an elite, their main concern was to eradicate the civil disabilities that, in their view,

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<sup>118</sup> Liebman 1973, 158.

<sup>119</sup> Diner 1977/1995, 100.

<sup>120</sup> See *Separation and its Discontents*, ch. 1.

limited the horizons of both blacks and Jews.

### CONCLUSION

Jews have been the backbone of the left in the United States since early in the century, when the huge wave of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe was at its crest. At least since the 1940s, the black-Jewish alliance has been an important part of the Jewish involvement on the left. In the present era, the rise of Jewish neoconservatism (which accepts the basic principles of the left on racial issues), the anti-Jewish and pro-Palestinian statements of some black activists, and relatively commonplace anti-Jewish attitudes in the black community have not really changed this substantially. I suggest that this is because at a fundamental level the entire Jewish political spectrum, from left/liberal to neoconservative right, continues to view the political and cultural hegemony of white Europeans with hostility and suspicion. Attitudes on immigration are an excellent indication of this. Immigration has already altered the demographics of voting in the US, and it will result increasingly in the eclipse of the white political and culture power in the foreseeable future. Jews are united in favor of this result.

Jewish activism played an essential and critical role in the revolution in ethnic relations that has occurred in the last fifty years in the US. It is a revolution that in its major premises has also been internalized by a large portion of the whites in the US and other Western countries, particularly by the white elite, who have made alliances with Jews and other components of the multiethnic elites. It remains to be seen what the long-term consequences of this revolution will be and whether, in particular, whites will attempt to retain and expand their political and cultural power in the US and other traditionally Western societies. It should be remembered that there is nothing in the nature of Judaism itself that would imply that the Jewish community would inevitably oppose being a minority in a racially hierarchical society dominated by whites. Jews have often participated in such societies, either as active supporters of the domination of another racial group or at least as passive but willing participants in such a system. One possibility is that Jews might alter their political behavior in this direction as the negative effects of Third World immigration, especially from Muslim countries, begin to take their toll on Jewish sensibilities.<sup>121</sup> Perhaps the neoconservative movement represents the first stirrings of this direction for the Jewish community, although, as it is presently constructed, it remains

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<sup>121</sup> Steinlight (2001) makes this argument. However, to date Jewish organizations have not changed their pro-immigration policies.

opposed to the ethnic interests of European Americans.