

AFRICAN AMERICANS, AMERICAN JEWS, AND THE HOLOCAUST

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African Americans and Jewish Americans have together journeyed a long, twisted path of enmities and empathies. Jews who currently oppose black goals as well as those who bemoan the dissolution of the civil rights alliance each have their antecedents to emulate, much as anti-Semitic African Americans and blacks who decry such prejudice each have their precedents to employ. Their joint, disjointed history points in no single direction. Today the media trumpet the views of African Americans praising Adolf Hitler or those claiming for themselves a greater victimization than that suffered by Jews during what we now call the Holocaust.¹ Today Jews loudly condemn blacks for trivializing the Holocaust, for not recognizing its uniqueness. Little is heard of the 1930s and 1940s, a time when there was more black anti-Semitism and more Jewish racism among the mass of blacks and Jews as there is now, yet when leaders of both communities, despite being shaped by different historical and personal experiences, sought to make common cause against the common enemy of intolerance and hatred. Both saw themselves as objects of persecution and each other as means to ends. As opportunistic as they were dissimilar, they developed an organizational alliance to achieve acceptance and equality of opportunity in American society.²

Nazi and Fascist anti-Semitism in the 1930s, and especially the horrors of the Holocaust, proved central to that development and the coming of age of the modern civil rights movement. Jews became more sensitive to cries of injustice, more ready for alliances with other underdogs. News of the Holocaust also made some other Americans uneasy or guilty about their own

racist beliefs and practices. And all the condemnations of Hitlerism by American government officials and shapers of public opinion, all the Allied talk of fighting a war against doctrines of racial superiority, fueled the righteous insistence of African Americans to end racism in the United States. African American leaders, particularly in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), used Hitlerism and the Holocaust to generate concern for the plight of blacks and support for the cause of civil rights. They repeatedly pointed to what was happening to European Jewry as a means of advancing their own domestic agenda. They established an analogy between racial practices in Nazi Germany and those in the Jim Crow South to clarify and dramatize the nature of American racism to their fellow Americans. By linking the odious Nazism with Jim Crowism, these African Americans sought to make racial discrimination and segregation similarly anathema and to convince the white majority of the justness of their cause.³

Benito Mussolini helped them considerably. Regarding Africans as “inferior beings” and seeing himself as defending “western civilization against the colored races,” Il Duce’s forces attacked Ethiopia in October 1935, slaughtering defenseless children and women in the country many African Americans regarded as the “Black Zion.” Mussolini then issued a Manifesto of Fascist Racism declaring theories of racial equality “absolutely inadmissible,” branding the so-called Semitic and Hamitic (that is, black) races as inherently inferior, and insisting that the purity of the blood of the superior white race not be polluted by miscegenation with blacks or Jews. The Italian Ministry for Africa claimed proudly: “Italy is the first European nation to uphold the universal principle of the superiority of the white race.”⁴

If not quite first, Hitler and the Nazis went even further to avoid “racial contamination” by inferiors. Coming to power in 1933, they used the power of the state and their own paramilitary organizations to assault German Jews, boycott their businesses, and discriminate against them. Then the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor and the Third Reich Citizenship Law (the Nuremberg Laws of September 1935) defined Jews by ancestry rather than religion, outlawed marriages and sexual intercourse between Jews and non-Jews, stripped Jews of most rights of German citizenship, and increased earlier restrictions on Jews in all spheres of German educational, social, and economic life. The Nazi government also established an Office for Racial Policy to see that the master race of Aryans was not contaminated by racial inferiors; and, on November 9–10, 1938, unleashed *Kristallnacht* (Night of the Broken Glass), a pogrom of arson, destruction, and looting against Jews. Following the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, Hitler au-

thorized the creation of *Einsatzgruppen* (special mobile units) to accompany the German army and execute Jews. By year's end they had systematically murdered more than half a million "racial inferiors" in occupied Russia. By then, as well, the Nazis had begun to experiment at Chelmno in Poland with mass executions carried out by means of gas. In January 1942 Nazi officials met at Lake Wannsee, near Berlin, to coordinate the *Endlösung*, the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question." The gassing of prisoners at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Majdanek, Sobibor, and Treblinka now became a round-the-clock phenomenon, murdering more than three million people, mostly Jews. Not till the approach of the Soviet armies from the east did the Nazis abandon their Polish "death camps" and march the surviving Jewish, Gypsy, Jehovah's Witnesses, Serb, homosexual, and other "antisocial" prisoners to concentration camps in Germany, where millions more died of disease, exposure, and starvation en route to and in Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Dachau, Mauthausen, Nordhausen, and Sachsenhausen. It was the ultimate triumph of racism in practice.⁵

As soon as Hitler and the Nazis began their harassment of German Jewry, African American newspapers began highlighting the similarities of discriminations and oppressions in the United States and in Germany. Most of their editorials prior to 1936, however, were not at all sympathetic to the plight of German Jewry. The Great Depression engendered enormous anti-Semitism in the United States—by whites and blacks. Well over a hundred new anti-Semitic organizations were established in the second half of the 1930s alone, compared to just fourteen between 1915 and 1933. Indeed, throughout the 1930s and World War II most Americans were neither deeply touched nor troubled by the news about Jews coming out of Europe. A majority believed that Nazi persecution of the German Jews was either partly or entirely the Jews' own fault—their being too powerful, their running the economy, their being too radical. Few considered the plight of European Jewry their plight too. Until May 1945 many remained unaware, did not care, or thought the killing of European Jews a Jewish problem for Jews to solve. Most African Americans, accepting the dominant culture's values and prejudices concerning Jews, followed suit. An amalgam of religious folk beliefs and economic woes compounded their antipathy. Like many Germans and white Christian Americans, blacks viewed Jews as infidels, usurers, Christ-killers. Moreover, to the average African American tenant the Jew was the landlord, to the black worker he was the boss, to the black customer the Jew was the shopkeeper, and to the black domestic the Jew was the stingy woman whose house she cleaned. Still others condemned Jewish organizations in the United States for

being blind to American racism, resented the attention paid to German Jewry while the plight of African Americans went ignored, and feared that a focus on anti-Semitism drew energy away from the struggle against Jim Crow.

Anti-Semitism also allowed African Americans to give vent to pent-up hostilities and indulge a sense of imaginary superiority. Thus, the *Philadelphia Tribune* warned its readers that “most of what is told about Jewish treatment in Germany is propaganda since the Jews control to a great extent the international press” and opined that to “be a Jew in Germany is hell,” but “to be a Negro in America is twice as bad.” The *New York Age* added: “If the Jewish merchants in Germany treated German workers as Blumsteins treat the people of Harlem, then Hitler is right.” Not surprisingly, in September 1933, W. E. B. Du Bois responded with what he called “unholy glee” to the treatment of Jews by his beloved Germans: “When the only ‘inferior’ peoples were ‘niggers’ it was hard to get the attention of *The New York Times* for little matters of race, lynching and mobs. But now that the damned included the owner of the *Times*, moral indignation is perking up.”⁶

More explicitly anti-Semitic than Du Bois were the black nationalist “don’t buy where you can’t work” campaigns. Marcus Garvey and Carlos Cooks, the leader of the neo-Garveyite African Nationalist Pioneer Movement, blamed the Jews, as lovers of money, for their own persecution. Sufi Abdul Hamid (labeled “a black Hitler” by Adam Clayton Powell Jr.), became a regular fixture on Harlem street corners in the 1930s, fulminating against Jewish merchants and employers while sporting a Nazi-like uniform. The Negro tabloid *Dynamite* declared: “What America needs is a Hitler and what the Chicago Black Belt needs is a purge of the exploiting Jew.” In Baltimore, at an African American forum on Germany’s treatment of the Jews, the audience burst into applause when a speaker praised Hitler’s actions. And when Harlemites rioted in 1935, and then again in 1943, Jewish merchants were the chief target of their wrath.⁷

Indeed, much of the black press initially put the onus of Nazism on the Jews themselves, claimed that German Jewry suffered less than African Americans, argued against aiding Hitler’s victims since Jews did not assist blacks, and, most emphatically, emphasized the hypocrisy of those denouncing Germany’s treatment of Jews but not the oppression of blacks in the United States. Because Jews would not hire Negroes in their stores, opined the *Baltimore Afro-American*, in those stores “you will find Hitlerism in its most blatant form exercised by those who are being Hitlerized in Germany.” American Jews, wrote the *St. Louis Argus*, use “the same tactics and methods to persecute and discriminate against Negroes” that Hitler uses

against German Jews. "Why shed crocodile tears over the fate of the Jews in Berlin when here in America we treat black folk in the same manner every day?" the *Oklahoma City Black Dispatch* asked. "Why the comparison is so definite and clear," it added, "we are almost wont to feel Germans secured the pattern of Nazi violence visited upon the Jews from white America." The *Cincinnati Union* had no doubt that in segregating Jews Germany was "taking a leaf from the book of many American cities." Complaining that African Americans had to endure greater persecution "under American Hitlers," the *Amsterdam News* sneered at those rallying to save Europe's Jews "while Negroes were lynched, beaten and burned." "Just how we can charge and snort about Fascism abroad and practice it here" disgusted the *Des Moines Iowa Bystander*. The *Louisiana Weekly* insisted that, given the racism in the United States, Germany had "a right to look askance at any criticism leveled at its persecution of unfavored people." "We're tired of reading our favorite dallies and their editorials about Hitler and his Nazis," the *New York Age* chimed in: "It's about time that the papers stayed out of the internal affairs of other nations and that they help the United States first sweep its own doors clean." All too commonly in the 1930s, Chandler Owen summed up, Negroes could be heard saying "well, Hitler did one good thing: he put these Jews in their place."⁸

The black nationalist J. A. Rogers and the scholarly Kelly Miller reiterated these views in newspaper column after column. So did conservative George Schuyler. Traveling in Mississippi in 1935, Schuyler found "that Negroes of all classes from peons to planters are quite unconcerned about either the spread of fascism or the fate of the Jews. Indeed I am not at all exaggerating when I state that a surprising number of articulate Negroes seem to derive a sort of 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. . . . They cannot see why, they contend, that under the circumstances they should get excited about the fate of German Jews." Neither did Schuyler. He remained indignant that the American press paid more attention to the persecution of German Jews than to the lynchings of Negroes and wrote in the *Courier*: "I would be able to wail a lot louder and deeper if American Jews would give more concrete evidence of being touched by the plight of Negroes. . . . If my Hebrew friends were only as quick to employ capable Negroes as they are other people and did not get so excited when a decent family moves in their districts, I could pray even harder for Hitler to let up on them." Adam Clayton Powell Jr. concurred. He termed Jewish merchants "the criminals of Harlem," and challenged "Jews to stop

crying over German Jews and get an anti-lynch law passed.” In response to an appeal from the Central Conference of American Rabbis for a “reconciliation of the proverbial friendship of our two peoples,” he retorted that Negro anti-Semitism was regrettable “but the Jew himself was its author.” And criticizing President Franklin Roosevelt’s decision to admit some additional Jewish refugees in 1938, Powell complained that as soon as they “were off the boat most of them would settle in the Bronx Alps” and take the jobs that Negroes deserved to have.⁹

Various officials of the NAACP echoed such sentiments. Roy Wilkins thought that Jews were paying too much attention to “exaggerated charges of Nazi persecution and not enough to persecuted Negroes,” and that the government was doing too much to help European Jews instead of African Americans. “Our sometimes friends,” Wilkins said of Jews, “ask us to fight Nazism.” But too many Jews, he continued, “never gave a dollar bill to fight lynching or break down prejudice in employment.” Walter White, the NAACP’s executive secretary, privately considered African American anti-Semitism “legitimate,” a justified response to Jewish exploitation of and discrimination against blacks. He chided Jews for “doing to Negroes what they object to others doing to them.” He denied the notion that the increasingly prosperous and prominent Jews were “in the same boat” as the poor, isolated Negroes. And he scorned those who protested against Hitlerism but failed to demand that the United States first end its own persecution of minorities. As late as December 1948, in a letter to a friend, White reiterated that Jewish merchants cheat blacks, that Jewish-owned theaters segregate them, that Jews in Hollywood stereotype African Americans, and that Jews contribute charitably only to atone for their anti-Negro prejudices. White ended the letter with a reminder that he had been candid because the correspondence was private: “I would not want to say such things publicly.”¹⁰

Publicly, White and the NAACP expressed dramatically opposite views. Almost from the very start of Hitler’s persecution of German Jews, when the Association was virtually alone in the black community in supporting campaigns to boycott German goods and the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, the NAACP focused on the plight of the Jews as a way of drawing attention to racial practices in the American South. The “unholy glee” of Du Bois lost out to the strategy enunciated in 1933 by William Pickens that the NAACP use a condemnation of Hitlerism to condemn Jim Crow, draw an analogy between the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazi Party, and demand of the American people whether or not they favor maintaining racial practices in the South just like Hitler’s racist practices in Germany. Official NAACP resolutions and editori-

als in the NAACP's *The Crisis* as early as mid-1933 denounced the vicious prejudice directed against Jews by Hitler and equated Nazism with American racism, intending that those who abhorred the former would detest the latter. Pickens hoped that Americans would not favor maintaining racial practices at home that were just like Nazism. Added Walter White: the NAACP needs "to utilize the present and wise concern over anti-Semitism to call attention more vigorously than ever before to bigotry against the Negro here."¹¹

Accusing the Nazis of "barbarism" over and again in the 1930s, White publicly expressed "wholehearted contempt for, and condemnation of, the unspeakable terror now being inflicted upon the Jewish people in Germany by the sadistic Nazi government." Again and again he pointed to developments in Germany to fortify his case for abolishing racial discrimination in the United States. To arouse opposition to Jim Crow he emphasized the fundamental similarity between racial practices in both countries, scorned the "counterpart of Hitlerism existing in the United States," and called upon all Americans, especially minorities, to fight fascism abroad and atrocities at home. "We Negroes know what this means since it has happened to us," White said of *Kristallnacht*, "what happens to one minority can happen to others—a lesson which Jews, Negroes, and all minorities must learn." While frequently associating himself and the NAACP with those protesting Hitler's treatment of the Jews, White never ceased equating Nazi anti-Semitism with American racism, with demands that Americans "clean up our own backyard." When New York City Mayor LaGuardia called for a protest rally at Carnegie Hall to denounce Hitler's persecution of Jews, White telegraphed him and the announced participants about the upsurge of lynchings against blacks, expressing his hope "you and other speakers will stress need of simultaneous American action to wipe out bigotry or racial hatred no matter who are the victims nor where such bigotry and oppression exist, including our own country." He publicly mocked Senator William King of Utah for failing to support antilynching legislation while wanting the United States to sever relations with Germany to protest Nazi atrocities. And concerning the admission of Jewish refugees, White wrote Secretary of State Cordell Hull that the NAACP shared the President's "reported indignation at the outrages being perpetrated upon minorities by the Nazi government. But we would be even more enthusiastic if our government could be equally indignant at the lynching, burning alive, and torture with blowtorches of American citizens by American mobs on American soil which have shamed America before the world for a much longer time than persecution under Adolf Hitler."¹²

Resolutions adopted at the NAACP annual conferences throughout the decade mirrored White's efforts to equate the oppression of Jews and African Americans and to use events in Europe to change public attitudes in the United States. Numerous articles and editorials in *The Crisis* did so as well. Far more than most non-Jewish publications, *The Crisis* forthrightly expressed "profound and poignant sympathy" for the plight of European Jewry, as well as claiming that blacks felt that way more than most Americans because "they have known the same type of persecution ever since the beginning of America," because "Negroes are persecuted here in much the same manner that 'non-Aryans' are persecuted in Central Europe." Both are "segregated, humiliated, and terrorized." African American "feelings go out to the Jews. They know what Hitler means because they have known slave overseers, plantation riding bosses, high sheriffs." And: "Maybe some day we will see that until a Negro can freely study medicine at, say, the University of Michigan, we cannot make a convincing argument as to why Jews should be permitted to study at Heidelberg; or that until we stamp out the rope and the faggot as amusements for sections of our population, we cannot make a good case against the cruelties of Storm Troopers." And: "The tales of humiliation, terror and cruelty have a familiar ring to us. We know all about being driven off the streets, having our women kicked and beaten, being barred from public places, being at the mercy of hoodlums and bloodthirsty mobs, having 'scientists' prove us something less than human, being restricted in employment and residence, having separate schools set up for us, having our youth put on a quota basis in colleges and universities, and hearing and reading violent tirades against our race." And: "The only essential difference between a Nazi mob hunting down Jews in Central Europe and an American mob burning black men at the stake in Mississippi is that one is actually encouraged by its national government and the other is merely tolerated." Thus, to highlight the harms done by American racism *The Crisis* spotlighted Nazi terrorism. And, by emphasizing the shared oppression of Jews and African Americans, *The Crisis* message, explicitly and implicitly, was that minorities must "unite to fight the spread of Hitlerism."¹³

To underscore that tenet, *The Crisis* published numerous articles in the 1930s by prominent American Jews. Most, like Rabbi Stephen S. Wise's address to the 1934 NAACP Annual Meeting, centered on the common plight of the two minorities. A series by Jacob J. Weinstein spelled out the need for the two to work together against discrimination and prejudice in the United States. And to illustrate that they had done just that in the past, another series featured rabbis who had championed the cause of freedom and citizen-

ship for black slaves, Jewish abolitionists, and Jews who fought alongside John Brown in Kansas. It concluded: "Jews and Negroes, because they often face identical problems and because they embrace a common destiny as victims of prejudice and bigotry," should therefore stand together—"the struggle for racial equality is indivisible." *The Crisis* also made the argument for an African American–Jewish American alliance by reprinting editorials from the Jewish press that called upon Jews to shed their racist prejudices and to fight with blacks for their common goals. In "We Must Stand Together," the *Jewish Frontier* acknowledged the need for African Americans to give voice to their own grievances while condemning German anti-Semitism, and emphasized that Jews and blacks should struggle together against racial discrimination and bigotry. Likewise, *The Reconstructionist* proclaimed that now was the time for blacks to insist that the United States put its "own house in order and wipe out every last vestige of anti-Negro discrimination," and that "If the injustices inflicted upon Jews in Germany will arouse the conscience of America to do justice to the Negro racial minority, it will be some consolation to us Jews." The Jewish editorial concluded: "Both self-interest and our holiest traditions demand our making common cause with the Negro in his fight for equality."¹⁴

Despite the widespread prejudices among the masses of both African Americans and American Jews, opposition to Hitlerism by their leaderships, to help their own causes, had begun to forge a commonality of purpose. Especially in New York City, which had large communities of blacks and Jews and was home to most of the major betterment and rights organizations of both groups, a common agenda emerged. The *American Hebrew* newspaper asked, "If Mussolini's fascism and Hitler's Nazism can join forces, why shouldn't their joint victims, Negroes and Jews ally to fight them?" And no less than the NAACP, National Urban League director Lester Granger, and the League's journal, *Opportunity*, answered affirmatively for such an alliance to "erase the shadow of the Swastika from our land." Utilizing the same analogies and arguments as the NAACP, the NUL condemned Nazi actions against German Jews while emphasizing the similarity of oppression of Jews and African Americans. Never failing to remind its readers that racial prejudice was just as sordid and cruel when directed against Mississippi blacks as against German Jews, the League also condemned black anti-Semitism, urging African Americans to combat it wherever it appeared.¹⁵

So did many other African American community leaders. Adam Clayton Powell Jr. was among those who took the lead in fighting anti-Semitism. He announced that the same psychology underlay prejudice against blacks and

Jews and that Hitler's persecution of Jewry and the plight of African Americans were inextricably intertwined. And he called repeatedly for a black-Jewish alliance "to stop Fascism." Ralph Bunche similarly assailed black anti-Semitism while stressing that the problems of both Jews and African Americans, "their grievances and their fears are cut to a common pattern." Many followed in linking Hitler's actions with the need for Jews and blacks to, in William Pickens phrase, "stand with unbroken ranks side by side."¹⁶

To underscore its necessity and the similarity of persecution, African Americans took to labeling racism in the United States as just a variant of Hitlerism. The *Baltimore Afro-American* termed the white South and Nazi Germany as "mental brothers," the oppression of blacks as "American Nazism," and the exclusion of African Americans from a college as "Nazis at Williams." "From the way Hitler talks," it editorialized, "one would think he is a member of the Ku Klux Klan and a native of Alabama." Indeed, the *Afro-American* christened Hitler as the Imperial Wizard of the German Ku Klux Klan, and columnist Kelly Miller termed him "the master Ku Kluxer of Germany."

Numerous editorial cartoons depicted Hitler as a Klansman and Klansmen as wearing swastikas, much as Nazis were transformed into "Crackers" and southern racists into Nazis (different names, said the *Afro-American*, but the "same result"). In like manner, the *Amsterdam News* called the exclusion of blacks from the major leagues "Nazism in Baseball," racial segregation as "Nazism in America," and the refusal of the Daughters of the American Revolution to permit Marian Anderson to sing in Constitution Hall as "Nazism in Washington." Lynch mobs, added *The Crisis*, were storm troopers; terrorist attacks on Negroes who sought to vote in Brownsville, Tennessee, the "work of Himmler's Gestapo;" and such terms as "Gestapo in Memphis," "the Himmler of the U.S.A.," and "Fuehrer Crump" were the way a *Crisis* writer referred to the police of Memphis, its police chief, and mayor. Despite the estrangement between the mass of African Americans and the mass of American Jews, despite the disparity of their progress into the American mainstream, their mutual identification as victims of discrimination and oppression now held sway. As Scottsboro lawyer Samuel Leibowitz exclaimed to a Harlem Elk's Convention, in urging them to reject anti-Semitism: "Both of us, Negroes and Jews are in the same boat together."¹⁷

Once the war in Europe began, censorship in Germany and the lands it occupied, as well as its desire to keep its mass murder of Jews secret, brought a diminution in news of Nazi persecution in both the Negro press and mainstream American press. But what was known, however fragmentary and piecemeal, caused some African American organizations and periodicals to

increase their efforts to place the black struggle for justice and equality in an international context and to solidify the emerging leadership alliance of Jews and African Americans. Even more than in the 1930s, *The Crisis* employed the imagery of odious Nazism to call attention to American racism, to convince the white majority of the justness of the NAACP's reform cause. Segregation in the armed forces was "America's Mein Kampf," violence against black servicemen was Hitlerism or the work of "cracker Fascists," anti-black rioters in Detroit were referred to as "Nazi-minded mobsters," and, almost without fail, Mississippi's white supremacist Senators Bilbo and Eastland were labeled "America's Hitler and Goebbels." Similarly, the Urban League's *Opportunity* entitled an article on Governor Eugene Talmadge "A Georgia Hitler." More than a year after the war ended *The Crisis* continued to describe the KKK as Nazis and to accuse it of trying to build "an American *Volkstaat*." The monthly kept labeling white supremacists as fascists or Nazis, and described violence against African Americans as "Southern *Schrecklichkeit*."¹⁸

Knowing well the claim of the *Amsterdam News* in 1942 that "there never has been such general anti-Semitic sentiment in Harlem as exists right now," and the 1943 warning of the *Pittsburgh Courier* of "the dangerous and disastrous spread of anti-Semitism among Negroes," those African Americans engaged in the wartime crusade for civil rights nevertheless sought to exorcise prejudice against Jews. Describing anti-Semitism in the United States as "doing Hitler's work here at home," *The Crisis* observed that anti-Semitic actions in Boston and New York seemed "like something out of Berlin and Warsaw." The cause of each minority is the cause of all minorities, it continued, and "every beating of a Jewish child is an invitation to the lyncher of Negroes." At its 1944 annual conference, the NAACP adopted a resolution to eliminate anti-Semitism among Negroes. Among other prominent African Americans, Langston Hughes, Paul Robeson and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. concurred with Walter White's assertions that anti-Semitism and racism are the same kinds of bigotry, and that blacks indulging in anti-Semitism are playing Hitler's game. So did the Urban League, which established volunteer Service Councils to better relations between blacks and Jews." No Negro is secure from intolerance and race prejudice," summed up A. Philip Randolph at a Madison Square Garden rally of the March-on-Washington Movement, "as long as one Jew is a victim of anti-Semitism."¹⁹

Shortly after the United States entered the war, the NAACP Board of Directors pledged "its unqualified and unlimited effort on behalf of the persecuted Jews of the world, which includes anti-Semitism in the United States as well as slaughter in Poland." Little more was said or done for almost a year,

until December 1942 when a delegation of representatives from major Jewish organizations submitted a memorandum to President Franklin Roosevelt on the deliberate, systematic annihilation of European Jewry. Using the information supplied by the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Congress (AJC) publicized news of the Holocaust and communicated hurriedly with the NAACP concerning it. As Rabbi Stephen Wise wrote Walter White in mid-December, there will be no Jews left in Europe at the end of the war unless the NAACP "associate itself with the action to prevent Hitler from accomplishing his purposes." At its next meeting, the NAACP Board adopted a resolution that it stands "appalled at the cold-blooded campaign of extermination of the Jews," and that it will do whatever it could to end this slaughter. Thereafter, White and other prominent African Americans joined with major labor, religious, and liberal spokesmen at emergency conferences to save the Jews of Europe and appealed for action to stop the extermination of the Jews. They pledged "to do whatever we can to help rescue Jews from the clutches," knowing, as White wrote the AJC that "if Jews can be slaughtered today," Negroes will be tomorrow. And they contributed financially toward the relief of Jews overseas, knowing, in Lester Granger's words, its importance "as another means of building goodwill between American Negroes and their fellow-citizens of Jewish faith."²⁰

As the Holocaust intensified the insecurity felt by African American and American Jewish leaders, both reached out to the other. Jewish publications featured articles by and about African Americans. Editorials in the Jewish press, like "Defend the Negro," sent by the Independent Jewish Press Service to all its subscriber newspapers, made the case for the civil rights of blacks. Numerous essayists stressed the commonality of African American and Jewish needs and goals, as did editorial cartoons, such as the *Jewish Survey's* "Help Wanted—No Negroes, No Jews." That magazine similarly featured a picture of a Negro and a Jewish soldier, arms intertwined, in the battle against Nazism. Also in 1942, the Central Conference of American Rabbis began to adopt annual resolutions deploring discrimination against blacks and promising support in the struggle for black equality. In 1942 it issued a "Justice for Negroes" message calling upon Jews, "who ourselves have been victims of injustice," to combat African American inequities. American rabbis then inaugurated an annual "Race Relations Sabbath." The Bronx Rabbinic Council joined with the National Council of Jewish Women to campaign for the fair treatment of Negro domestics. American Jewish Congress youth groups sponsored interracial forums and prepared petitions protesting racial discrimination. Numerous Jewish and black organizations featured speakers

from the other race. Interracial Committees, Councils Against Intolerance in America, and Committees for Racial and Religious Understanding, largely composed of Jews and African Americans, became ubiquitous.²¹

Both black and Jewish leaders endorsed what Louis Reddick called “the establishment of an all out alliance.” W. H. Jernigin, national chairman of the Fraternal Council of Negro Churches, urged African Americans and Jews “to unite in a common cause against Hitlerism,” striking hard and quickly against racial and religious discrimination. So did the editors of the *Jewish Forward* and the *Jewish Survey*, arguing that “both their fates were becoming inextricably intertwined” and they needed to overcome their mutual oppressors. Jointly discussing the possibility of alliance, Rabbi Lou Silberman and Walter White agreed on the necessity of blacks and Jews pooling “our intelligence and idealism not only to defeat the Hitlers and the Rankins of the world, but to root out the prejudices from our own hearts.” And in addresses to the NAACP, an American Jewish Congress officer described how the fate of Jews and African Americans “dovetailed,” requiring that they work together to challenge their common oppressors.²²

In 1944 the American Jewish Congress established a Commission on Community Interrelations, under social psychologist Kurt Lewin, to eliminate conflict between minority groups. It worked with the NAACP, as did the AJC’s Commission on Law and Legislation (changed to Commission on Law and Social Action in November 1945). Headed by Will Maslow, the Commission on Law and Social Action combated discrimination in employment, education, and housing against blacks as well as Jews. By so doing, by seeking to promote civil rights for all minorities, Rabbi Wise wrote the NAACP’s Thurgood Marshall, the fight against anti-Semitism is bound up “with the fight for the status and rights of all minority groups in this country.” Thus, the 1945 platform of the AJC, “Full Equality in a Free Society,” promised Negroes “that in all the causes for which they struggle they can count upon finding the Jews and the American Jewish Congress on the side of justice.” Morality and self-interest had intersected. A marriage of convenience, said Will Maslow: “It was in our interest to help them. We had the staff, the money and the political muscle to do it.”²³

Convinced that they had a common enemy in Nazism, both at home and abroad, the NAACP also forged bonds with the more conservative American Jewish Committee and Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith. Previously concerned solely with anti-Semitism and the threat to Jews, such groups now redefined their mission to creating a more pluralistic and egalitarian society for all, and reached out to work with the National Association of Colored Women,

the National Council of Negro Women, the Urban League and others. Together they promoted a liberal, reformist creed of equality. Believing that justice and social acceptance would come shortly after the war's end, they concentrated on appeals to conscience and on the political process, abjuring mass pressure tactics. Far more than any comparable groups, they overwhelmingly voted Democratic. They joined in testifying before legislative committees for anti-discrimination and anti-KKK laws, as well as for higher quotas for Jewish refugees. Along with other Jewish and African American organizations they collaborated on celebrating diversity and inclusion, urging Hollywood to end degrading stereotypes, seeking to analyze and cure prejudice, mobilizing public opinion against intolerance, lobbying in favor of the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, campaigning for civil rights legislation, especially a permanent Fair Employment Practices Committee, and challenging discrimination in the law. Well before the Supreme Court's *Brown* decision in 1954, every single major Jewish civic organization had filed friends of the court briefs in behalf of the NAACP's suit to end segregation in public education. This was the "democracy, liberalism, and freedom" that A. Philip Randolph lauded as the enemies of anti-Semitism and "the hopes of the Negro."²⁴

The Holocaust had both frightened Jews and blacks into a defensive alliance and emboldened them to capitalize on the revulsion and guilt engendered by Nazism's horrors. The descriptions by Private John Stribling Jr. in the *Chicago Defender*, among many others, of the "horrible odor of burned human flesh," of "naked human bodies piled on top of each other," of "bodies dissected for human experimentation," of prisoners "blind, crippled, and half-insane, they could barely walk," brought increased sympathy for Jews and decreased "respectability" for racism. The shocking photographs and newsreels of corpses stacked like cordwood, of boxcars heaped with the bones of dead prisoners, of bulldozers shoving emaciated bodies into hastily dug ditches, of the barely alive liberated, living skeletons, lying in their own filth, their vacant, sunken eyes staring through barbed wire, proved a turning point in racial attitudes. The horror of what has occurred in its name demolishes the doctrine of racial superiority, wrote Ralph McGill in an *Atlanta Constitution* editorial; and the editor of the *Detroit Free Press*, after visiting the concentration camps, stated, "I found in the hell that once was Germany an indictment of my own beloved America." African American columnists elaborated upon this view throughout the year. Moreover, the theme of a common oppression made its way into the songs of William Grant Still, the fiction of Chester Himes, and the scholarship of Oliver Cox. Du Bois, whose *Souls of Black Folk* had contained numerous references to Jews as sly, dishonest, and unscrupulous, omit-

ted them in a postwar edition, admitting that he “did not realize until the horrible massacre of German Jews, how even unconscious repetition of current folklore such as the concept of Jews as more guilty of exploitation than others, had helped the Hitlers of the world.” The Holocaust, and all the depravity associated with it, had revealed the logical conclusion of prejudice, and many Jewish and African American commentators now made the “we’re in the same boat” argument as justification for a civil rights alliance. “The barbaric excesses of Nazism have made it impossible to escape the full implications of racial and religious prejudice, no matter what its form,” wrote Kenneth Clarke: enlightened African Americans and Jews must pool their efforts to overcome prejudice and discrimination. Much as a letter to the editor of the *Norfolk Journal and Guide* had prophesized, or hoped, in 1934: “When history is written a hundred years from now, Adolf Hitler of Germany will be given credit for showing the world the absurdity of race prejudice.” The “Final Solution” would ultimately lead to the demise of racism being socially acceptable, intellectually justified, or legally permissible.²⁵

The magnitude of the Holocaust gave racial reformers a powerful weapon, one that became yet stronger as nonwhite nations raised the issue of race in international relations and the Soviet Union sought to exploit American racism for its own ends. Momentum for racial changes in the United States flowed from all the official condemnations of the Holocaust and official declarations in favor of nondiscrimination accompanying the creation of the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the establishment of the Commission on Human Rights and its special Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, and the UN’s adoption in 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Concurrently, the racial awareness catalyzed by the Holocaust along with the necessity of keeping the two-thirds of the world’s peoples who were nonwhite out of the Soviet orbit pushed liberal cold warriors into openly condemning racial discrimination and segregation in the United States—a process that would eventually result in the legal ending of those practices.²⁶

Of course, it was not all onward and upward, not an unbroken line of progress from barbarism and indifference to compassion and liberality. Bursts of reform and of reaction alternated. While benign neglect, in the main, characterized relations between African Americans and Jews, particularized instances of conflict often made headlines. Prominent Jews bade farewell to their former allies and embraced neoconservative policies on af-

firmative action, voting rights, and the welfare state; and a new generation of African American scholars and demagogues employed anti-Semitism as a weapon in the battle for who will speak for Black America. Each often referred to the Holocaust, in one way or another, to make its case, as both anti-Semitism and racial prejudice and discrimination proved more resilient and pervasive than reformers had presumed.²⁷

Accordingly, the lessons once learned, the impulses generated, the notion that justice and self-interest need not be opposites, become easier to forget as the Holocaust receded into the historical past. Who remembers Leon Bass? An African American in the 183rd Combat Engineer Battalion who helped bury the dead at Buchenwald, Bass consequently dedicated his remaining years to speaking out against anti-Semitism and racism. Or remembers Paul Parks? A black draftee ordered to go into Dachau as part of a burial squad, a stunned Parks wandered by the still-warm ovens and emaciated bodies until he encountered a Jewish prisoner who spoke English. Why? Why the Jews? What did they do? Nothing, said the prisoner, nothing, they were killed just because they were Jews. "I understand that," Parks slowly responded, "I understand that because I've seen people lynched just because they were black." He returned from Europe determined to make his own country a better country, becoming one of Martin Luther King's negotiators in the struggle to end racial discrimination in the South and a key leader in the effort to desegregate the public schools of Boston. Or recalls Paul Cowan's remembrance? One of the Jews who accounted for nearly two-thirds of the white volunteers who went south in 1964 for the Freedom Summer, Cowan would later write that "there was no doubt in any of our minds that we were risking our lives to achieve the very American goal of integration because our kinsmen had been slaughtered in Lithuania, Poland, and Germany." But, as James Baldwin reminds us in *Nobody Knows My Name*, too few Jews actually thought that way: "One can be disappointed in the Jew—if one is romantic enough—for not having learned from his history, but if people did learn from history, history would be very different." For African Americans as well as Jews the unlearned and forgotten haunts. "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?" Adolf Hitler spoke confidently as the Nazis prepared for the Final Solution.²⁸

NOTES

1. I use the term *Holocaust* to signify the systematic extermination of some six million European Jews by the Nazi regime. The use of the term by some to refer to

other examples of genocide, to other tragedies, to ecological disasters, and even to personal psychological pain, has led numerous Jews, and others, to prefer the Hebrew word *Shoah*. I do, too, but because most readers are more familiar with Holocaust, that is the term used in this essay for the specific Nazi effort to annihilate European Jewry.

2. Hugh Pearson, "Blacks and Jews View the Holocaust," *Wall Street Journal*, April 19, 1996; and Hasia Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915–1935* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 241–43.

3. Lunabelle Wedlock, *The Reaction of Negro Publications and Organizations to German Anti-Semitism* (Washington, D.C.: n.p., 1942), 91, 189; and Lenora Berson, *The Negroes and the Jews* (New York: Random House, 1971), 175.

4. Dennis Mack Smith, *Mussolini* (New York: Random House, 1982), 182; Paul Gordon Lauren, *Power and Prejudice, The Politics and Diplomacy of Racial Discrimination*, 2d ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996), 129–130. Various Jewish organizations associated with the Popular Front joined with black groups to support Ethiopia. See William R. Scott, *The Sons of Sheba's Race: African-Americans and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935–1941* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993) and Joseph E. Harris, *African-American Reactions to War in Ethiopia, 1936–1941* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994).

5. George Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1978), 191; A. James Gregor, *The Ideology of Fascism* (New York: Free Press, 1969), 241–282, and Leni Yahil, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry, 1932–1945* (New York: American Philological Association, 1990). See also Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War against the Jews* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975).

6. Charles H. Stember et al., *Jews in the Mind of America* (New York: Basic Books, 1966), 53–62, 138; Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 203–207; David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941–1945* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), x–xi; Kenneth B. Clark, "Candor about Negro-Jewish Relations," *Commentary* I (February 1946): 8–14; Richard Wright, *Black Boy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1945), 70; James Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son* (New York: Dial Press, 1955), 28, and "The Harlem Ghetto: Winter 1948," *Commentary* 5 (February 1948): 165–170; Rabbi Robert Gordis, "Negroes Are Anti-Semitic Because They Want a Scapegoat," in Leonard Dinnerstein, ed., *Antisemitism in the United States* (New York: International Thomson Publishing, 1971), 132–137; Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 67–68; Editorials, *Philadelphia Tribune*, April 6, October 12, 1933, July 5, 1934; Isabel B. Price, "Black Responses to Anti-Semitism: Negroes and Jews in New York, 1880 to World War II" (Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, 1973), 230; and W. E. B. Du Bois, "As

the Crow Flies," *Crisis* 40 (September 1933), 197. American Jewish Committee, *The Jews in Nazi Germany: The Factual Record of Their Persecution by the National Socialists* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1933) is an early, largely ignored effort to alert Americans to what was happening in Germany.

7. *The Black Man* 1 (July 1935), 9; Roi Ottley, *New World A-Coming* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), 118–119, 129, 334; Adam Clayton Powell Jr., *Marching Blacks* (New York: Dial Press, 1945), 75, 81; Wedlock, *The Reaction of Negro Publications*, 72–73, 171–173; "What the Black Belt Needs Is a Hitler to Fight for Our Race and Purge Us of the Exploiting Jew." *Dynamite*, May 28, October 22, 1938; Edward L. Israel, "Jew Hatred Among Negroes," *Crisis* 43 (February 1936): 39, 50. Also see S. A. Haynes, "Jews and Negroes," *Philadelphia Tribune*, July 26, 1934; Harold L. Sheppard, "The Negro Merchant: A Study of Negro Anti-Semitism," *American Journal of Sociology* 53 (September 1947), esp. 96–99; Ella Baker and Marvel Cooke, "The Bronx Slave Market," *Crisis* 42 (November 1935): 330; Lawrence D. Reddick, "Anti-Semitism Among Negroes," *Negro Quarterly* 1 (Summer 1942): 113; George Britt, "Poison in the Melting Pot," *Nation* 148 (April 1, 1939): 374–376; Oscar R. Williams Jr., "Historical Impressions of Black-Jewish Relations Prior to World War II," *Negro History Bulletin* 40 (July–August 1977): 728–731; and Box C-208, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., for more on black anti-Semitism.

8. *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 17, 1933, August 24, 1935, February 22, 1936; *St. Louis Argus*, July 15, 1938; "From the Press," *Crisis* 46 (January 1939): 19, (March 1939): 83, and *Crisis* 45 (September 1938): 300; *Amsterdam News*, December 7, 1935, March 14 and 28, 1936, June 12, 1937; and Chandler Owen, "Should the Negro Hate the Jew," *Chicago Defender*, November 8, 1941.

9. J. A. Rogers columns in *Philadelphia Tribune*, September 21, 1933, July 26, 1934; Kelly Miller, "Race Prejudice in Georgia and in Germany," *Washington Tribune*, June 23, 1933, "Race Prejudice in Germany," *Opportunity* 14 (April 1936): 102–105, column in *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, April 1, 1933, December 17, 1938, January 21, 1939, and "Hitler Hits Back," *Chicago Defender*, December 10, 1938; George Schuyler to Walter White, December 22, 1935, NAACP Papers, II L 7, article in *New York World Telegram*, November 21, 1938, and columns in *Pittsburgh Courier*, January 23, February 20, 1937, November 26, December 3, 1938; Powell in *Amsterdam News*, March 7, 1936, January 23, February 20, 1937, April 9, 16, July 16, 23, 1938; and *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, December 17, 1938.

10. Wilkins in *Amsterdam News*, March 20, December 11, 1937, *Philadelphia Tribune*, December 22, 1937; White to William Hastie, July 20, 1939, White to Dr. Ames, November 18, 1938, White to Claude McKay, December 23, 1938, White to Hubert Delany, September 15, 1939, and White to George Mintzer, December 2, 1948,

NAACP Papers, II, A-325. Also see Cleophus Charles, "Roy Wilkins, the NAACP and the Early Struggle for Civil Rights" (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1981).

11. Pickens to Du Bois, July 25, 1933, Du Bois Papers, University of Massachusetts, Reel 39; Pickens, "Why the Negro Must Be Anti-Fascist," *New Masses* (May 30, 1939): 29–30; Pickens, "Nine Hundred Jews on A Ship," *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, June 24, 1939; "Stay Out of Nazi Olympics," *Crisis* 42 (September 1935): 273; White to Max Yergan, November 30, 1938, NAACP Papers, C-208. Also see Pickens, "The Jewish People and Prejudice," *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, August 19, 1939. There are many examples in the Negro press of using the plight of German Jewry to call attention to the evils of racism in the United States. See, for example, the following editorials in the *Baltimore Afro-American*: "Jim Crow for Jews Now," October 14, 1933, "The German Cracker," December 21, 1935, and "The Nazis and Dixie," February 22, 1936.

12. Press release "N.A.A.C.P. Secretary Denounces Nazi Pogroms: Says All Must Unite to Protect Minority Rights Here and Save Democracy," November 18, 1938, White address to NAACP Annual Meeting, January 5, 1936, "Nazism and the Negro," a series of 1936 WMCA radio addresses by White, and "The Nazi Terror—My Reaction, White address of November 27, 1938, NAACP Papers, Box 208, "Anti-Semitism 1935–1938"; *Amsterdam News*, November 15, 1938; "Walter White Scores Persecution of Jews," *Crisis* 45 (December 1938): 399–400; Roy Wilkins to Walter White, March 25, 1938, and White to Cordell Hull, March 25, 1938, NAACP Papers, I, C208; also see *Crisis* 45 (September 1938): 339.

13. Conference resolutions appear annually in the September *Crisis*. "Walter White Scores Persecution of Jews," *Crisis* 45 (December 1938): 399–400; Editorials, *Crisis* 45 (September 1938): 301, (December 1938): 393, *Crisis* 42 (September 1935): 273, *Crisis* 47 (July 1940): 209, and *Crisis* 42 (September 1935): 273. Also see *Crisis* 43 (September 1936): 273 and 45 (April 1938): 113. Earlier efforts by African Americans to use the plight of the Jews to draw attention to racial abuses in the United States are mentioned in Arnold Shankman, "Brothers Across the Sea: Afro-Americans on the Persecution of Russian Jews, 1881–1917," *Jewish Social Studies* 37 (Spring 1975): 114–121.

14. Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, "Parallel Between Hitlerism and the Persecution of Negroes in America," *Crisis* 41 (May 1934): 127–129; Jacob J. Weinstein, "The Jew and the Negro" and "The Negro and the Jew," *Crisis* 41 (June 1934): 178–179 and (July 1934): 197–198; Harry Essrig, "Einhorn: Champion of Racial Equality," *Crisis* 47 (October 1940): 314–315, "John Brown's Jewish Associates," *Crisis* 47 (December 1940): 380–381, and "Jewish Friends of Negro Emancipation," *Crisis* 48 (January 1941): 16; *Crisis* 46 (January 1939): 29 and (October 1939): 308. Also see "Anti-Semitism among Negroes," *Crisis* 45 (June 1938): 177.

15. Norton Belth, "Problems of Anti-Semitism in the United States," *Contemporary Jewish Record* 2 (July 1939): 43–57; "Americans All," *National Jewish Monthly* 53

(April 1939): 298; *American Hebrew*, December 13, 1936; Joseph Roucek, "The Forgotten Man in Europe and America," *Opportunity* 11 (March 1933): 73–74; Verna Arvey, "Tolerance," *Opportunity* 18 (August 1940): 244; Elmer Carter, "The Way of Madness," *Opportunity* 16 (October 1938): 292; Lawrence Reddick, "What Hitler Says About the Negro," *Opportunity* 17 (April 1939): 108–110; and editorials, *Opportunity* 17 (January 1939): 2, (June 1939): 164, (November 1939): 324, and "The Negro and Nazism," *Opportunity* 18 (July 1940): 194–195.

16. Adam Clayton Powell Jr., "Soap Box," *Amsterdam News*, February 19, March 18, April 16, 1938; Ralph Bunche, "Forward," in Wedlock, *The Reaction of Negro Publications*, 3, 10; William Pickens, "German Fascists and Free Speech in America," *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, March 11, 1939; editorial, "Fascism Spreads," *Amsterdam News*, March 19, 1938; Chandler Owen, "Should the Negro Hate the Jew?" *Chicago Defender*, November 8, 1941; "Danger Is Seen in Anti-Jewish Onset as Probe Is Begun," *Atlanta Daily World*, August 15, 1938; M. Beaunorus Tolson, "Keep That Chin Up, My Jewish Brother!" *Philadelphia Tribune*, March 11, 1939; and Robert Bagnall, "Taken in Stride," *Philadelphia Tribune*, August 4, 1938.

17. Editorials in *Baltimore Afro-American*, February 22, 1936, August 24, and October 5, 1935, April 1, 1933, and April 11, May 2, 1936; Miller in *Washington Tribune*, June 23, 1933; editorials in *Amsterdam News*, February 11, April 8, 15, 1939; *Crisis* 45 (September 1938): 301, (December 1938): 393, *Crisis* 47 (August 1940): 232, and Thomas F. Doyle, "Gestapo in Memphis," *Crisis* 48 (May 1941): 152–154, 172–173; and *New York Times*, August 22, 1939.

18. Editorials, *Crisis* 48 (May 1941): 151, (July 1941): 215; "A Georgia Hitler," *Opportunity* 19 (August 1941): 226–227; Harold Preece, "The Klan's 'Revolution of the Right,'" and "Klan 'Murder, Inc.' in Dixie," *Crisis* 53 (July 1946): 202, 220, and (October 1946): 299–301, and editorial, *Crisis* (September 1946): 276. The sole African American in Congress, Arthur W. Mitchell, wrote to Roosevelt urging the U.S. government to take greater measures to protect European Jews. "October 12" in Janus Adams, *Freedom Days: 365 Inspirational Moments in Civil Rights History* (New York: Wiley, 1998).

19. *Amsterdam News*, February 14, 1942, and *Pittsburgh Courier*, October 23, 1943; Marie Syrkin, "Anti-Semitic Drive in Harlem," *Congress Weekly* 8 (October 31, 1941): 6–8; *Crisis* 51 (February 1944); Adam Clayton Powell Jr., "What Negroes Think of Jews," *New Currents* 1 (September 1943): 15–16; Langston Hughes column, *Chicago Defender*, March 10, 1945; Walter White and Rabbi Lou H. Silberman, "The Minority Problem from the Inside Looking Out," *Hebrew Union College Monthly* 30 (April 1943): 6–7; *Pittsburgh Courier*, August 4, 1945; and Randolph quote in Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), 852. See also editorial, "The Dangers of Anti-Semitism," *Chicago Defender*, March 17, 1945. More

examples of African American wartime efforts to combat anti-Semitism are found in the NAACP Papers, II A-325.

20. Minutes of the NAACP Board of Directors, February 1942, NAACP Papers, II A-134; *Congress Weekly*, December 4, 1942; Stephen Wise to Walter White, December 17, 1942 and Edwin C. Johnson to Walter White, June 23, 1943, NAACP Papers, II A-374; Walter White to American Jewish Congress, August 30, 1943, NAACP Papers, II A-325; Lester Granger to Walter White, June 21, 1943, NAACP Papers, II A-446. On what was known and what was reported see Deborah Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933–1945* (New York: Free Press, 1986). The *New York Times* began printing stories on the slaughter of millions of Jews in June 1942, although the Allied governments did not publicly acknowledge it until December.

21. See articles and editorials from Jewish publications in NAACP Papers, II A-325, II A-361, II A-380, and II L-7; “Defend the Negro,” and “Help Wanted—No Negroes, No Jews,” in NAACP Papers, II A-325; *Jewish Survey* II, June 1942; *Year Book, Central Conference of American Rabbis* (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1942); on the activities of the American Jewish Congress see NAACP Papers, II C-300; and Lucille B. Morton, “On the Civil-Liberty Front,” *New Republic*, June 26, 1944, 839–840, and Kenneth B. Clark, “Candor About Negro-Jewish Relations,” *Commentary* 1 (February 1946): 9. See also columns by Roy Wilkins, *Amsterdam News*, February 28, 1942, April 17, 1943.

22. Louis D. Reddick, “Anti-Semitism Among Negroes,” *Negro Quarterly* (Summer 1942): 105; W. H. Jernigan, “Tolerance is Indivisible,” *Jewish Survey* II (August 1942); *New York Jewish Forward*, March 3, 1942, and Louis Harap, “Anti-Negroism among Jews,” *Negro Quarterly* (Summer 1942): 107; Walter White and Rabbi Lou H. Silberman, “The Minority Problem From the Inside Looking Out,” *Hebrew Union College Monthly* 30 (April 1943): 6–7; and Jacob X. Cohen, “Fighting Together For Equality” and “The Negro and Anti-Semitism,” in NAACP Papers, II C-300. Also see Marshall F. Stevenson Jr., “Points of Departure, Acts of Resolve: Black-Jewish Relations in Detroit, 1937–1962” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1988).

23. Milton R. Konvitz, “Jews and Civil Rights,” in Peter I. Rose, ed., *The Ghetto and Beyond: Essays on Jewish Life in America* (New York: Random House, 1969), 274–280; American Jewish Congress pamphlet “Accent on Action, A New Approach to Minority Group Problems in America,” and Bernard Gittelson to Walter White, June 14, 1945, Alexander H. Pekelis to Thurgood Marshall, June 15, 1945, and Rabbi Stephen Wise to Thurgood Marshall, April 11, 1946, NAACP Papers, II C-300; and Maslow in Berson, *The Negroes and the Jews*, 96. Also see Jonathan Kaufman, *Broken Alliance, The Turbulent Times Between Blacks and Jews in America* (New York: Scribner, 1988), and Edward S. Shapiro, “Black-Jewish Relations Revisited,” *Judaism* 44 (Summer 1995): 379.

24. Cheryl Greenberg, "Liberation and Liberalism: The Politics of Black-Jewish Relations in the 1960s," a paper presented at the Organization of American Historians 1996 annual meeting, is an indispensable account of the emerging alliance, as is Stuart Svonkin, *Jews Against Prejudice: American Jews and the Fight for Civil Liberties* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). Files "Negro Race Problems" and "Negro-Jewish Relations," and *ADL Bulletin*, Anti-Defamation League Papers, Anti-Defamation Library, New York City; "Negro Jewish Relations File," American Jewish Congress Papers, American Jewish Congress Library, New York City; 1945 platform of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, *Pittsburgh Courier*, February 3, 1945; Myron Harshhaw to George Schuyler, June 30, 1943, George Schuyler Papers, Schomburg Archives, New York Public Library; Kaufman, *Broken Alliance*, 97–100; and Walter White column and story on Randolph in *Chicago Defender*, January 27, 1945.

25. "Chicago GI Tells Horrors of Nazi 'Murder Factory' Prison Camp," *Chicago Defender*, May 12, 1945; *Atlanta Constitution*, August 8, 1945; "Editor Sees Parallel of Nazi Germany in America," *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 26, 1945; Joseph Bibb column, *Pittsburgh Courier*, March 31, 1945; Marjorie McKenzie column, *Pittsburgh Courier*, May 12, 1945; Horace R. Cayton column, *Pittsburgh Courier*, December 8, 1945; letter to the editor, *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, July 21, 1934; and Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 144. The overall impact of the news of the Holocaust is best covered in Robert H. Abzug, *Inside the Vicious Heart: Americans and the Liberation of Nazi Concentration Camps* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). See also William Grant Still's "Wailing Woman" (1946), Chester Himes, *If He Hollers Let Him Go* (New York: Doubleday, 1945), Oliver Cox, *Caste, Class and Race* (New York: Doubleday, 1948), W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Milkwood, N.Y.: Bard, 1973), 42–43, Clarke, "Candor About Negro-Jewish Relations," as well as references to the Holocaust later made by Martin Luther King Jr., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), 50, 356.

26. Alphonse Henningburg, "What the Urban League Expects for All Races as a Result of the San Francisco Conference," *Opportunity* 23 (Summer 1945), 123; editorial, "The Jews Look Ahead," *Atlanta Daily World*, May 6, 1945; Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 164–165; and, especially, Jonathan Seth Rosenberg, "How Far the Promised Land? World Affairs and the American Civil Rights Movement from the First World War to Vietnam" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1997). See also Carol Anderson, "Eyes Off the Prize: African Americans, the United Nations, and the Struggle for Human Rights, 1944–1952" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1995).

27. Roy Wilkins, "Jewish-Negro Relations: An Evaluation," *American Judaism* 12 (Spring 1963): 4–5; Eugene I. Bender, "Reflections on Negro-Jewish Relationships: The Historical Dimension," *Phylon* 30 (Spring 1969): 59–65; Marguerite Cartwright, "Do I Like Jews?" *Negro History Bulletin* 21 (November 1957): 38–39; and Murray Friedman, *What Went Wrong? The Creation and Collapse of the Black-Jewish Alliance* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

28. Kaufman, *Broken Alliance*, 5–6, 52–53; Paul Cowan, *An Orphan in History* (New York: Doubleday, 1982), 6; Baldwin quote in Dinnerstein, ed., *Antisemitism in the United States*, 131; Elie Wiesel commentary in Michael Freeman, "Can Social Science Explain Genocide?" *Patterns of Prejudice* 20 (1986): 10.

