



Re-encounter with the Past:
Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany
and their Struggle for Civil Rights
in Post-war America

David Jünger

Research Paper No. 16

ISSN 1468-4721

US

UNIVERSITY
OF SUSSEX

Re-encounter with the Past: Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany and their Struggle for Civil Rights in Post-war America

David Jünger

History Department, University of Rostock, Rostock, Germany

David Jünger, Historisches Institut, Neuer Markt 3 (3.OG),
18055 Rostock, Germany

david.juenger@uni-rostock.de

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9398-2757>

David Jünger is Lecturer for Contemporary History at the University of Rostock. He received his PhD from the University of Leipzig. His research focuses on Modern German and American-Jewish History, Modern European History and the History of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. From 2012 to 2017 he worked at the Free University Berlin and from 2017 to 2021 at the University of Sussex, where he was also the Deputy Director of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies. He is currently working on his second book about the life and times of the German-American rabbi Joachim Prinz (1902–1988).

Cover image:

Joachim Prinz at the March on Washington, 28th August, 1963.

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Joachim_Prinz_speaking_at_March_on_Washington,_with_Bayard_Rustin_pictured,_1963_\(6891546869\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Joachim_Prinz_speaking_at_March_on_Washington,_with_Bayard_Rustin_pictured,_1963_(6891546869).jpg)

Re-encounter with the Past: Jewish Refugees from Nazi Germany and their Struggle for Civil Rights in Post-war America

This article examines the participation of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany of the 1930s in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. It describes the different ways in which the history of Nazi persecution, the Holocaust and the African American civil rights struggle have been compared by American Jews and by African Americans. This complex relationship is further addressed in a case study of the German-Jewish refugee rabbi Joachim Prinz (1902–1988), who emigrated to the United States in 1937, was president of the American-Jewish Congress from 1958 to 1966 and the Jewish key speaker at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in August 1963.

St. Augustine, Florida, June 1964

A blistering heat awaited the rabbis when they arrived in St. Augustine, Florida in the late afternoon on June 17, 1964. They were exhausted after a long trip from Atlantic City, New Jersey, where they were attending the annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), the leading umbrella organisation of Reform Rabbis in the United States. The rabbis were received in St. Augustine by the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. who joined them in public prayer. The following night's march by the local African American civil rights activists and the rabbis through a white neighbourhood remained unheeded by the residents. The state troopers present on the site watched the scene but did not intervene. Although violence seemed imminent, it had not yet broken out.¹

The summer of 1964 was a crucial turning point in the post-war history of the United States. The African American Civil Rights Movement had intensified its politics of open confrontation with the ongoing segregation in the American South by organising interracial public protests *en masse*. During the 'Freedom Summer' of 1964, volunteers from the north travelled south, mainly to Mississippi, to help register more black voters. Violence against African Americans and their white supporters ran rampant throughout the entire South, exposing once again the vicious character of the Jim Crow regime. Indeed, this was the strategy of the younger generation of civil rights leaders that dominated the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and especially the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) but became also more influential in the rather conservative Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) – to heat up the tensions towards a point that federal intervention was unavoidable in order to save the integrity and union of the country. The passage of a comprehensive civil rights bill was announced but was still pending and needed to be pushed forward.²

At the time, the city of St. Augustine was heavily segregated, and well known as a hotspot of racist violence in the South. From the time that Martin Luther King Jr.'s SCLC set foot in the city, they were received with brute force. The leading local activist Robert B. Hayling had been severely harassed for weeks, SCLC's executive director Andrew Young was beaten unconscious during a demonstration and King was arrested shortly thereafter. The situation was tense, the outcome unpredictable. When King asked his friend Rabbi Israel Dresner for his support, Dresner, along with 15 rabbis and the layman Albert Vorspan, immediately left the CCAR convention for St. Augustine.³

The day after their arrival, they joined in the protest against the segregation policy of the Monson's Motor Lodge, 'the center for segregationist resistance in St. Augustine,' as Vorspan remembered.⁴ The demonstration ended the same way they always did: the black protesters were beaten and arrested and so were the Jewish representatives. The incident hit the headlines for two reasons. First, the protesters had dared to use a swimming pool, which white supremacists perceived to be an appalling offence.⁵ Photographs of the scene quickly spread all over the globe and became iconic images for

the civil rights struggle of the 1960s. Second, the arrest of 15 rabbis was an extraordinary event. To this date it remains the largest mass arrest of rabbis in the history of the United States. The New York Times, for example, covered the events in a series of articles and provided the name of each individual rabbi arrested by local police.⁶



James Brock pours muriatic acid into pool at the Monson Motor Lodge, June 1964.

The rabbis spent one night in police custody, discussing their recent experiences, their anxieties and their ambitions for the protest that had brought them to the Deep South, culminating in imprisonment. As the new day broke, the rabbis were released on bail. Immediately, they left St. Augustine to return to Atlantic City, and published a statement entitled: 'Why we went.' The letter reads as follows:

We went to St. Augustine in response to the appeal of Martin Luther King addressed to the CCAR Conference [...]. We came to St. Augustine mainly because we could not stay away. [...] We came because we could not stand quietly by our brother's blood. We had done that too many times before. We have been vocal in our exhortation of others but the idleness of our hands too often revealed an inner silence; silence at a time when silence has become the unpardonable sin of our time. [...] We came as Jews who remember the millions of faceless people who stood quietly, watching the smoke rise from Hitler's crematoria. We came because we know that, second only to silence, the greatest danger to man is loss of faith in man's capacity to act.⁷

With this letter, the rabbis suggested that the Jewish support for civil rights directly derived from the Jewish experience of the Holocaust; from the understanding that mankind's greatest sin was its indifference and silence in the face of the mass murder of Europe's Jews. Following Vorspan's personal account of the events in St. Augustine, the Nazi past and the Holocaust was an important reference point throughout the incident for many of its participants, not only the Jewish ones.⁸

This letter raises many questions: Why did the rabbis invoke the Holocaust to explain their commitment to the cause of the Civil Rights Movement in St. Augustine in June 1964? If it was not merely rhetoric, then what else was it? In what way did personal experiences with Nazi oppression or the general memory of the Holocaust influence Jewish perceptions of racism, segregation and the Jim Crow regime? And finally, in light of the history of Jewish suffering, especially during the Holocaust, is there a certain Jewish understanding of segregation?

On the surface, the analogy seems obvious. Nazi antisemitism and American racism had some elements in common, like the system of segregation in Nazi Germany and the Jim Crow South. Notwithstanding the apparent differences, just one or two decades after the Holocaust, this could still be enough of an incentive to motivate Jews to take part in the civil rights struggle. This paper will examine how important, if at all, that incentive really was.

The history of Black-Jewish relations in the United States is well known. Many scholarly works have dealt with this relationship ranging from the Reconstruction period (1865–1877),⁹ the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century,¹⁰ the heyday of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s, to the present day. The latter studies tend to focus on reasons for conflicts, increasing mutual alienation (beginning in the 1960s) and whether or not cooperation was successful.¹¹ Further studies deal with religious, literary and cultural convergences,¹² or questions of race, colour and ethnicity.¹³ Less attention has been paid to the motives of the Jewish participants in the struggle for civil rights, however, and how they were influenced by the memory of the Holocaust or by personal experiences with Nazi oppression.¹⁴

The St. Augustine incident of 1964 is a perfect starting point for such an analysis. It comprises many important elements of this intricate issue of Black-Jewish relations in the post-Holocaust age. This essay will address the questions of Jewish involvement in the Civil Rights Movement and Holocaust memory raised by St. Augustine on two levels. First, I will demonstrate how analogies between Nazi Germany, the Holocaust and the Jim Crow South were utilised by both African Americans and Jews. Second, I will expand on the topic through a short case study of the German-born American Rabbi Joachim Prinz's (1902–1988) encounters with civil rights issues. I do not think that one can give a definite and satisfactory answer to the question of why Jews participated in the Civil Rights Movement. However, I will try to narrow down the complexity of the issue for a better understanding of the problems involved. Finally, it is my argument that German Jews who experienced Nazi persecution tried to see the American Jim Crow system in the light of their own experiences with segregation. By this, they did not go

so far as to equate American segregation with Nazi German persecution of the Jews, but tried to lay bare the very foundations of a society that accepts and enforces the exclusion of one of its groups one way or another.

The deafening silence: Haunting memories of the Nazi past

During the late nineteenth through the first half of the twentieth century, there were many voices, both African American and Jewish, which compared or equated the histories, predicaments and destinies of African Americans and Jews. And there was also a certain level of cooperation which developed over time, especially in the foundation and leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) founded in 1909 by African Americans and Jews alike.¹⁵

After the end of the Second World War, the struggle for civil rights gained momentum and so did the cooperation between African American and Jewish agencies. 'The postwar civil rights movement,' writes Cheryl Greenberg, 'was a cold war liberal attempt to end discrimination based on race or religion using the institutions of civil society: courts, legislatures, media, public schools and voluntary organizations.'¹⁶ Whereas both parts intensified their public and legal fights against discrimination, the war experiences of African American Soldiers and the meaning of the Holocaust increasingly weighed into this relationship.¹⁷

The following years marked ever-increasing cooperation between African Americans and Jews who wanted to promote equal rights for all Americans regardless of race, faith or class. The NAACP and the American Jewish Congress (AJ Congress) were the most important exponents of this cooperation.¹⁸ As time went by, others joined in. The SCLC's Martin Luther King Jr. and Bayard Rustin became the closest partners of the Jewish organizations which now also included the American Jewish Committee (AJ Committee) and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). In the 1950s and 1960s, King was the spiritual leader of the movement and Rustin its leading strategist. Both men were unwavering in their support for Jewish causes, their defense of Israel and in their fight against antisemitism within the African American community and beyond; both perceived the African

American and the Jewish emancipation struggle as closely interrelated.¹⁹

When King was the special guest speaker at the biennial convention of the AJ Congress in Miami Beach in May 1958, his speech invoked a common history of slavery und liberation, which was by that time a well-established line of argument:

My people were brought to America in chains. Your people were driven here to escape the chains fashioned for them in Europe. Our unity is born of our common struggle for centuries, not only to rid ourselves of bondage, but to make oppression of any people by others an impossibility.²⁰



Joachim Prinz and Martin Luther King, Jr. (in the center) at a Fundraising event of the American Jewish Congress, 1963.

Throughout the next several years, King would reiterate this argument in similar words, as he did for instance in St. Augustine, when he received the rabbis who had come down from Atlantic City in June 1964. Albert Vorspan remembered the moment:

He reminded the audience that we were descended from the Israelites who had also had their exodus to freedom, that it was Moses who first confronted the world with the cry ‚Let my people go’ and that Judaism had given the world that love of freedom which now inspired the Negro Revolution.²¹

But King went further when he delved into the writings of Martin Buber, especially his thoughts on I and Thou, and asked what he would have done as a non-Jew in Nazi-Germany:

We can never forget that everything Hitler did in Germany was ‚legal’ [...]. It was ‚illegal’ to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler’s Germany. But I am sure that if I had lived in Germany during that time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers even though it was illegal.²²

Memories of the Nazi past not only provided a framework for critiquing the Jim Crow South; they also served as a rationale for many Jewish participants in the civil rights struggle. Michael E. Staub, who has collected and published eye witness accounts of the Jewish 1960s, realized with surprise that there was ‘a vivid and unnerving reminder of Nazi Germany for many activists as they travel[ed] through a segregated South.’²³ Debra Schultz, who has interviewed numerous Jewish female activists for her book *Going South*, confirms this observation: ‘Certainly for many Jewish women civil rights activists, knowledge of the Holocaust fueled and legitimated their desire to fight against racism.’²⁴

When Betty Alschuler travelled from Chicago to Albany, Georgia in August 1962, she was haunted by the Jewish past that seemed to permeate her perception of the entire situation: ‘Terrible memories harass me and I wonder if I will ever see any human movement without the memories of my people’s murder. I can’t separate the longing for freedom of an enslaved

people from our own enslavement, but I can’t be pulled with it, into what?’²⁵ In 1961, Elizabeth Slade Hirschfeld too ‘thought back on the [concentration] camp images when she was being transported from Hinds County Jail to Parchman Prison in a small, crowded, wooden wagon through a forest after her arrest as a Freedom Rider in Mississippi.’²⁶

The use of such comparisons, analogies and metaphors seems compelling. But did Jewish experiences with oppression, persecution and ultimately mass murder during the Holocaust really lead to a more considerate and sympathetic approach to the problems of race and segregation in America? The examples that seem to prove this argument – some of which have been cited above – are contrasted by a variety of counter-examples.

First of all, there was no unanimous Jewish voice. Historians Leonard Dinnerstein, Clive Webb, Eric Goldstein and Mark K. Bauman, for instance, have shown that Jewish responses to racism and segregation differed greatly between the North and the South, and even within the South between smaller and larger cities, between rabbis and their congregants.²⁷ In contrast to the North, the civil rights struggle in the South seemed to have the potential to endanger the status of the Jews. Even though the Jewish community of the South was much less targeted by white supremacists than African Americans were, and was generally perceived as part of white domination rather than its counterpart, its attributed whiteness became especially precarious after the end of the reconstruction period and the beginning of the African American emancipation struggle. The August 1915 lynching of the Jewish man Leo Frank was a rare incident, but it deeply frightened Southern Jews who feared the loss of their status as “whites” within the dichotomous race hierarchy of the south.²⁸

During the Civil Rights Era, Southern Jews felt especially uncomfortable and insecure. They challenged and repudiated any comparisons between the Jewish and the African American situation in order not to be kicked to the other side of the colour line. Moreover, many Southern Jews openly attacked their northern co-religionists for their involvement in the Civil Rights Movement, warning them to keep their hands off the South and to let the Southern Jews care for their problems themselves.²⁹ Some Southern

Jews, such as Solomon Blatt, Sol Tepper and Charles Bloch were even fierce segregationists.³⁰

The Northern rabbis who travelled down to St. Augustine in June 1964 to support Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights activists in the South also experienced this atmosphere of repulsion, contempt and hostility from the local Jewish community. Not only were they not received by any Jewish representative or community member upon their arrival, they were even attacked and insulted following the demonstration and their subsequent incarceration. Albert Vorspan recounts the moment when the president of the local congregation entered the jail cell, complaining about the rabbis not wearing kippot and talking too loudly and telling them finally: 'Are you the so-called rabbis? [...] Never mind that. [...] I'm here to tell you so-called rabbis to shut up. [...] I'm telling you to shut up-and now!'³¹

Although the story of 15 rabbis and a layman leaving the annual CCAR convention to support Martin Luther King Jr. at a demonstration hundreds of miles away is itself impressive, there is also the story of the rabbis who did not respond to King's call for help – and these by far outnumber those who took action. Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolf was one of the rabbis who stayed, and he spoke bluntly to publicly justify his decision:

It is an act (or an unwillingness to act) which comes from our whole existence. [...] When I said no, I meant it. No – I do not really wish to work with you! I do not wish to swim with you! I do not wish to go to jail with you! I do not wish to eat your food or be one of you! [...] The American Jew lives by his superiority to and distance from the American Negro and the American poor. And I live off him! Both of us are terribly frightened by the new American revolution. Like most revolutions in the past, this one is likely to do the Jew no "good".³²

Wolf expressed what later research would call one of the major obstacles in the relationship between African Americans and Jews. Whilst both groups shared a liberal agenda in their political civil rights activities - for example Rabbi Wolf was a fierce and outspoken civil rights proponent, they were much more separated in other parts of their lives and especially in terms of their social status.³³

Looking at the examples cited above – and the many more that exist – it is noticeable that direct Holocaust analogies were rare. Interestingly, these analogies were made more often by non-Jewish civil rights advocates and activists than by Jewish ones. The novels and writings of Harper Lee (*To Kill a Mockingbird*) and Lillian Smith (*Strange Fruit, Killers of the Dream*) are striking examples of such analogies by white non-Jewish authors.³⁴ However, as was demonstrated with the examples of Betty Alschuler, Elizabeth Slade Hirschfeld or the rabbis of St. Augustine, such analogies did exist. Even so, it is worth mentioning that none of these examples, neither Alschuler, Hirschfeld, nor any of the rabbis, were born in Europe and had migrated to the United States. If such references to the Holocaust were made, it was rarely by Jewish refugees from Europe, but rather by American born Jews.

What were the thoughts and feelings of the Jewish refugees who had experienced antisemitic persecution and exclusion in Nazi Germany before their immigration to the United States? Some of them spoke of their early encounters with American racism and segregation in relation to their experiences in Nazi Germany. But when they compared the American situation to the German one, they thought of Germany before 1938; before Germany began the ghettoization and murder of the Jews. Many were surprised and shocked when they entered the United States and had to experience a segregated society, which at times evoked memories and flashbacks of their own lives back in Nazi Germany of the 1930s.

Ernst Moritz Manasse, for instance, who had received his PhD in Heidelberg late in 1933 and became a Professor of German, Latin and Philosophy at the North Carolina College for Negroes (today: North Carolina Central University) in Durham, later recalled his thoughts and emotions upon arrival: 'I came from a situation of forceful segregation, where we were the victims and now suddenly I was on the other side; I belonged not to the oppressed but to the oppressor.'³⁵ Lore Rasmussen, who had left Germany at the age of 17 and who would later receive a position as a teacher at Talladega College in Alabama remembered: 'What I didn't know when I came here was that the same kind of feelings against Jews in Germany were here in the United States against blacks. [...] Black people were rejected in the white community

the way I had been rejected in Germany, so I had a lot of empathy.’³⁶

For Frances Henry, a social anthropologist, who had been born in Germany and fled early in 1939, German-Jewish history transmits a legacy and a commitment. In 1988, she wrote:

For me, the spirit of the German-Jewish legacy revolves around the need to be generous and helpful towards people who are victimized and jeopardized by the society in which they live. [...] As a former victim, I have become inordinately sensitive to the plight of other victims [...]. I believe, however, that if the Jews are indeed a chosen people, what then have they been chosen for if not to try to make the world a better place for all people regardless of religion, race, and other cultural differences? That, for me, sums up the “spirit of the German-Jewish legacy”.³⁷



Joachim Prinz at the March on Washington, 28th August, 1963.

Besides the college and university teachers whose first jobs were at African American colleges after they arrived in the United States, the most visible protagonists were the young rabbis who were born in Germany – some of them even having taken their first career steps in Weimar and Nazi Germany. These people finally became icons of Black-Jewish collaboration in the Civil Rights Movement: Abraham Joshua Heschel, Joachim Prinz, Max Nussbaum, Manfred Swarsensky, Albert H. Friedlander – just to name the more famous ones. Their commitment to the civil rights struggle was spiritual, political and also personal. In the following section, the case of Rabbi Joachim Prinz shall be used to demonstrate this commitment and its relation to the Nazi past.

Out of the Ghetto: Rabbi Joachim Prinz’s Commitment to the Civil Rights Movement

On August 28, 1963, the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, one of the most iconic events of the Civil Rights Movement took place, and featured Martin Luther King’s historic ‘I have a Dream’ speech. American Jews participated in the March in tens of thousands and the president of the influential AJ Congress, Rabbi Joachim Prinz, delivered a speech that cemented his reputation as a passionate advocate for the African American cause.³⁸ In his speech, Prinz referred to the similarities in Jewish and African American history, in racist and anti-Jewish discrimination and similarities between Jewish and Black emancipation.

But more significant than these well-known tropes of Black-Jewish solidarity was the part of his speech in which he recalled his own history as a young rabbi in Nazi Germany. He said:

When I was the rabbi of the Jewish community in Berlin under the Hitler regime, I learned many things. The most important thing that I learned under those tragic circumstances was that bigotry and hatred are not the most urgent problem. The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and the most tragic problem is silence.³⁹

This was surely not a sweeping analogy between anti-Jewish oppression by the Nazi regime and racist segregation in America, but rather a reference to Prinz's own personal experience and the background for his political agenda in post-war America. Prinz often evoked the trope of the ghetto or the state of total isolation, a situation that he himself had experienced in Nazi Germany in the early 1930s. Henceforward he opposed the de facto ghettoization of African Americans in the United States, he criticized the self-ghettoization of Judaism and American Jewry within American society, he tried to overcome the isolation of Israel vis-à-vis Diaspora Jewry as well as within the Middle East and he participated in the interfaith dialogue between Jewish institutions and the Catholic Church. For this article, however, only his attitudes and actions towards racism and segregation will be scrutinized.



Portrait of Joachim Prinz, circa 1970's

Joachim Prinz was born in 1902 in a small village in the German region of Upper Silesia. When he grew older, he rebelled against his father, a German patriot and assimilated Jew, in two ways: by becoming a Zionist and a rabbi.⁴⁰ In 1927, at the age of 24, he became the youngest rabbi in Berlin. Prinz's arrival in Berlin was an event. He was a charismatic figure and a popular orator; the opposite of a typical rabbi. He loved parties, alcohol and sex – he and his wife Lucie publicly indulged in promiscuity – and he detested what he perceived as an ordinary rabbinical life. In short: Prinz adored the exciting life of the German metropolis. More than 40 years later, his adoration for Weimar Berlin was still alive. His autobiography reads:

Berlin was one of the most exciting cities in the world. [...] To have lived in Berlin in the twenties was an indescribable experience. It was probably at that time the most creative city in the world. It was cosmopolitan and far removed from German nationalism. [...] If we had any free evenings, we went either to the theatre, opera, or concerts. It was, in short, a great, creative, marvelous life, which cannot be repeated because it was a time of mankind's great hopes for a world of justice and peace.⁴¹

Prinz's adoration for Weimar Berlin is important because it helps us to understand what the Nazi regime actually meant to him. For Prinz, the Nazis did not only attack the Jews and the Jewish community, they also completely destroyed the life he loved so much.⁴²

When the Nazis took power in 1933, Prinz used his speeches and sermons to publicly criticize them. Nonetheless he still tried to find a way to cope with the new reality. In early 1934, he published a book entitled *Wir Juden* [*We Jews*], in which he analyzed the present situation and outlined future prospects by reconsidering the Jewish past.⁴³ It was one of the most important and controversial Jewish books published during the Nazi era. Like many others, Prinz harkened back to the medieval ghetto and the beginning of Jewish emancipation in Europe. However, unlike most of his counterparts, he did not condemn, but tried to vindicate the ghetto as a metaphor for Jewish life within a hostile environment. He wrote:

The ghetto did not always create the hunchback and the beggar-like servility, but it also raised the heroic Jew, who rather chose to be burned at the stake than to betray its Jewishness. [...] The mutual national bond created the feeling of responsibility for one another, which is something else than the philanthropic endeavors of the 19th century and today. The heroic man – this is the Jew of the Middle Ages. The heroic life, willing to make sacrifices – this is the life in the ghetto.⁴⁴

The message was clear: even if the Nazis tried to humiliate and denigrate the Jews by isolating them from their environment, they would not succeed in



Extract from article “Life without Neighbours”, *Jüdische Rundschau*, 17th April 1935.

suppressing their pride and honor. This vindication of the ghetto, however, was fiercely repudiated by almost all Prinz’s contemporaries. Most of the Zionists and Orthodox Jews, who also deemed the way in which emancipation had developed to be a failure, did not share this understanding. Their message to the German Jews was that they should not accept any minority or even ghetto existence.⁴⁵

With the deterioration of the situation of the Jews in Germany in 1934 and early 1935, Prinz revised his usage of the ghetto metaphor for the analysis of present circumstances. In April 1935, a couple of months before the promulgation of the Nuremberg Laws, he published a programmatic article called *Life without neighbors*. [...] *Ghetto 1935*, in which he laid down some fundamental ideas, that he would reuse, transform and reconfigure time and again in ensuing decades. He wrote:

Now we begin to understand that we are living in a ghetto. Yet, this ghetto differs in many ways, in its notion and in its reality, from what we used to perceive as ghetto. No longer is the ghetto a spatially defined place, at least not in the sense of the medieval ghetto. The ghetto, this is the “world”. Outdoors is the ghetto for us. On the market places, on the highway, in the tavern, everywhere is

the ghetto. It has a symbol. The symbol is: neighbor-less. The Jew’s destiny is to be neighbor-less.⁴⁶

Unlike the medieval ghetto, Prinz argued, the Nazi ghetto of 1935 deprived the Jews of any interaction with the outside world. This ghetto was indeed unbearable. After another two years of hatred, persecution and repeated arrests by the Gestapo, Prinz realized that he had no other option but to leave. Finally, in mid-1937, he left Nazi Germany and immigrated to the United States. His immigration was facilitated by Rabbi Stephen S. Wise who was the president of the AJ Congress and one of the most prominent American Jews of his time.

Prinz felt relieved that he had been able to leave Germany and that he had emigrated to the United States and not – as so many had expected from an outspoken Zionist – to Palestine. However, Prinz’s first encounter with America, with American Jewry and American Zionism left him shocked. Apart from the fact that he shared some typical German anti-American prejudice, he was appalled by the system of racial segregation, by Jewish racism and by the self-isolation of American Jewry. The impressions of his first trip through the United States in early 1937 were published in the German-Jewish monthly *Der Morgen* shortly after his return: Prinz wrote:

Strange, how our view has changed. We, who came here [to America] to look around, have a sharper view and deeper feelings. The Negroes of Harlem remind us of the times of Uncle Tom’s Cabin. We therefore do not understand how the Jews there can look at Negroes with such utter indifference, or how they can be so arrogant... We cannot do this. We understand them too well, the Blacks in the ghetto of Harlem.⁴⁷

It was Prinz’s conviction that the perspective of a German Jew living in the modern ghetto of Nazi Germany led to an understanding of racial discrimination in other places. He was unsettled that Jews could be part of racial discrimination against others, especially while their brethren were persecuted for similar reasons in Europe. Prinz was not only offended by Jewish racism; he was also put off by the isolationist attitudes he believed

to be inherent within American-Jewish life. In his autobiography, written almost 50 years later, he recalled his first amazement:

What impressed me most negatively was the fact that the Jews lived among themselves. Although they were citizens of the United States and very proud of it, their life after six p.m. was restricted to their Jewish friends. I discovered to my amazement that there was a thing called the Jewish neighborhood. Since I came from a city where Jews lived all over and where no Jewish ghettos existed, I had never heard of anything like that. But here in America I began to understand that it was not merely a result of anti-Semitic social rejection; it also came from a very deeply felt desire on the part of the Jews to be among themselves.⁴⁸

Whether Prinz referred to racial segregation, Jewish racism, or 'Jewish isolationism,' his frequent use of the ghetto metaphor and comparison with his own experience indicates that he saw the American situation with German eyes. Whatever reminded him of the dreadful experience of the Nazi regime, he felt obliged to attack – and abolish. Four years under Nazi rule had made him particularly sensitive to any kind of social segregation, isolation, or exclusion.

In 1939, after working for two years as a lecturer, Prinz became the rabbi of the congregation B'nai Abraham in Newark, New Jersey. He maintained this post until his retirement in 1977. He simultaneously began his career in the AJ Congress and the World Jewish Congress (WJC). Over the next two decades, he would become a major figure in these organizations. In these early years though, his political agenda, as he frequently pointed out, was to ensure the survival of the Jewish people. After the horrors of the Holocaust and the foundation of the Jewish state, he worried that the vital forces of Judaism would vanish. Like many others, he was not sure whether Judaism or global Jewry would be able to survive.⁴⁹

American Jewry, he was convinced, was stuck in a ghetto mentality, not ready to adapt to the new realities and to interact with the outside world. Shortly after the foundation of Israel in May 1948, he wrote:

Hitler is dead, the period of pogroms is over – what will [the American Jews] do without tragedy? [...] What will they do without the Madison-Square-Garden mentality? [...] The goal ought to be the mass movement of American Jewry as against the fragmentation of Jewish life.⁵⁰

Prinz's program of survival was deeply influenced by Mordecai Kaplan's concept of peoplehood and Horace Kallen's understanding of cultural pluralism.⁵¹ Kallen was a particular inspiration as he was a lifelong leading figure of the American Jewish Congress and one of Prinz's closest allies within this organization.⁵² Both Kaplan's notion of peoplehood and Kallen's notion of cultural pluralism merged with Prinz's anti-isolationist stance to construct a concept of an ethical and dialogic Judaism. This concept involved many aspects: As a rabbi, Prinz kept his congregation denominationally independent in order to foster mutual exchange between all streams of Judaism.⁵³ He was also adamant that his congregation remained in Newark and did not move to the suburbs at a time when most of the local Jews and almost all other congregations were leaving the city. He deemed the interaction with the local community, especially with the local African American community, as crucial for American Jewry's integration into American society. Prinz collaborated with the African American community and the emerging Civil Rights Movement not only on a local level, but also on a national level, and in the following years he would become one of the most distinguished Jewish figures of this collaboration. Most important for him, however, was the dialogue between Israeli and American Jewry. The success of this dialogue, he repeatedly proclaimed, would be pivotal as to whether Judaism would survive or perish.⁵⁴

The stage on which Prinz waged this battle for Jewish survival was the AJ Congress. Though he was a civil rights advocate, the dominance of civil rights issues within the organization worried him. In the 1950s, the civil rights program was indeed the predominant, if not the only visible political activity of the AJ Congress. Moreover, leading figures like Shad Polier and Justine Wise-Polier frankly backed this policy. They argued that the struggle for civil rights was the only up-to-date activity for a Jewish organization in the twentieth century. Prinz considered its exclusivity a death sentence for

Judaism and warned others about the dangers of a civil rights program at the expense of any specific Jewish assets:

Too many of us find refuge in the Congress civil rights program because it affords an opportunity to belong to a Jewish organization without being involved in a “Jewish program.” [...] Without a uniquely Jewish motivation, we deprive ourselves of the Jewish and moral foundations of our work. The American Jewish Congress is not merely an agency which has established its reputation in the skillful handling of civil rights issues. It is not a Jewish branch of the Civil Liberties Union. We do and must join forces with many American groups in the battle for civil rights, but we do so as Jews and because we are Jews.⁵⁵

When Prinz was elected president of the AJ Congress at the 1958 convention in Miami Beach, these parties clashed dramatically. A panel discussion between Prinz and Wise-Polier quickly turned into a fight. It was described by participants as unprecedented in the history of Congress.⁵⁶ After his election, Prinz pronounced the new policy of the AJ Congress under his leadership, recalling his experience with Nazi Germany and his lucky flight to the United States. In a rather private message he told the audience:

When my family and I came to America in 1937 I discovered in the fall that the American people celebrated a festivity of which I had never heard before. It was Thanksgiving Day. We had a great many things to be very thankful for. Dr [Stephen] Wise had called us to America. I spent my last night in Germany in solitary confinement in a prison in Berlin. We had finally crossed the border and we had arrived to this place where we then lived [...] I say now, quite simply, that Thanksgiving of 1937 has now, today, been fulfilled for me, and that something has come [to] fruition which at that time was not even a gleam in my eye.⁵⁷

Prinz continued his address by attacking the ghetto mentality he still believed to be prevalent within American Jewry. He said:

The Jewish people do not live in a ghetto. A ghetto is not merely

a geographical term for a segregated neighborhood. A ghetto is a mentality. We reject any kind of ghettoization or any kind of Ghetto mentality. Ghettoization means separation from the stream and breath of things around us. We at this Convention have called for the very opposite of Ghettoization. We have called for the integration of the Jew. That means a deep understanding of the Jew, of himself as a Jew, and active realization that he is a part of the American people, its aspiration and its dream for the fulfillment of which we shall continue to work.⁵⁸

In describing the goals for his presidency, Prinz again evoked the metaphor of the ghetto and his years living under Nazi rule. He even translated parts of his 1935 analysis of the modern ghetto of Nazi Germany into what he



Martin Luther King, Jr. and Shad Polier, 1963.

characterized as the needs for American Jewry in the twentieth century. In 1935, and again in 1958, he spoke about the non-spatial ghetto, about neighborhood as a moral concept and about the lack of interaction with the outside world.

The next several years were overshadowed by the conflict between Shad Polier and Justine Wise-Polier on one side, and Prinz on the other, regarding different issues of leadership and the AJ Congress's political agenda. In 1963, when the March on Washington was planned, it was not Prinz, but Isiah Minkoff, head of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, who was scheduled to be the Jewish representative.⁵⁹ Minkoff was substituted by Prinz only days before the event. The press office of the AJ Congress immediately prepared a speech for Prinz.⁶⁰ When he received it the night before the March, he discarded it right away. Though it was a good speech, he believed that it was missing something. He stayed up that night to revise the speech, adding three aspects he deemed necessary.⁶¹

First, Prinz referred to the concept of the neighborhood as a moral idea, which he had evoked time and again since 1935. He said: 'When God created man, he created him as everybody's neighbor. Neighbor is not a geographic term. It is a moral concept. It means our collective responsibility for the preservation of man's dignity and integrity.' Second, he talked about the ghetto experience of the Jews in an historic perspective, stating:

From our Jewish historic experience of three and a half thousand years we say: Our ancient history began with slavery and the yearning for freedom. During the Middle Ages my people lived for a thousand years in the ghettos of Europe. Our modern history begins with a proclamation of emancipation.'

And last, but not least, as previously cited, he recalled his own experience as a 'rabbi of the Jewish community in Berlin under the Hitler regime', when he learned that not 'bigotry and hatred' of the few was the most appalling aspect of the Nazi period, but the silence of the majority of non-Jewish Germans in the face of anti-Jewish persecution.⁶²

It is revealing that at this critical point in history Prinz chose the trope of the



March on Washington, August 1963. Leaders of the march posing in front of the statue of Abraham Lincoln (Back row, second from left: Joachim Prinz)

ghetto, the concept of neighborhood and his experiences in Nazi Germany to justify his own commitment to the Civil Rights Movement. Years later, Prinz would call the March on Washington 'the only significant move in contemporary Judaism,' and 'the greatest religious experience of my life.' He believed that Jewish participation in the March 'indicated to the world that Judaism had returned to its prophetic teachings and that it was no longer a museum of antiquity, but a living and acting religion of the twentieth century.'⁶³ It is therefore not surprising that he referred to issues in his speech that had been haunting him since his early years in Berlin.

Prinz's speech at the Lincoln Memorial elicited expressions of excitement and respect and cemented his reputation as a staunch civil rights activist. In the wake of the March, many letters arrived at Prinz's house, praising his

performance at the March and thereafter. Julius Wildstein, a member of the AJ Congress and B'nai Abraham, Prinz's congregation, was overwhelmed when he wrote:

I am sure that there will be a day in the future when my daughter will be asked by her children where we were on August 28, 1963, and the answer will be that we were in Washington, D.C., and were not one of the 'silent listeners' as it was so dramatically put in the wonderful speech of Rabbi Prinz – *our Rabbi*.⁶⁴

Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP, also expressed his gratitude: 'In the sober ruminations after the peak excitement of the day, the consensus among the many who have talked with me has been that "the Rabbi" was among the two or three best. I join personally in that view and offer my thanks, not only for your speech at the Memorial, but for your cogent observations and guidance in the various conferences and radio and television panels.'⁶⁵

At the meeting of the Governing Council of the AJ Congress several days later, Prinz repeated some key elements of his speech such as the concept of neighborhood, the ghetto metaphor and the meaning of Jewish experiences with segregation for a better understanding of the African American plight. The minutes of the meeting state: 'At the close of his stirring address, Dr. Prinz received a standing ovation.'⁶⁶

Conclusion – The Sin of Silence

What were the reasons for Jews participating in the civil rights struggle? And to what extent, if at all, was the Holocaust an incentive to do so? Debra Schultz, who conducted interviews with female civil rights activists, concludes in her study:

Though it is difficult to 'quantify' the impact that knowledge of the war, Nazism, and the destruction of European Jews had on the consciousness of Jews involved in the civil rights movement, some of the women discuss the connection explicitly. [...] Certainly for many Jewish women civil rights activists, knowledge of the Holocaust fueled and legitimated their desire to fight against racism.⁶⁷

Stephen J. Whitfield draws a similar conclusion in his writing about Holocaust analogies within the Civil Rights Movement:

The influence of the Shoah cannot be conclusively proven. No single figure or institution pushing hard for racial justice was decisively shaped by the knowledge or the memory of the Final Solution. Scrupulous scholars may well conclude that the evidentiary base of the argument is thin. Indeed, it is more a matter of atmospherics, of inference rather than induction. But a case is tenable.⁶⁸

Similarly, the historian Atina Grossmann, who is a daughter of German-Jewish refugees and Holocaust survivors, states in an article about her own and her generation's perspective on the Civil Rights Movement: 'For Jewish voices, the shadow of the Holocaust hovered but only indirectly.'⁶⁹

Indeed, there is no direct or objective link between Holocaust memory or personal experiences with Nazi oppression to the Jewish civil rights struggle in post-war America. But neither can it be ignored that there were frequent comparisons on the Jewish side, especially by those who actively participated. For those who had no personal experience with Nazi Germany, Jewish participation in the Civil Rights Movement was rather connected to the allegations against, and self-recriminations of parts of the American-Jewish community as having failed to help their co-religionists during the Holocaust.⁷⁰ As we have seen, Holocaust analogies could rather be found with them than with European refugees.

Richard L. Rubenstein, one of nineteen rabbis who traveled to Birmingham in May 1963 to support Martin Luther King, remembered: 'I've been a little sick and tired of the recent refrain that "Jews were passively compliant in their own downfall under Hitler" [...]. I wanted to be an actor in events rather than a spectator or commentator.'⁷¹ Rubenstein, who was born in New York City, was 29 years old in May 1963. The women interviewed by Schultz, the activists testifying in Staub's collection and the rabbis of St. Augustine were all American born Jews in their late twenties or early thirties.⁷² For them, the civil rights struggle and the strengthening of Holocaust consciousness were strongly interconnected and thus had a predominantly inner-Jewish meaning. Or, as Albert Vorspan stated after his trip to St. Augustine in 1964:

'In the end, we can't be certain what we accomplished in St. Augustine, beyond what we did for ourselves.'⁷³

For European refugees, it seems to be slightly different. Of course, their experiences, thoughts and deeds cannot be subsumed under a common denominator, but it is striking that most refrained from making direct analogies to the Holocaust. Rabbi Wolf, who had refused to support Martin Luther King in June 1964 in St. Augustine, later observed that Holocaust survivors rarely equated the Holocaust with current events for any political purpose:

The reticence of our greatest minds to write about the Holocaust is, I believe, emblematic. [Abraham Joshua] Heschel, [Shmuel Yosef] Agnon, [Martin] Buber – all survivors – wrote about the Shoah almost only indirectly. Their silence speaks volumes of tact and agony and love.⁷⁴

Coming from Nazi Germany to the United States, the refugees felt unsettled by the ethnic divide they encountered in their new home and especially by the segregation of the African American and white populations.

The case of Joachim Prinz demonstrated one specific approach towards this issue. While he considered the civil rights struggle to be a tool for Jewish survival in the post-war world, and thus a Jewish endeavor, there was still another layer to his position. The images of antisemitic exclusion he had witnessed in Nazi Germany and the racist segregation he saw, especially in the American South, were too familiar for him to ignore. Usually Prinz didn't emphasize his background as a German refugee as he perceived himself to be first and foremost an American Jew. Accordingly, the first sentence of Prinz's address at the March on Washington was: 'I speak to you as an American Jew.'⁷⁵ However, the fragmentation of American society, particularly the separation between blacks and whites, disturbed him to such an extent that he could not remain aloof. His personal experience with antisemitic persecution, repeated arrest but also with the exciting life of cosmopolitan Weimar Berlin and the advancing isolation of the Jewish community after 1933 had constituted his firm devotion to an open society without ghettos, social isolation or racial segregation. For Prinz, an open society meant that

one must speak up when injustice occurred. As he stated on the steps of the Lincoln memorial on August 28, 1963, 'bigotry and hatred' were not 'the most urgent problem;' rather, 'the most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and the most tragic problem is silence.'⁷⁶

Notes

- 1 For the St. Augustine episode see: Taylor Branch, *Pillar of Fire. America in the King Years 1963–65* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 343–60; Marc Schneier, *Shared Dreams. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Jewish Community* (Woodstock, Vt.: Jewish Lights, 1999), 121–31; Albert Vorspan, “In St. Augustine,” *Midstream. A Quarterly Jewish Review*, vol. 10, no. 3 (September 1964): 15–21; Rabbi Joel S. Goor, “Twenty-Four Hrs. in St. Augustine Jail,” *The Southern Israelite*, July 10, 1964, 4.
- 2 Branch, *Pillar of Fire*, 343–509; Robert Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound. A History of America’s Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Norton, 1990), 86–126.
- 3 Subsequently, I refer to the entire group as ‘the rabbis’, even though it was actually a group of 16 rabbis and layman Albert Vorspan.
- 4 Vorspan, “In St. Augustine,” 16.
- 5 This was due to the racist imagination of the swimming pool as very special stage of “race mixing” because of the exposure of nudity, ideas of cleanliness connected to it, “blood mixing” and so forth. For similar reasons a few decades earlier, spas and swimming pools were the first public spaces in Germany from which Jews were excluded.
- 6 John Herbers, “16 Rabbis Arrested as Pool Dive-In Sets Off St. Augustine Rights Clash,” *The New York Times*, April 19, 1964.
- 7 “Why we went: A Joint Letter from the Rabbis Arrested in St. Augustine,” June 19, 1964, in Eugene B. Borowitz, *Studies in the Meaning of Judaism* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2002), 89–93 (90).
- 8 Vorspan, “In St. Augustine”. See also: Albert Vorspan, “The Freedom Rides,” in Michael E. Staub (ed.), *The Jewish 1960s. An American Sourcebook* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2004), 19–22.
- 9 Mark K. Bauman (ed.), *The Quiet Voices. Southern Rabbis and Black Civil Rights, 1880s to 1990s* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998); Vincent P. Franklin (ed.), *African Americans and Jews in the Twentieth Century. Studies in Convergence and Conflict* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998); Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters. Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Clive Webb, *Fight Against Fear. Southern Jews and Black Civil Rights* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001); Jack Salzman

- (ed.), *Struggles in the Promised Land. Toward a History of Black-Jewish Relations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Lenora E. Berson, *The Negroes and the Jews* (New York: Random House, 1971).
- 10 Hasia R. Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land. American Jews and Blacks, 1915–1935* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977); M. Alison Kibler, *Censoring Racial Ridicule: Irish, Jewish, and African American Struggles over Race and Representation, 1890–1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).
- 11 Murray Friedman, *What went wrong? The Creation and Collapse of the Black-Jewish Alliance* (New York: Free Press, 1995); Seth Forman, *Blacks in the Jewish Mind. A Crisis of Liberalism* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Jonathan Kaufman, *Broken Alliance. The Turbulent Times between Blacks and Jews in America* (New York: Scribner, 1988); Schneier, *Shared Dreams*; Debra L. Schultz, *Going South. Jewish Women in the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2001); Eric J. Sundquist, *Strangers in the Land. Blacks, Jews, post-Holocaust America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); Stuart Svonkin, *Jews Against Prejudice. American Jews and the Fight for Civil Liberties* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).
- 12 Emily Miller Budick, *Blacks and Jews in Literary Conversation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Yvonne Chireau and Nathaniel Deutsch (eds.), *Black Zion. African American Religious Encounters with Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- 13 Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, *The Colors of Jews: Racial Politics and Radical Diasporism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007); Efraim Sicher (ed.), *Race, Color, Identity. Rethinking Discourses about Jews' in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013); Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness. Jews, Race and American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).
- 14 Only a few scholars have partly addressed those questions: Atina Grossmann, "Shadows of War and Holocaust. Jews, German Jews and the Sixties in the United States, Reflections and Memoirs," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2014): 99–114; Stephen J. Whitfield, "The South in the Shadow of Nazism," *Southern Cultures*, vol. 18, no. 3 (2012): 55–75; Johnpeter Horst Grill and Robert L. Jenkins, "The Nazis and the American South in the 1930s: A Mirror Image?" *The Journal of Southern History*, vol. 58, no. 4 (1992): 667–94; Michael Rothberg, "W.E.B. DuBois in Warsaw: Holocaust Memory and the Color Line, 1949–1952," *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2001): 169–89; Gabrielle Simon Edgcomb, *From Swastika to Jim Crow. Refugee Scholars at Black Colleges* (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger Pub. Co, 1993).
- 15 Hasia R. Diner, *The Jews of the United States, 1654 to 2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 92.
- 16 Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters*, 114.
- 17 Maria Höhn/Martin Klimke, *A Breath of Freedom. The Civil Rights Struggle, African American GIs, and Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Christine Knauer, *Let Us Fight as Free Men. Black Soldiers and Civil Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014); Berson, *The Negroes and the Jews*, 96–111.
- 18 Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters*, 114–68; Friedman, *What went wrong?*, 131–155; Berson, *The Negroes and the Jews*, 96–111.
- 19 Schneier, *Shared Dreams*.
- 20 Martin Luther King, Jr., "Address Delivered at the National Biennial Convention of the American Jewish Congress," May 14, 1958, in Clayborne Carson and others (eds.), *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Vol. IV: Symbol of the Movement, January 1957–December 1958*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 406–10 (407).
- 21 Vorspan, "In St. Augustine," 15. See also: Schneier, *Shared Dreams*.
- 22 Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," April 16, 1963, http://okra.stanford.edu/transcription/document_images/undecided/630416-019.pdf
- 23 Staub (ed.), *The Jewish 1960s*, 1.
- 24 Schultz, *Going South*, 183.
- 25 Betty Alschuler, "Notes from the American Revolution – 1962," in Staub (ed.), *The Jewish 1960s*, 12–18 (15).
- 26 Schultz, *Going South*, 184.
- 27 Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness*; Webb, *Fight Against Fear*; Bauman (ed.), *The Quiet Voices*; Leonard Dinnerstein, "Southern Jewry and the Desegregation Crisis, 1954–1970," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, vol. 62, no. 3 (1973): 231–41.
- 28 Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness*; Webb, *Fight Against Fear*, 1–68; Leonard Dinnerstein, *The Leo Frank Case* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968).

- 29 Webb, *Fight Against Fear*, 69–87.
- 30 Webb, *Fight Against Fear*, 114–46.
- 31 Vorspan, “In St. Augustine,” 20.
- 32 Arnold Jacob Wolf, “The Negro Revolution and Jewish Theology,” *Judaism*, vol. 13, no. 4 (fall 1964): 478–83 (478–9).
- 33 Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters*, 7–9.
- 34 Harper Lee, *To kill a Mockingbird* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1960); Lillian Smith, *Killers of the Dream* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1949); idem, *Strange Fruit* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1944). See also: Stephen J. Whitfield, “Joachim Prinz, the South, and the Analogy of Nazism,” *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, Supplement 11 (2015): 99–117; idem, “The South in the Shadow of Nazism.”
- 35 Quoted in Gabrielle Simon Edgcomb, *From Swastika to Jim Crow: Refugee Scholars at Black Colleges* (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger Pub. Co, 1993), 67.
- 36 Quoted in Shelvia Dancy, “Exiled Jews Found Black Bridge,” *The Seattle Times*, February 10, 2001.
- 37 Frances Henry, “Reflections on the German-Jewish Legacy: North American Style,” in Abraham J. Peck (ed.), *The German-Jewish Legacy in America, 1938–1988. From Bildung to the Bill of Rights* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 211–4 (213–4).
- 38 Whitfield, “Joachim Prinz, the South, and the Analogy of Nazism”; Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters. America in the King Years, 1954–63* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988), 846–87; Friedman, *What went wrong?*, 195–202; Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound*, 76–85.
- 39 “The Issue is Silence,” Address by Rabbi Joachim Prinz, President of the American Jewish Congress, at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Lincoln Memorial, Aug. 28, 1963.
- 40 For the following see: Joachim Prinz, *Rebellious Rabbi. An Autobiography. The German and early American Years*, ed. and introd. by Michael A. Meyer (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008).
- 41 Ibid., 72, 57, 55.
- 42 Otto Friedrich’s portrayal of 1920s Berlin gives a good impressions of this popular Berlin thrill. For this book, Friedrich partly relied on interviews he conducted with Prinz among others. Otto Friedrich, *Before the Deluge. A*

- Portrait of Berlin in the 1920’s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).
- 43 Joachim Prinz, *Wir Juden* (Berlin: Erich Reiss, 1934).
- 44 Prinz, *Wir Juden*, 111–112.
- 45 See especially Bruno Weil’s and Hans-Joachim Schoeps’s fierce repudiations of Prinz’s claims: Bruno Weil, *Der Weg der deutschen Juden* (Berlin: Centralverein, 1934); Hans Joachim Schoeps, *Wir deutschen Juden* (Berlin: Vortrupp-Verlag, 1934). See also: Dominique Bourel, „Hans-Joachim Schoeps und seine Gegner,“ in Gideon Botsch, Joachim H. Knoll and Anna-Dorothea Ludewig (eds.), *Wider den Zeitgeist. Studien zum Leben und Werk von Hans-Joachim Schoeps (1909–1980)* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 2009), 139–58; Michael A. Meyer, „Jüdischer Geistiger Widerstand während der NS-Zeit. Die Rabbiner Leo Baeck und Joachim Prinz,“ *LBI-Information*, vol. 12 (2007): 6–16; Guy Miron, “Emancipation and Assimilation in the German-Jewish Discourse of the 1930s,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. 48 (2003), 165–89.
- 46 Joachim Prinz, „Das Leben ohne Nachbarn. Versuch einer ersten Analyse. Ghetto 1935,“ *Juedische Rundschau*, vol. 40, no. 31/32, April 17, 1935.
- 47 Joachim Prinz, „Amerika – hast du es besser? Notizen von einer Reise,“ *Der Morgen*, vol. 13, no. 3 (June 1937): 104–11 (106).
- 48 Prinz, *Rebellious Rabbi*, 202.
- 49 Henry F. Feingold, “The Condition of American Jewry in Historical Perspective: A Bicentennial Assessment,” *American Jewish Yearbook*, vol. 76 (1976), 3–39; Edward S. Shapiro, *A Time for Healing: American Jewry since World War II* (Baltimore/London: John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 27; Jonathan Woocher, *Sacred Survival: The Civil Religion of American Jews* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1987).
- 50 Joachim Prinz, “Life Without Hitler,” *Congress Weekly*, vol. 16, no. 5, January 31, 1949, 12–13.
- 51 Mordecai Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization. Toward a Reconstruction of American Jewish Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1934); idem, *The Future of the American Jew* (New York, Macmillan Co. 1948); Horace M. Kallen, ‘Of them which say they are Jews’. *And other Essays on the Jewish Struggle for Survival* (New York: Bloch, 1954); idem, *Cultural Pluralism and the American Idea. An Essay in Social Philosophy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1956). For the concept of peoplehood see Noam Pianko, *Jewish Peoplehood. An American Innovation* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015); Simon Rabinovitch (ed.), *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism*.

- Writings on Jewish Peoplehood in Europe and the United States* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2012).
- 52 Noam Pianko, "The True Liberalism of Zionism: Horace Kallen, Jewish Nationalism, and the Limits of American Pluralism," *American Jewish History*, vol. 94, no. 4 (December 2008), 299–329; Sarah Schmidt, *Horace M. Kallen. Prophet of American Zionism* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson, 1995).
- 53 Whitfield, "Joachim Prinz, the South, and the Analogy of Nazism," 101; William B. Helmreich, *The Enduring Community. The Jews of Newark and Metro West* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publ., 1999), 253.
- 54 Joachim Prinz, "This Jewish Revolution," *Congress Weekly*, vol. 16, no. 14, April 4, 1949, 5–8; idem, "Beyond the Zionist Dream," *Congress bi-Weekly*, vol. 28, no. 2, January 16, 1961, 5–7.
- 55 Joachim Prinz, "Ideology and Program," *Congress Weekly*, vol. 25, no. 11, June 16, 1958, 3–5 (3).
- 56 Speeches by Dr. Israel Goldstein, Mrs. Justine Wise-Polier and Dr. Joachim Prinz, May 16, 1958, in Proceedings of the Biennial National Convention of the American Jewish Congress, Carilon Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida, Friday, May 16, 1958, [American Jewish Historical Society Archives, I-77 American Jewish Congress Records, Box 837: National Biennial Conventions, Folder 14: National Convention 1958, pp. 1–28, following: AJHS/I-77/837/14]; Prinz, "Ideology and Program"; Justine Wise Polier, "The Jewish Commitment," *Congress Weekly*, vol. 25, no. 11, June 16, 1958, 5–6.
- 57 Speech Dr. Prinz, May 18, 1958, AJHS/I-77/837/14, pp. 50–1.
- 58 Speech Dr. Prinz, May 18, 1958, AJHS/I-77/837/14, p. 51.
- 59 Friedman, *What went Wrong?*, 199.
- 60 Address prepared for Delivery by Rabbi Joachim Prinz, President, American Jewish Congress, at March on Washington, Lincoln Memorial, Aug. 28, 1963, [American Jewish Archives, Prinz, Joachim: Nearprint].
- 61 Interview with Jonathan Prinz, February 25, 2014.
- 62 "The Issue is Silence."
- 63 Joachim Prinz, "An Agenda for the Jewish People," *Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly*, vol. 34 (1970): 15–28 (27 f.).
- 64 Julius Wildstein to Joachim Prinz, September 4, 1963, American Jewish Archives, MS-673: Joachim Prinz Papers, Box 4, Folder 4: W, General (following: AJA/MS-673/4/4).
- 65 Roy Wilkins to Joachim Prinz, September 5, 1963, AJA/MS-673/4/4.
- 66 Minutes of the Governing Council Meeting, September 7–8, 1963, International Inn, Washington, D.C., American Jewish Historical Society Archives, I-77 American Jewish Congress Records, Box 7: Governing Council Minutes, Correspondence, Resolutions, Members, Folder 2: Minutes, 1962–1963.
- 67 Schultz, *Going South*, 182.
- 68 Whitfield, "Joachim Prinz, the South, and the Analogy of Nazism," 107–6.
- 69 Grossmann, "Shadows of War and Holocaust," 101.
- 70 Whitfield, "Joachim Prinz, the South, and the Analogy of Nazism," 108–15; Grossmann, "Shadows of War and Holocaust," 100–4.
- 71 Richard L. Rubenstein, "The Rabbis Visit Birmingham," in Staub (ed.), *The Jewish 1960s*, 23–30 (26).
- 72 Schultz, *Going South*; Staub (ed.), *The Jewish 1960s*, 1–34.
- 73 Albert Vorspan, "In St. Augustine," 21.
- 74 Arnold Jacob Wolf: "Overemphasizing the Holocaust [1979]," in *Unfinished Rabbi. Selected Writings of Arnold Jacob Wolf*, ed. by Jonathen S. Wolf, with a Foreword by Eugene S. Borowitz (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998), 196–200 (200).
- 75 "The Issue is Silence."
- 76 "The Issue is Silence."

Images

- Page 3: Swimming Pool:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:James_Brock_pouring_muriatic_acid.jpg
- Page 7: Prinz speaks at March:
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Joachim_Prinz_speaking_at_March_on_Washington,_with_Bayard_Rustin_pictured,_1963_\(6891546869\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Joachim_Prinz_speaking_at_March_on_Washington,_with_Bayard_Rustin_pictured,_1963_(6891546869).jpg)
- Page 12: King and Prinz at Fundraising event:
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Joachim_Prinz,_Martin_Luther_King,_Jr.,_and_Shad_Polier_at_American_Jewish_Congress_fundraising_event_\(8388548824\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Joachim_Prinz,_Martin_Luther_King,_Jr.,_and_Shad_Polier_at_American_Jewish_Congress_fundraising_event_(8388548824).jpg)
- Page 14: Prinz Portrait:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rabbi_Prinz.jpg
- Page 16: Extract from article “Life without Neighbours”, *Jüdische Rundschau*, 17th April 1935.
- Page 21: Shad Polier and MLK:
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Martin_Luther_King,_Jr._talking_with_Shad_Polier_while_shaking_hands_with_unidentified_smoking_man_at_American_Jewish_Congress_fundraising_event_\(8387461455\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Martin_Luther_King,_Jr._talking_with_Shad_Polier_while_shaking_hands_with_unidentified_smoking_man_at_American_Jewish_Congress_fundraising_event_(8387461455).jpg)
- Page 23: Group Picture in front of Lincoln Memorial:
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Civil_Rights_March_on_Washington,_D.C._\(Leaders_of_the_march_posing_in_front_of_the_statue_of_Abraham_Lincoln..._-_NARA_-_542063_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Civil_Rights_March_on_Washington,_D.C._(Leaders_of_the_march_posing_in_front_of_the_statue_of_Abraham_Lincoln..._-_NARA_-_542063_(cropped).jpg)

Friends of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies

We invite you to join the group of supporters whose contributions help to underpin the work of the Centre.

The annual subscription is £30.00
(£20.00 for students and the unwaged)

As a Friend of the Centre you will be entitled to:

- Prior notice of, and invitations to lectures, conferences and exhibitions both at the University of Sussex and in London
- Complimentary Centre for German-Jewish Studies research papers
- Opportunities to meet distinguished speakers and lecturers at special receptions
- The Newsletter of the Centre
- The Centre's Annual Report
- Regular reports about activities and events in which the Centre is participating
- Special discounts on publications produced by the Centre

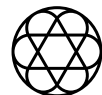
If you would like to join, please contact:

Diana Franklin, Centre Manager

E: d.franklin@sussex.ac.uk

T: +44 (0) 1273 678771

W: www.sussex.ac.uk/research/centres/jewish-studies



Centre for
German-Jewish Studies

The logo of the Centre for German-Jewish Studies, the Star of David encircled by a rose, symbolizes the ideal of co-operation between the two communities



It derives from a decorative motif in the old synagogue at Dresden, constructed to the designs of Gottfried Semper in 1840, destroyed by the Nazis in 1938.

For further information, please contact:

The Director
Weidenfield Institute of Jewish Studies
Arts Building
University of Sussex
Brighton BN1 9QN

E: g.reuveni@sussex.ac.uk

This is a publication of the
Weidenfield Institute / Centre for German-Jewish Studies
University of Sussex.

www.sussex.ac.uk/research/centres/jewish-studies

All copyright remains with the author.

Price: £14.00

US
UNIVERSITY
OF SUSSEX