

Introduction

Making the Decision

FIGHTING BACK

As a child in California, Vivian Leburg Rothstein (b. 1946) saw blue numbers that had been tattooed onto adult arms and heard the mournful, bitter stories of concentration camp survivors. She contrasted the romantic life her artistic parents had led in Europe with her mother's struggle to raise two children as a single parent and woman refugee. For Leburg, "[T]he Holocaust was the defining fact of my childhood. I was raised totally in a community of refugees. That's what propelled me into oppositional politics. I was used to being outside the mainstream. That made it easier to be critical and to identify with the oppression of Blacks."¹ Tired of being "a follower and not a leader" in the Berkeley Free Speech Movement, sophomore Leburg signed up to register Black voters in Mississippi for the summer of 1965.

Gertrude "Trudy" Weissman Orris (b. 1916) joined her husband, a military doctor, in Germany, at the end of World War II. As Orris recounts, "Whenever I met anybody German, I would say to them, 'What did you do during the war?'" One evening, a German musician said to her, "If you're asking me if I was a coward, I was a coward. I knew what was happening, but I couldn't do anything about it. My best friend was taken away. Now let me ask you something—what are you going to do when your turn comes?" Stunned, Orris recalls, "I stopped. I couldn't answer him. I said I didn't know what I would do but I would hope that I would do the right thing." The man said, "What you hope and what you do are two different things."

"When I came back to the United States," notes Orris, "I was a different person. I felt that the most important thing that I could do is to work in the Black movement. If anything happened, then somebody didn't have to say to me, what did you do?"² In addition to going south several times for freedom rides and major demonstrations, Orris would

help bring national attention and resources to the southern movement as one of the founders of New York Parents of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

At age six, racism became a personal issue for Faith Holsaert (b. 1943). When Holsaert's parents divorced, her mother and Charity Bailey, Holsaert's African-American music teacher who rented a room in her parents' Greenwich Village apartment, became a "couple," raising Holsaert and her sister. This family, highly unusual by 1950s standards, endured constant taunts on the street and more subtle forms of racism, sexism, and homophobia from their communities. Yet even this couple balked twelve years later when eighteen-year-old Holsaert announced in December 1961 that she was going south for the first time to get arrested at a sit-in in Christfield, Maryland. Despite the fact that Holsaert's decision was a product of her upbringing in their household, her mother and Charity Bailey expressed ambivalence and fear. When several churches were burned in southwest Georgia in the summer of 1962, Holsaert had to find the inner strength to take the next step on her own—to go south as one of the first white women to join the volatile Albany, Georgia, movement.

Whether they knew it or not at the time, the decision to go south for civil rights would ultimately transform the lives of the fifteen Jewish women whose stories comprise this narrative. As the women describe their various motivations, distinctive patterns and themes emerge. This book examines their decision and documents the experiences of these women as actors in the 1960s civil rights movement. The stories recounted here are primarily those of northern women connected to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee because in the South, SNCC (founded in 1960 by Black students) was the most grassroots and democratic organization accessible to white volunteers. SNCC provided a home for white antiracist activists at a time when the very notion of white antiracism was all too rare to most Americans, despite the existence of a white antiracist tradition.³

What Vivian Leburg Rothstein, Trudy Weissman Orris, and Faith Holsaert had in common was personal experience with the effects of fascism and racism. The civil rights movement gave them the opportunity to fight back and they seized it. Jewish women had many motives for going south, but their primary impetus was clearly to be part of a democratic movement to combat racial injustice. Like many young people of their generation, they sought to hold the United States to its democratic ideals. Yet, they made their decision to join the movement from

a more specific historical location: as women in mid-twentieth-century American Jewish life.

Rothstein, Holsaert, and most other northern Jewish women who went south were part of a transitional generation. Born between 1935 and 1946, the Great Depression and the end of World War II, the core group of women in this book grew up in families intimately familiar with struggle. They were the daughters and granddaughters of Jewish immigrants striving to succeed in the United States. They had direct experiences with working-class Jewishness even as the American Jewish community began its extraordinary socioeconomic climb. At formative ages, many had moved from the warmth and tumult of urban extended family life to the more affluent alienation of the suburbs. For many, family deviations from the 1950s cultural norm (such as divorce, the early death of a parent, physical disability, or parental radicalism) made them feel different and helped them identify with others who were different. Their "in-between-ness" facilitated the decision to go south and their ability to cross boundaries of various kinds.

The act of going south required them to traverse geographic, racial, gender, ethnic, class, and political boundaries. Risking their lives for democratic ideals, they had little time to reflect on what these aspects of their "identities" might mean to them. Yet, Jewish women civil rights activists present an interesting example of women with multiple and contradictory identities. They were relatively privileged, well-educated northern students who chose to go south to work in a social justice movement; still they often felt slightly outside the mainstream. They were Jewish women from families and a culture that both encouraged and limited their life choices. They were the children of Jews struggling to assimilate into American culture without losing their Jewish connection entirely. They were white women in a movement led most visibly by Black men. They were competent and experienced, willing to take action before the feminist movement made it legitimate to do so. They were secular Jews in a Black Christian movement working in the anti-Semitic and virulently racist South. As such, they began to see their own experiences and those of African Americans from a variety of perspectives. This raised many challenging questions that would inform their complex responses to future movements based on identity politics. These movements led many groups to organize politically around a single facet of identity, such as race, gender, or ethnicity.

What did being Jewish mean, if anything, for the women who went south? Though most of the women interviewed did not identify

strongly as Jewish while in the movement, “Jewishness” nevertheless played an important role in the development of their political, antiracist consciousness. Despite varying degrees of alienation and/or identification with Judaism, Jewish backgrounds, traditions, politics, and values did shape their worldviews and commitments. Though less directly than Rothstein and Orris, almost all the women interviewed had absorbed a sense of World War II and the Holocaust at young ages. Nightmares about Nazis and fantasies of joining the Resistance haunted their dreams. The Holocaust permeated their consciousness before the Jewish community could talk about it openly. Many, asking themselves how they would have responded if they had been in Europe, welcomed the chance to answer that question for themselves, to “resist” in a fight that was less obviously about their own survival.

Though the struggle was not directly about Jewish survival, it was not unrelated to Jewish identity.⁴ In a range of ways, these women were exposed to a liberal Jewish moral framework of social justice that made involvement in the civil rights movement almost irresistible. As a number comment, once they heard about the movement, “I just knew I had to be there.” For many, involvement in the civil rights movement was a creative application of a primary message of their parents’ generation: to embrace both American and Jewish identity.

Some but not all were children of Old Left families. For these women, activism was in keeping with family values. Not surprisingly, those with roots in Left politics (Trudy Weissman Orris, Harriet Tanzman, Dorothy “Dottie” Miller Zellner) articulated the strongest connection between a Jewish cultural identity and their politics. Others who came from liberal Democratic families retained a sense of *tikkun olam* (Hebrew for “repair of the world”). For those politically disinclined toward Zionism as a nationalist movement, the civil rights movement before 1966 provided an opportunity to fight for both “American” and “Jewish” social justice ideals.

The stories of Jewish women activists in the civil rights movement prompt us to think about the meanings of Jewishness for Jews (particularly Jewish women) in antiracist and other social justice movements. The forces of tradition, history, and Jewish politics legitimize religion as the ultimate expression of Jewishness. Yet, this focus often obscures other complex relationships to Jewishness that do not fit the mold.⁵ Despite a Talmudic tradition that invites dissent and multiple perspectives on any given issue, organized Judaism historically has alienated a number of questioning people who were born Jewish. It is perhaps a tribute

to the power and tenacity of the Jewish tradition that so many rebels have struggled so hard to relate to it. Hegemonic definitions of Judaism impoverish our collective culture by not including a fine tradition of radicals, dissenters, and visionaries.

Antiracist activism is one expression of a universalist concern with justice that has roots in Jewish history, ethics, and political radicalism. For the women in this book, one link between Jewishness and future activism came through lessons learned in their families. Most of the Jewish women activists grew up with a nonpolitical, culturally based Jewish social justice imperative to “do the right thing.” Although their families did not identify as “political,” the message they sent certainly was.

As the women matured and sought to shape lives that would have an impact, their diverse Jewish backgrounds informed their decisions to take action. Once in the southern movement, their Jewish identities would mean different things in different contexts.

STEPPING INTO HISTORY

While routes to movement involvement came in many forms, catalytic events in the South often propelled northern Jewish women into action. Some who came from political families or were already involved in local civil right protests recognized this as the moment to step into a fight that would change the course of American history.

On February 1, 1960, four Black college students in Greensboro, North Carolina, ignited the sit-in movement by taking seats at a whites-only Woolworth’s lunch counter. Images of their quiet dignity as local racists screamed at them and poured flour over their heads rocked the world. Within two months, Black students were demanding the right to be served at segregated lunch counters in seventy southern cities.⁶

By the end of the spring of 1960, students at one hundred northern colleges had mobilized in support of the actions in the South. Among them was Barbara Jacobs Haber (b. 1938), a self-described “bohemian-politico” at Brandeis University. After hearing a firsthand account of the Greensboro sit-ins from Brandeis graduate Michael Walzer, Jacobs was “absolutely galvanized. I’ll just never forget what it was like to hear Michael tell in his very low key way what was going on there and to feel that YES inside myself that I had to be part of this and not to think twice about it, just to do it.”⁷

In 1960, this Black-initiated nonviolent but confrontational form of

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protest catalyzed the white-student movement's militant activism.⁸ During the course of the next year, almost every campus across the country experienced some type of civil rights-related activity: support groups, freedom ride committees, local sit-ins and pickets, and travel to the South. At Brandeis, Haber says, "[W]e got a hundred students out picketing every week at different Woolworth's. I became totally involved in the civil rights movement." Later that year, she would go south to attend SNCC's founding convention.

After dropping out of graduate school (a class "sin" from a middle-class Jewish perspective), Jacobs took a job in Baltimore as a social worker, a helping profession deemed appropriate for women at that time, yet her increasing involvement with civil rights activism challenged gender stereotypes. Like many Jewish women who went south, she got her training with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), an interracial civil rights organization founded in 1942. A member of Baltimore CORE, she relished the challenge of desegregating bars or restaurants in mixed groups: "I was a very macho sort of young woman—and in some ways, stupid. I just liked to go into these restaurants and bars and to be at the front, you know, in their face."

Dottie Miller Zellner (b. 1938) was another passionate young woman for whom the Greensboro sit-ins signaled the start of a journey on which she was eager to embark. A Queens College senior, she edited the student newspaper, as had Jacobs. A red-diaper baby attuned to world events, Miller was looking for a way to connect with the emerging civil rights movement as she graduated from college. That summer of 1960, she seized an opportunity to go south with CORE for training in nonviolent resistance. Miller went to Miami with thirty-five community leaders and was arrested immediately in a demonstration. In the segregated jails, Miller (the only white woman civil rights worker in the project) did her time with twelve white women criminals.

Confronting the culture of segregation was one of many adaptations the southern movement required. Though southern Blacks interacted with whites in various contexts, especially those related to work, they had separate social worlds. Even northern activists with impeccable civil rights credentials had to learn a whole new way of being when they crossed into the South. As Zellner notes, "Even though I had come from the Left all my life, this was my first real exposure to the whole Black social environment. It was my first exposure to Black culture, and certainly my first exposure to ministers and religious people." Cross-cultural communication proved to be one of the basic challenges in

building these boundary-crossing alliances. Recalls Zellner, invoking her New York Jewish accent, "[T]hey couldn't understand me!"⁹

Despite these differences, Miller felt she was finally in the right place. Pleading with CORE organizers, "[D]on't send me home yet," Miller "wangled my way" to New Orleans for further movement work. Though it "was very nerve-racking and scary," Miller also participated in the sit-ins there. Facing with great reluctance the prospect of returning home, she vowed to find a way back south. Her CORE colleagues told her, "[I]f you want to come back, the group to contact is SNCC." Though she did not know what SNCC was at the time, the organization would become her lifelong political reference point.

University of Chicago graduate Carol Ruth Silver (b. 1938) knew what she wanted: a year working in New York before going to law school. With a passionate interest in international relations, she talked her way into a clerk/typist job at the United Nations. Eager to learn, she manufactured excuses to watch proceedings of the Security Council. There in January 1961, she saw Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev bang his shoe on the table during his famous address declaring the Soviet Union's support for national liberation struggles in Cuba and Vietnam.

Witnessing Khrushchev's historic challenge to U.S. hegemony in international affairs broadened Silver's thinking. Thus, she became more receptive to critiques of domestic affairs, such as the persistence of racism. In May 1961, when Silver heard CORE's radio call for Freedom Riders, "I felt as if it was a call to me personally. I could not say no."¹⁰ Within weeks, she was on one of the earlier buses heading south to challenge segregation in intrastate travel. In a letter to her mother from jail, Silver wrote, "Don't worry about me, please. This should be one of the most interesting experiences of my life bar none and certainly something which I will never again get a chance to do."

Sometimes the decision to go south needed to germinate. During the heyday of early '60s radicalism at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, history major Harriet Tanzman (b. 1940) was struggling over what to do with her life. A member of the W. E. B. DuBois Club, Tanzman was also working with the local CORE chapter (headed by future SNCC leader Silas Norman). She had considered going south after hearing some freedom riders speak in 1961: "I was too afraid to do it, but I was very affected by them." Early in 1963, Tanzman heard two powerful Black women leaders speak about the movement. Diane Nash of SNCC had pushed successfully for the continuation of the Freedom Rides despite the violence they encountered and the resistance of CORE

leadership.¹¹ Gloria Richardson, a rare woman leader of the Cambridge, Maryland, movement, endured death threats and physical repression in a violent fight to end school segregation. Enormously moved by Richardson, Tanzman recalls, "She basically invited us. She said that there's this work to be done and you could participate." Throughout the summer and fall, Tanzman continued to study and organize locally, "trying to get myself to feeling like I could just go south, especially since I was studying something I didn't like—social work."¹²

Sitting in the lunchroom of her fieldwork placement at the State of Wisconsin's Youth Division of Probation, Tanzman looked up at a television screen and saw coverage of John F. Kennedy's November 1963 assassination. Her sense that "enormous things were happening out there, the assassination, the war, the strife in the South . . . just somehow gave me the oomph to quit the next day." Tanzman took her scholarship money and went directly to stay with friends in Atlanta. In the first of several "stints" in the southern movement, Tanzman "just showed up in the SNCC office." She helped do paperwork and participated in the revitalized Atlanta sit-in movement.

BREAKING FREE AND SEARCHING FOR MEANING

For some northern Jewish women, the decision to go south blended a search for meaning with a desperate desire to break free of the constraints of 1950s life, including American Jewish gender norms. From today's perspective, it is difficult to conceive of sending young women to college without any expectation of vocation except for marriage and motherhood.¹³ As Wini Breines notes dryly in her study of growing up white and female in that decade, "[M]arriage, the only sanctioned goal for girls in the 1950s, does not lend itself to rational planning as does a career."¹⁴ The college-educated, second- and third-generation Jewish women in this book ran right into the dilemma of what to do with their lives when they realized they wanted more than marriage and family. "The concept of getting married, living happily ever after, and not doing anything after that always bewildered me," Janice Goodman (b. 1935) recalls. "I did a lot of housecleaning as a child. I did not see cleaning the house as an occupation."¹⁵

The need to escape confinement to the home was a recurrent theme. For these primarily urban Jewish women, images of suburban life symbolized the trap they sought to avoid. When asked what enabled young

Jewish women like her to face the danger of going south, Rita Schwerner Bender replied firmly, "I did not see myself as saving anyone, but I did have a view of saving myself from a split-level house."¹⁶

During the postwar period when future civil rights activists were growing up, the development of Jewish suburbs epitomized rapid Jewish social and economic mobility (and its discontents). Jewish intellectuals criticized suburban Jewish life in general as bland, conformist, and materialistic, and looked upon suburban Jews' religious practice (building and attending synagogues primarily to make their socioeconomic success as Jews visible in the community) as anti-intellectual, spiritually shallow, and vulgar.¹⁷ Radical Jews of the 1960s and 1970s were the most bitter critics of Jewish suburbia. Irving Howe contended that assimilation there had extinguished some of the most distinctive qualities of the Jewish spirit: "an eager restlessness, a moral anxiety, an openness to novelty, a hunger for dialectic, a refusal of contentment, an ironic criticism of all fixed opinion."¹⁸ Certainly, these qualities describe the Jewish women activists in this book.

In Newark, New Jersey, housewife Jacqueline Levine (b. 1926) and her five-year-old daughter marched in an endless circle protesting Woolworth's segregated lunch counters. It was the late 1950s, before the Greensboro sit-ins galvanized a national civil rights movement. Not long before, Levine's husband had asked, "Are you just going to take care of the children and the house, or are you going to do something with your mind?"¹⁹ Harkening back to her suffragist mother and grandmother, Levine stepped onto the picket line and into a forty-year career of volunteerism and leadership in the Jewish communal world.

Inspired by her mentor, Rabbi Joachim Prinz, she attended the 1963 March on Washington, which Prinz helped organize. Later, Levine flew in for the Montgomery rally at the end of the 1965 Selma to Montgomery march. Because there was a small contingent from the American Jewish Congress participating, she felt more comfortable going to Montgomery and proud to be there as a Jew. As a highly visible leader, Levine represents untold numbers of women in Jewish organizations who have pushed the Jewish community to live up to its social justice ideals in twentieth-century race relations.

Jewish women's hunger for meaningful action explains their tenacity in facing difficult movement experiences. After she describes a "horrible" 1963 jail experience in Albany, Georgia, that included a hunger strike, Miriam Cohen Glickman (b. 1942) explains why she stayed:

I guess I need to be clear about my commitment. I had many horrible experiences. There wasn't anything else I could have been doing at the time that had anywhere near the pull that this did, of helping make the world a better place. I mean what were the alternatives? I could go back and get a 9-to-5 job somewhere. In those days, women were teachers, nurses, and psychologists/counselors. And Jewish women weren't nurses. So I had the other two to choose from. I would have stayed forever down there. I finally left because I was forced out. But all of us felt that what we were doing was the most important work that could be done. Nobody said this was a wonderful experience. If you find anybody that told you that, they've forgotten.²⁰

Glickman's honesty demystifies the daily work of social-change movements. For Glickman as for other white women activists, including Jewish women, the work of the civil rights movement, while often very challenging, gave life a focus and a meaning beyond those expected for daughters of the rising white middle class at the time.

After Elizabeth Slade Hirschfeld (b. 1937) graduated from Cornell University in 1958, she worked in a genetics lab, at an Atomic Energy Commission lab located at Cornell, and at the Veterinary School. She also, in her words, "screwed around a lot." Although she didn't want to think about it, it was clear that "I wasn't getting married." Slade "was looking for a career or something compelling, something to commit to. The main career for women in the '50s was being a housewife and mother, and there were just no appropriate role models for me, certainly not in my family. I needed something to do that would be something for me. I didn't know what to do. So when the Freedom Rides came along, I felt it was a wonderful opportunity for me."²¹

Some Jewish women's decisions to go south seemed arbitrary on the surface but actually reflected an intuition that the movement experience would liberate them in unforeseen ways. Elaine DeLott Baker (b. 1942) exemplified this dynamic, crediting disgust with hypocrisy as her motivation.

A Radcliffe College junior, DeLott was staying at a friend's house in Cambridge over Christmas break, 1963. A group of friends came to visit, including "a guy who was part of our group and we ended up sleeping together. In that time, there was that kind of loose sexuality. In fact, we had never slept together before, and we never did again, but we slept together that night."²² Breaking sexual taboos must have been both exciting and nerve-wracking for DeLott and her peers, who grew

up in an era when even talking about sex publicly was taboo.²³ Despite the fact that the Pill liberated women of their generation to become more sexually active, young people's sexual expression was still subterranean and subject to social control in the early 1960s, as DeLott's story illustrates.

In the next room, also sleeping over, was a young girl who said she was a junior at M.I.T. When her uncle, a captain in the Cambridge police force, stormed in at five o'clock in the morning, they learned that she "was a townie, a junior in high school, a Catholic girl whose father was dead. Her mother sent the police to arrest her for being a willful child." The police arrested DeLott and her friends (only a few years older than the "willful child"), too, and charged them with fornication, lewd, and lascivious behavior, and corrupting the morals of a minor—one misdemeanor and two felonies.

Paroled into the custody of the college and her Harvard-based dean, DeLott endured a humiliating talk designed to uplift her morals. The dean told her the story of his own daughter, whom "you might call a little wild. But she married someone who was a little boring but who didn't care about her past. Someday you will find someone who doesn't care about your past." After this enlightening talk, the school first expelled DeLott and then readmitted her. "I had to have a police escort to my exams because the court hearing was the same morning as my exams."

As a working-class woman who struggled to find her place at an elite institution, DeLott was incensed. "I felt shame for my parents who had to come. I felt indignation as a woman of the world. As an intellectual, you knew that this was bullshit. So I finished the academic year and said, 'This place is fucked—I'm getting out of here.'" When two Harvard doctoral student friends invited her to join them to teach at the summer session at Tougaloo College, DeLott literally jumped on the SNCC bus heading toward Jackson. That was the beginning of her antiracist education.

DOING WHAT NEEDED TO BE DONE

Jewish women's ability and willingness to work—to handle a variety of necessary tasks—gave them access to the southern civil rights movement and legitimized their participation. Many Jewish women civil rights activists had direct proximity to Eastern European working-class

Jewishness and to working mothers. They were aware of the traditional Eastern European Jewish gender division of labor: women managed family and business; men studied Torah. They internalized a culturally derived, gendered work ethic of doing what needed to be done.

Embodying this Jewish women's work ethic, some northern Jewish women, often slightly older professionals, went south when they saw they had skills the movement needed. Florence Howe (b. 1929) was already a professor at Goucher College in Baltimore by the time she first went south. Having involved her students in local civil rights protests in 1963 and 1964, it was they who pushed her to deepen her commitment. She went to Mississippi in 1964, using her teaching and organizational skills to coordinate the Blair Street Freedom School in Jackson. In a much more dangerous assignment, she returned the following summer to work on school desegregation for a month in Natchez, a Klan stronghold.

During her internship at a Jewish hospital in Chicago, British-born physician June Finer (b. 1935) began to understand American racism. "I began to be really upset by the level of illness of the Black people who would come in at death's door. Their health would be neglected until they were really, really, really sick. It became increasingly clear that the differences in class and income were making a big difference in their health status."²⁴ Finer's relationship with Jewish activist and physician Quentin Young reinforced her perceptions and opened up a world of radical activism in Chicago. She became part of a long-standing interracial organization called the Committee to End Discrimination in Chicago Medical Institutions (CED). Finer headed south for the first time on a CED-chartered train to the 1963 March on Washington.

Providing care (a traditional women's role) in a nontraditional career for women at that time, Finer worked with the medical staff during the 1964 Mississippi Summer Project. She returned in the spring of 1965 to serve for five months as southern coordinator for the Medical Committee for Human Rights (MCHR). Finer managed and dispatched the many volunteer medical professionals who came south. MCHR literally bound up the wounds of SNCC activists on the front lines.

Not everyone who wanted to go south could do so at a moment's notice. Roberta Galler's priority was always to work where she was most needed and for a long time that meant the North. On leave from the University of Chicago, Galler (b. 1936) became manager of the journal *New University Thought*, an early northern-student chronicler of

events in the southern civil rights movement. In 1961, *New University Thought* hosted a SNCC fund-raiser. As activists told their stories about the struggle in the South, Galler committed herself fully to the movement. She had planned to go back to school in the fall to finish her degree, but as she puts it, "I forgot to."²⁵ She helped found Chicago Friends of SNCC and became its first executive secretary.

From her fund-raising, organizing, and press outreach work in Chicago, Galler developed strong connections with many SNCC activists. Some would come to stay with her to recuperate from stress or injuries. Keeping in close touch with SNCC field offices on a daily basis, Galler made direct interventions that brought food, information, money, national attention, and personal support to SNCC centers across the South. Movements for radical social change (and organizations like SNCC) generally fight against great odds with limited resources. Women like Galler manage, protect, and preserve precious human and material resources. They function as connective tissue—taking care of people's needs. The work of revitalizing activist communities through authentic personal connections sustains individuals and their collective vision.

In the fall of 1964, Lawrence Guyot offered Galler just such a challenging assignment. He invited her to come to Mississippi to open the first statewide office of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) at a moment when the entire staff was demoralized and burnt out. After the high of Freedom Summer, SNCC had to face the failure to seat the MFDP delegation at the Atlantic City Democratic National Convention. The next wave of voter registration work that Galler helped organize in Mississippi would empower both staff and local people.

SNCC was small and worked in dangerous Klan territory in several southern states. Therefore, it required keenly aware coordinators who knew the location of each field organizer at any given moment. A number of the Jewish women profiled in this book played such roles for SNCC. This type of coordinating work called for the ability to deal with people across differences, to manage information, to run offices, to assess danger, and to handle multiple tasks amid chaos. These are also skills that women must develop to perform their traditional gender roles. The work performed by many of the women in this book illustrates the different ways they protected the network they cherished as SNCC's "beloved community."

PARENTAL REACTIONS

Once young Jewish women made up their minds to go south, they faced two hurdles: figuring out the organizational connections that would get them there and telling their parents. First, one had to be quite determined as a white woman to work for SNCC at any time other than the 1964 and 1965 Mississippi Summer Projects. Dottie Miller, Miriam Cohen, and Harriet Tanzman all wrote letters to the Atlanta office asking to work for SNCC. The letters went unanswered, probably because the office was understaffed and chaotic and there was no formal process for bringing white students into SNCC other than the Summer Projects.

Second, the women had to deal with a range of parental reactions when they announced their decision. Most Jewish women volunteers did not need parental permission to go south, but they certainly must have wanted their family's support.²⁶ Yet, those women who went, more often than not, confronted parental disapproval. Even women from progressive households had to face parental ambivalence.

The women's decision to put their bodies on the line to fight racism was a transgressive act on a number of levels. To begin with, it carried the potential to cross Jewish class boundaries. Throughout the twentieth century, American Jewish parents invested a great deal of energy and resources trying to protect their children and to ensure their children's future security. They saw higher education as leading almost inevitably to upward mobility and social safety. Activism threatened to disrupt this hard-won and privileged path.²⁷ Those who left college temporarily or permanently for the movement often widened the breach between generations.

For northern Jewish women, going south was also a transgression of Jewish gender norms. Women who had never rebelled before shattered their parents' perception of them as obedient daughters, nice Jewish girls. Jewish daughters were in training for marrying upward, building a family, maintaining Jewish continuity, and supporting a husband's and children's success. The primary injunction was not to make waves. Their job was to ensure that their family and the Jewish community would "make it" in the United States. Within twentieth-century American Jewish culture, the Jewish woman's body has been the medium for expressing the community's gender, race, and class issues. Specifically, Jewish women's bodies have symbolized Jewish ethnicity but as an affluent, acculturating presence.²⁸ Jewish women civil rights activists resisted this symbolic function.

Making waves in more ways than one, many Jewish daughters who went south knew that their parents would not be pleased. While trying to respect parental fears, daughters were mindful that they were enacting values learned at home. When Carol Ruth Silver told her mother she was going south on one of the early freedom rides, Silver recalls that her mother said, "'Oy, my heart, my heart.' My father said, 'Well, just be careful.' My mother said, 'You're going to kill me. You can't do this, it's dangerous.' I said, 'Mother, this is what you taught me to do and this is what you taught me to be. If I don't do it, then I will not be true to all that you have taught me.' She knew it was true and she was legitimately frightened for me. Now that I'm the mother of kids who take risks, I know that feeling, but it's in kids' nature to do that to their parents."

Even the most engaged parents found it hard to watch their children risking violence for an ideal. This hit home for longtime labor and peace activist Trudy Orris when her sixteen-year-old son Peter insisted on going with her on a Freedom Ride to Gwynne Oaks, Maryland, in 1963. "My son wanted to be arrested," she relates, "and I wanted him to go to school." As the bus rolled southward down the East Coast, the entire group passionately debated whether Peter should get arrested. "People took sides, and the majority decided that he should not. He was very young." Whenever she wanted to go south for the movement, Orris had to balance delicately her activist and mothering roles. This was a creative adaptation of Jewish gender roles.

Ambivalence was the best possible response Jewish daughters could expect when sharing their decision to go south. Because their daughters were usually acting in consonance with the values taught at home, parents had a hard time arguing against the morality of the impulse to take action. Still, naturally, they were frightened for their daughters' safety, and all the more so after the disappearance of activists Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney in Mississippi in June 1964.

Ilene Strelitz, editor of the *Stanford Daily* and a protégée of former Stanford dean and liberal activist Allard Lowenstein, had a very stressful time with her mother during the training session for the 1964 Mississippi Summer Project at Oxford, Ohio:

Every night, in complete fear and anguish, I waited to see my mother on the [TV] screen. She had sent me a telegram signed with my brother's name saying that she had had a heart attack and I must come home immediately (none of which was true). Telephone calls, with her screaming, threatening, crying until I hung up, came every day. Long

vituperative letters came from her for me. After the phone calls I would disappear into the ladies' room, and cry out the engulfing rage and accumulated frustration. When I recovered, I desperately threw cold water on my face as it was rather well advertised that there were psychiatrists around looking for people showing signs of breaking down and who thus should be weeded out before they got to Mississippi. *Mississippi had nothing over a Jewish mother.*²⁹

A number of the women had more trouble with their fathers than with their mothers. This often required them to break explicitly with patriarchal authority and values, including overt racism. Janice Goodman had been out of school for seven years and involved in sit-ins and progressive New York politics by the time she announced that she was going to Mississippi in 1964. Goodman's mother reacted with "a mixture of fear and pride" that her daughter was "doing this very exciting, meaningful, and important thing." On the other hand, Goodman's father (from whom her mother had been divorced for some time) took her out to dinner to try to talk her out of going. Goodman recalls: "He said, 'God, it's dangerous, aren't you worried?' And then when he was getting no place with that, he finally said, 'Don't you realize, Jan, that those people down there, they rape and ravage?'"³⁰

Although she was already a professor at the time she went south, Florence Howe's commitment also had repercussions for her relationship with her family. When Howe adopted Alice Jackson, a Black teenager she met in Mississippi, her family "was very angry with me. More than angry. They just refused to see me with her. Same thing. My brother was an incredible racist. I didn't see my brother for about fifteen years over Alice and a couple of other things."³¹

Elizabeth Slade Hirschfeld's mother "was very proud of me. Real, real proud of me. Yeah, she loved it." However, before she left on the sixth bus of the Freedom Rides, she had a huge fight over the phone with her Republican (assimilated Jewish) father. He was furious and screamed at her, "You're a damn fool." Later, Hirschfeld notes, "my dad came around. In fact, after I was married and he had been out here once, he said, 'The problem with you all was that you didn't stay with it.'"

Despite memories of her own flight from Berlin to Amsterdam to New York, Vivian Leburg's mother supported her daughter's decision to go south; her refugee father did not. Opposed to the idea of sending young people into such danger, he tried to bring other volunteers' parents around to his point of view at an emergency meeting of the local

Parents of SNCC group. In an August 8, 1965, letter responding to his daughter's youthfully militant letter from jail, Werner Leburg described this meeting, where, "I can assure you, I did not have an easy time when I talked against these professional speakers."³² In the letter, Leburg's German-Jewish rationalism and moral intelligence warred with his emotions:

Dear Chicky:

As far as I can remember, I never could have tried to tell you that what you are doing is wrong. This would by no means be in line with my social conscience or ethical philosophy.

All what I tried to convey to you and as a matter of fact also to the parent committee was, that within my knowledge of so very many revolutionary movements in Europe and elsewhere I never came across a single fact where young girls have been sent into the front and fireline, except maybe for the so called "children's crusade" during the middle ages, which ended in a catastrophe.

However, whatever the opinions are for ways and means to achieve results, risks have to match possibilities of results and you should not construct your parents' concern about your safety as a disapproval of your present activities.

Chicky, do not take unnecessary risks and that is all we ask for, that is all we can ask for and if you even are able to do that we do not know and doubt it, but we hope so with all our heart. Keep well, Chicky, and good luck to you.

All my love, Daddy

Werner Leburg's poignant letter speaks for all the parents who balanced concern for their daughters' vulnerability with pride in their courage to make the decision to go south.

Exploring the significance of that decision and chronicling the actions that followed, this book acknowledges the ordinariness and extraordinariness of northern Jewish women who went south. Their stories reveal how "ordinary" Jewish women found ways to contribute to the extraordinary fight for civil rights led by Black people in the 1960s. As Dottie Miller Zellner puts it, "The primary lesson I learned is that ordinary people can do the most extraordinary things." Although Zellner was speaking primarily of local Black people, who were the heart and

soul of the southern movement, her statement also applies to many northern Jewish women like herself, who moved out of a relatively comfortable existence into an unfamiliar and often dangerous context in order to take action on principles in which they believed.

JEWISH WOMEN'S INVISIBILITY IN CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY

The prominent Jewish role in the civil rights movement is well known. Jews provided a major portion of contributions made to such civil rights organizations as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which they helped found in 1911; the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE); the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC); the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); and the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO). One researcher has suggested that half of the white Freedom Riders were Jewish, as were half of the civil rights attorneys who went south. Approximately two-thirds of the white volunteers for the 1964 Mississippi Summer Project were Jewish.³³

Although it is clear that Jews played a significant part in the Black civil rights movement of the 1960s, the documentary record and public perception of Jewish participation reflects the roles and experiences of men. In relation to the total U.S. population, Jewish women participated in the civil rights movement in disproportionate numbers. A few of their names appear in civil rights books and a few of their unlabeled faces peek out in photographic essays on the movement, but they remain, on the whole, anonymous. Even Rita Schwerner Bender, the most visible and historically remembered Jewish woman in the southern civil rights movement, receives short shrift as an activist in her own right. When Michael Schwerner, James Chaney, and Andrew Goodman disappeared in Mississippi in June 1964, they became symbols of Black-Jewish martyrdom for the civil rights cause. Andrew Goodman had been in Mississippi for one day when he was killed. Rita Schwerner had been working in Meridian for six months when her husband disappeared. History has seen Rita Schwerner as the widow of a martyr. Women's history demands that we see her fully embodied in time, a woman whose activism preceded and continued after the terrible summer of 1964. Rita Schwerner Bender is but one of many Jewish women activists whose less dramatic stories have yet to be told.

Jewish women's invisibility in civil rights history is not the result of an anti-Semitic, misogynist conspiracy. Their invisibility has more to do with the construction of academic disciplines, the complexities of Jewish identity, the development of identity politics since the 1960s, and the nature of the work Jewish women performed in the movement.

The contemporary disciplines most likely to discuss the experiences of Jewish women civil rights activists have ignored or missed them. For example, civil rights scholarship in the 1990s focused increasingly on making visible the integral organizing role played by grassroots southern Black people. The laudable move away from lavishing attention solely on charismatic leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. to giving credit to behind-the-scenes Black women catalysts like Ella Baker has created more space for examining the contributions of Black and white women on the ground. More community studies and biographies of Black women activists have emerged, but it is still true, as civil rights historian Steven Lawson has asserted, that "we need systematic studies of how ordinary women in their roles as mothers, wives, workers, churchgoers, and professors affected the nature of the movement."³⁴ Lawson does not mention synagogue-goers, Hadassah activists, and temple sisterhoods, but that research is necessary as well.³⁵

Racial sensitivities of the past and present, however, still make such studies difficult, for there remains ambivalence about the role of white and Jewish participants in the movement. And white women, including Jewish women, generate even more controversy, due to the racialized sexual politics of the South in which they worked.³⁶

The 300 white women who went to Mississippi in 1964 and the 350 who worked throughout the South in 1965 were "a relatively anonymous group who lived the daily lives of women's work in a social movement."³⁷ But, if women constituted one-third to one-half of the volunteers, of whom a majority were Jewish, it seems reasonable to assume that many of those anonymous white women volunteers were Jewish. And, as this book documents, Jewish women played diverse roles in the southern movement in addition to teaching and registering voters during the Mississippi Summer Projects.

Research that could inform analyses of Jewish women's participation in the civil rights movement does not address Jewish women directly. For example, although some Jewish philanthropists and activists used the early-twentieth-century phase of the Black civil rights movement as a medium for working out their own issues of American identity, as Hasia Diner has argued, Jewish men may have identified with

African Americans for different reasons than did Jewish women.³⁸ In a comparable way, in locating the roots of the women's liberation movement in the civil rights movement, Sara Evans discusses white women's experiences, highlighting the religious motivations of southern white Protestant women activists, without commenting on Jewish cultural and religious influences on Jewish women activists.³⁹

Among scholars who do address white movement participation, ethnicity has not been a major factor in analyzing whites' reasons for going south. Religion, on the other hand, has been a central theme. Given the centrality of the Black church in the movement, the focus on Christian religion is almost inevitable. However, ethnicity, rather than religion, is a more useful framework for understanding progressive Jewish activists, many of whom did not identify as religious at the time. And to complicate matters further, ethnic definitions of Jewishness are diverse, as discussed in chapter 5, "Exploring Many Ways of Being Jewish."

While many civil rights scholars have had trouble seeing secular Jews as Jews,⁴⁰ Jewish historians have had trouble seeing Jews who are women. A growing number of American Jewish historians do integrate gender into their scholarship, but many tend not to include gender as a category of historical analysis in their research, writing, and teaching. Without gender analysis, it has been easy for historians to ignore the complex and painful racialized sexual dynamics that plagued relations among movement workers. Without this analysis, any attempt to understand the breakdown of the "golden era" of Black-Jewish civil rights collaboration remains incomplete.

Born of the identity politics of the 1960s, racial/ethnic studies seems a logical place to analyze intercultural collaborations for civil rights. Yet racial/ethnic studies has tended not to highlight the experiences of white ethnics. These academic fields started out as places where disenfranchised "minority" groups could recover their lost histories and cultures. More recently, racial/ethnic studies has influenced many disciplines with the central insight that race is socially constructed, its meanings changing over time. The historical complexity of Jewish racial identity seems appropriate to this line of analysis. However, the vexed relationship between the American Jewish community's self-perceptions and the frameworks of multiculturalism hinders reasoned discussion on the critical issue of American Jewish racial identity.

The majority of U.S. Jews are perceived as white and perceive themselves as white. Whiteness allows Jews to be invisible as Jews, enabling

them to pass quietly into the dominant culture. This work questions the category of "whiteness"—particularly in the United States and particularly for Jews.⁴¹ Given the "white skin privilege" accorded much of the American Jewish community, which enabled rapid and widespread economic success, it is difficult to characterize the nature of Jewish oppression in the United States. Thus, despite the existence of anti-Semitism, as well as working-class Jews and Jews of color, it has been difficult to locate Jews within discussions of multiculturalism. David Biale locates one source of this tension in American Jews' attachment to their "privileged" status as the model minority that would define America's relationship to minorities. In the post-World War II era, he argues, American Jews "found themselves for the first time in modern history as doubly marginal: marginal to the majority culture but also marginal among minorities. In the American histories of victims, Jews were no longer sociologically 'the chosen people.'"⁴²

Similarly, despite the consciousness-raising efforts of such scholars as Evelyn Torton Beck, women's studies has neglected to fully integrate Jewish women's ethnic identity into its theoretical frameworks. This may be because Jewish women do not seem to fit well into the theoretical constructs that have energized the interdisciplinary field of women's studies as it has matured: the intersection of race/gender and postcolonial debates. A new generation of younger women and men, schooled in both Jewish studies and gender studies, is starting to create dialogue between the two disciplines.⁴³ Only cross-disciplinary conversations will provide frameworks for approaching Jewish women's experiences in the civil rights movement.

Jewish women activists were more comfortable fighting for Black rights than for specifically Jewish causes. One reason for this lies in the complex nature of Jewish "oppression" at that moment in United States history. Jews had religious freedom, but vestiges of social discrimination still existed, as did Jewish invisibility in a Christian culture. The wounds of historical anti-Semitism were very much alive, including awareness of historic persecution, pogroms, and the Holocaust.

Yet, in the past few decades, American Jews, including Jewish women, have achieved significant educational, occupational, and economic mobility. Most of the Jewish women in this study would classify themselves today as white, middle-class, relatively privileged Americans. The view of most sociologists of contemporary American Jewry is that Jews have "made it" in the United States; they are represented among the most economically secure and well educated of Americans,

making their presence felt in academia, politics, and the professions. The majority are, if not completely assimilated, then mostly nonreligious and unaffiliated with synagogues or other Jewish institutions. The meaning of this lack of affiliation for Jewish group identity is a matter of debate among scholars and commentators.⁴⁴

At the time they went south, most Jewish women did not identify themselves or their motivations primarily as Jewish. Jewish women, while participating in significant numbers in every social change movement from civil rights onward, have rarely examined their own identities within these movements—that is, from their own perspectives as women who are Jews. In the 1950s and 1960s, the category of secular Jewishness lacked both visibility and credibility. However, the ideology of universalism had tremendous appeal both within Jewish culture and progressive political circles. When asked about their Jewishness within the southern movement, many Jewish activists (men and women) said, “We didn’t think in those terms then.”⁴⁵ The universalist spirit is so strong in this generation of activist Jews that there seems to be a taboo against appearing ethnically chauvinist.

For those disinclined to announce their ethnicity, daily life in the southern movement provided little motivation to highlight their Jewishness. When they found their way south, Jewish women civil rights workers were grateful to be able to participate in a Black-led movement that was making history. They were anxious not to call any more attention to their white female Jewishness than racist southern culture already did. They were also working against at least two cultural stereotypes. To Black movement coworkers whom they revered, they did not want to appear as “pushy New York Jews.” To the Klan, whom everyone feared, they were already marked as “nigger-loving, Jewish Bolshevik agitators.”

There is still another reason that Jewish women have been invisible in civil rights history. The nature of some “back-office” work Jewish women performed for the movement reinforced their invisibility. Yet, Jewish women worked as campus organizers, fund-raisers, demonstrators, and desegregators; voter registration workers; fieldworkers and organizers; Freedom School teachers; strategists; communications coordinators; human resource managers; economic cooperative organizers; typists; cooks; sympathetic listeners; lawyers; doctors; and social workers. The kinds of roles Jewish women played specifically for SNCC helped build and sustain the infrastructure of a tiny, underfunded,

Black student-led organization that challenged and transformed the entire civil rights movement.

The narratives recorded here are part of the effort to chronicle the lives of Jewish women activists in what Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz calls the Jewish “political diaspora.”⁴⁶ The experiences of Jewish women civil rights activists are an integral part of a collective Jewish and activist heritage, one that must remain alive and accessible to future generations.

Going South is divided into two general parts, each comprising three chapters. Chapter 1, “Going South, 1960–1963,” chronicles Jewish women’s engagement with the southern movement prior to the 1964 Mississippi Summer Project, which first brought significant numbers of white northerners to the South. It follows the women as they witnessed the founding of SNCC, got on the bus for the Freedom Rides, faced firehoses in demonstrations, and endured days and nights in jail. Chapter 2, “Moving In On Mississippi, 1963–1965,” profiles the roles Jewish women played as Freedom School teachers, voter registration workers, professionals, fund-raisers, strategists, and movement caretakers. Also profiled are Jewish women who came south independent of the institutional frameworks provided by the Mississippi Summer Projects. Chapter 3, “Crossing Boundaries: Jewishness in the South, 1960–1967,” investigates the contexts in which Jewishness mattered for northern Jewish women civil rights workers in the South. Within the framework of twentieth-century southern Jewish history, it examines the stories of Jewish women’s encounters with the Ku Klux Klan, southern Jews, and southern Black communities during the movement.

The second part examines the ways in which Jewish culture and contexts influenced the women’s decision to go south for civil rights. Chapter 4, “Uncovering Family Legacies,” examines the sources of activist Jewish women’s developing consciousness by looking at family backgrounds. Family economic struggles, political culture, racial views, and gender dynamics fostered the women’s receptivity to the radical call of the civil rights movement. Chapter 5, “Exploring Many Ways of Being Jewish,” looks into the ways that the women see Jewishness shaping their worldviews and commitments. In addition to examining the women’s early encounters with religious institutions, experiences of anti-Semitism, and knowledge of the Holocaust, the chapter locates these women in a broader tradition of Jewish women’s radicalism. Chapter 6, “Creating a Living Legacy,” looks at the women’s efforts to find meaningful ways to live and contribute to social change after they

had to leave the southern movement. One way of doing this has been to pass on their stories because the efforts of Jewish women antiracist activists provide lessons about the challenges and successes of multiethnic, multiracial collaborations for social change.

Going south gave northern Jewish women an opportunity to create existential meaning in their lives through moral action. Going south also provided adventure, "authentic" experience (in which theory and practice were linked), a sense of community, and escape from boring jobs, difficult families, and the prospect of marriage and life in suburbia. The movement offered these women the chance to learn from some of the most exciting activist/theorists in the country—people who worked with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)—such as Ella Baker, Bob Moses, Fannie Lou Hamer, James Forman, Charles McDew, Stokely Carmichael, and a host of unsung local heroes. Working with SNCC provided an opportunity to explore one's "vocation," to experiment with different identities in a youth-led social environment. For some of the women, those experiments with identity included their first experiences with interracial collaboration, assuming leadership, becoming an activist, and exploring sexuality. Through it all, there was the intoxication of the "freedom high," of danger, and of putting one's full self on the line. Jewish women seized this opportunity to bring their skills, passion, and openness to the movement. Their stories deserve a place in history.

NOTES

1. Interview with Vivian Leburg Rothstein, June 26, 1994.
2. Interview with Gertrude Weissman Orris, January 21, 1994.
3. Herbert Aptheker argues that white antiracism, more common among the working classes, women, and those in direct contact with Blacks, has been underestimated in U.S. history. Herbert Aptheker, *Anti-Racism in United States History: The First Two Hundred Years* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1992).
4. As historian Hasia Diner has argued, the nature of twentieth-century Black-Jewish collaboration mixes altruism with self-interest. Identification with the plight of African Americans and efforts to "help" them enabled American Jews to explore and consolidate their own identities as Americans. Michael Rogin's linkage of Jewish civil rights workers with immigrant Jewish entertainers who wore blackface stretches the analogy too far. However, Naomi Seidman's analysis is more resonant with the experience of Jewish civil rights workers and contemporary Jewish progressives. She argues that "in the absence of a

particularist Jewish political affiliation that could also satisfy the progressive universalist agenda with which Jewish politics has been historically linked, adopting the particularist position of another group paradoxically becomes a distinctly Jewish act." Thus she "names" a "Jewish politics of vicarious identity," which, if conceptualized with respect for the real contributions of Jewish cross-cultural activists, helps illuminate the American Jewish progressive tradition. See Hasia Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915–1935* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977); Michael Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); and Naomi Seidman, "Fag-Hags and Bu-Jews: Toward a (Jewish) Politics of Vicarious Identity," in Biale et al., 261.

5. Jewish law defines any child of a Jewish mother as Jewish. Any group, particularly one as historically reviled as the Jews, must create boundaries to define who is a safe member of the community and who is a threatening outsider.

6. Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: Free Press, 1984), 195.

7. Interview with Barbara Jacobs Haber, February 20, 1994. Michael Walzer went on to become a noted political philosopher and the author of many books, including *Exodus and Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), a meditation on the political meaning of the biblical Exodus story. Walzer has used his early civil rights experiences to reflect on contemporary Black-Jewish relations. See Walzer, "Blacks and Jews: A Personal Reflection," in Jack Salzman and Cornel West, eds., *Struggles in the Promised Land* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

8. Morris, 222.

9. Quoted in Fred Powlledge, *Free at Last? The Civil Rights Movement and the People Who Made It* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 222.

10. Interview with Carol Ruth Silver, February 9, 1994.

11. Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 34.

12. Interview with Harriet Tanzman, October 15, 1993.

13. By 1956, one-fourth of all urban white college women married while still in college. Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 79.

14. Wini Breines, *Young, White, and Miserable: Growing Up Female in the 1950s* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 107.

15. Interview with Janice Goodman, October 21, 1993. The rebellion of daughters of the aspiring white middle class against the idea of being "the wife of a house" helped inspire the early moments of second wave feminism. However, the failure to make visible the relationship between such aspirations and Black women's domestic work created tensions in the women's movement.

16. Telephone conversation with Rita Schwerner Bender, February 1994.
17. Edward S. Shapiro, *A Time for Healing: American Jewry since World War II* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 151.
18. Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers*, cited in *ibid.*, 152.
19. As recounted during interview with Jacqueline Levine, October 1993.
20. Interview with Miriam Cohen Glickman, February 11, 1994.
21. Interview with Elizabeth Slade Hirschfeld, February 10, 1994.
22. Interview with Elaine DeLott Baker, September 23, 1994.
23. John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 282.
24. Interview with June Finer, December 21, 1993.
25. Interview with Roberta Galler, December 10, 1994.
26. McAdam, *Freedom Summer*, 65.
27. Some Jewish women civil rights veterans became lifelong radicals, just getting by with modest wages from progressive organizations.
28. Riv-Ellen Prell, "Why Jewish Princesses Don't Sweat: Desire and Consumption in Postwar American Jewish Culture," in Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, ed., *The People of the Body: Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993).
29. Excerpt from Strelitz's unpublished memoir, cited in Mary Aickin Rothschild, "White Women Volunteers in the Freedom Summers," *Feminist Studies* 5, no. 3 (fall 1979): 475, emphasis added. Also, see William Chafe, *Never Stop Running: Allard Lowenstein and the Struggle to Save American Liberalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), for discussion of Ilene Strelitz and other Allard Lowenstein civil rights protégées.
30. In recounting the story, Goodman said, "So hey, my father was a racist. You know, in his heart of hearts, he ended up being a racist. Not an active racist because he was a jolly person and he was a basically decent person. On a one-to-one [basis], he wouldn't hurt anybody and was good natured. But as a political matter, he was basically a racist." Goodman's distinction between "active racism" and her father's "political racism" is an honest attempt to grapple with the difficult question of Jewish racism. Adrienne Rich also distinguishes forms of racism, (1) active domination and (2) passive collusion; Jews may participate in both forms, as well as in resistance to racism. Jewish racism has its own dynamics. It often derives from a sense of victimization and consequent commitment to protecting oneself and one's family from harm, as with Goodman's father. See Adrienne Rich's classic essay, "Disloyal to Civilization: Feminism, Racism, and Gynophobia," in *On Lies, Secrets, and Silences: Selected Prose, 1966-1978* (New York: Norton, 1979).
31. Interview with Florence Howe, December 1, 1993.
32. I am very grateful to Vivian Leburg Rothstein for sharing her father's letter with me. She subsequently published parts of the letter in "Reunion," *Boston Review* (December/January 1994-95): 8-11, a piece reflecting on her ex-

perience at the 1994 Mississippi Freedom Summer Project 30th Anniversary Reunion.

33. Jonathan Kaufman, *Broken Alliance: The Turbulent Times between Blacks and Jews in America* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 93. Kaufman does not state the source of these figures, which are often repeated, as in Shapiro, 223.

34. Steven Lawson, "Freedom Then, Freedom Now: The Historiography of the Civil Rights Movement," *American Historical Review* 96 (April 1991): 456-471.

35. There is a modest literature on efforts by Jewish women's organizations to oppose racism. See Cheryl Greenberg on the National Council of Jewish Women in "Negotiating Coalition: Black and Jewish Civil Rights Agencies in the Twentieth Century," in Salzman and West. Joyce Antler contrasts the NCJW's cautious approach with the antiracist activism of the more working-class and radical Emma Lazarus Federation of Jewish Women's Clubs. Joyce Antler, *The Journey Home: Jewish Women and the American Century* (New York: Free Press, 1997).

36. Critiques of such white feminist historians of the civil rights movement as Sara Evans and Mary Aickin Rothschild, often center on the perception that they focus too much on white women's sexual experiences in the movement. Two forthcoming collections of essays by women veterans of SNCC—one by nine white women and one by an interracial group of fifty authors—will illuminate a broad range of women's experiences in SNCC.

37. Rothschild, "White Women Volunteers in the Freedom Summers," 475.

38. Building on Hasia Diner's insight that Black-Jewish collaboration mixes altruism with self-interest, *Going South* explores some of the "gendered" ways in which joining the civil rights movement helped Jewish American women expand their self-conceptions and life options.

39. Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980).

40. Clayborne Carson has come the closest to explaining the Black-Jewish alliance in SNCC with his essentially accurate statement that "a number of Blacks and Jews became similarly alienated from prevailing white cultural values to the point that they became more like each other than like the most culturally distinctive members of their own groups." However, an undifferentiated interpretation of this "alienation" does not quite capture the ways in which Jewishness influenced Jewish civil rights activists—before, during, and after the movement—nor does it address issues of gender. See Clayborne Carson, "Blacks and Jews in the Civil Rights Movement: The Case of SNCC," in Jack Salzman et al., eds., *Bridges and Boundaries: African Americans and American Jews* (New York: Braziller, 1992), 38.

41. "Whiteness studies" has now become a multidisciplinary field that includes studies of Jewish "whiteness." Ruth Frankenberg's pioneering ethnography of women's whiteness also notes briefly the social construction of Jewish

whiteness. Karen Brodtkin extends this analysis. See Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 11, 275; and Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998).

42. For an analysis of American Jewish economic success, see Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, *Jews and the New American Scene* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997). For the challenges of placing Jews within discussions of multiculturalism, see Biale et al. and Marla Brettschneider, ed., *The Narrow Bridge: Jewish Views on Multiculturalism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996). The quotation is from David Biale, "The Melting Pot and Beyond: Jews and the Politics of American Identity," in Biale et al., 27–28.

43. Evelyn Torton Beck, "The Politics of Jewish Invisibility," *NWSA Journal* (Autumn 1988); Peskowitz and Levitt; Laura Levitt, *Jews and Feminism: The Ambivalent Search for Home* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Rebecca Alpert, *Like Bread on a Seder Plate: Jewish Lesbians and the Transformation of Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); and Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, eds., *Jews and Other Differences: The New Jewish Cultural Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

44. More traditional scholars and commentators tend to focus anxiously on monitoring Jewish continuity (fear of assimilation). For a critique of dominant trends in discourses on Jewish identity, see Laurence Silberstein, ed., *Mapping Jewish Identities* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

45. Debra Schultz, *We Didn't Think in Those Terms Then: Narratives of Jewish Women in the Southern Civil Rights Movement, 1960–1966* (diss.) (Ann Arbor: UMI Press, 1995).

46. Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz issues a ringing call in her essay "To Be a Radical Jew in the Late 20th Century": "Everyone knows that Jews are all over progressive movements, what I've come to think of as the political diaspora. Maybe our task is to ingather the Jews, just a little, into a new civil and human rights coalition, in which we are present and visible as Jews. It means being proud of our collective strength, confident that we can use it right. Someone will always call us pushy. Isn't it time to really push?" Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, *The Issue Is Power: Essays on Women, Jews, Violence, and Resistance* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Foundation Books, 1992), 149.