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A CRITICAL PSYCHOBIOGRAPHY OF KIVIE KAPLAN
AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF BLACK-JEWISH RELATIONS

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for Ordination

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DIGEST

For more than seventy years Jews and Blacks worked together closely, promoting civil rights in America. The list of Jews and Jewish institutions involved in civil rights and other Black causes is quite extensive. One of the last Jews on this long list was Kivie Kaplan, an active Reform Jew and the national president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People from 1966-1975.

In this thesis I examine the relationship between Blacks and Jews during the first seventy years of the twentieth century. The different areas in which Blacks and Jews were involved in cooperative efforts are examined as well as those areas in which they found themselves divided. Some explanation of the attitudes of each toward the other during this period is given as well.

I then go on to look at the life of Kivie Kaplan as reflected in his personal correspondence and papers. Areas explored include details about his personal life, his business career, his philanthropic efforts and activities in the Jewish community. The concluding sections of this thesis deal with Kivie Kaplan's involvement in the NAACP. Also included are a bibliography on Black-Jewish relations and on Kivie Kaplan. Finally, there is an index to the entire thesis.

DEDICATION

This thesis is affectionately dedicated to my teacher and friend Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus. As a teacher Dr. Marcus instructs through example. By observing him I have learned to approach a subject with an open mind being well prepared and organized. While listening to him I have learned to take pride in my work and see it as a reflection of myself. From watching him I have come to understand the importance of digging below the surface and reading between the lines in order to find the truth. When talking with him I have realized how much and yet how little I really know. To know Dr. Marcus is to discover that to be a rabbi is to care about others.

As my friend, Dr. Marcus has offered Beverly and me warmth, help, support and encouragement. I am grateful to him for his interest in our well being and the well being of "Jacob and Esau". I am also appreciative of the odd jobs at 401 which I have only seen as welcome opportunities to visit with him. For all of this and much more I thank Dr. Marcus.

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To my brother and sisters, Stacey, Marla and David-I want to thank you for the encouragement and support you have given Beverly and me over the years. Though distance has separated us, your care and love has always been with us.

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To my mother and father, Jack and Florence Engel-I thank you for believing in me and in whatever path I have decided to follow in my life. Your pride, love and support of me, whether I chose to be a pizza man or a rabbi, has meant a lot to me. Thank you for giving me confidence in myself, a confidence that has allowed me to develop and grow.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis represents the first critical biography written on Kivie Kaplan. His life merits such a study because of his active involvement in both the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He was involved in these organizations at a time when both were going through major changes internally and changes in relation to one another. Throughout the years he served on numerous Boards and Committees of the UAHC and NAACP and as the national president of the NAACP from 1966-75. Kivie Kaplan also supported various other Black and Jewish organizations by giving his money, time and talents. After a very successful business career Kivie gave millions of dollars to these causes and persuaded hundreds of others to do so as well. In the '60s and '70s he spent over a hundred hours a week writing letters, travelling, phoning and networking for Blacks and Jews.

Kivie Kaplan was a successful businessman turned philanthropist. He was a modest person who was profoundly dedicated to the ideals of racial and religious equality. Kivie manifested this idealism by attempting to bring Blacks and Whites, Jews and non-Jews together whenever possible. In order to accomplish this Kivie Kaplan befriended some of the most important Black and Jewish leaders in the country.

Kivie was involved in Black causes at a time of great turmoil in Black-White relations and Black-Jewish relations. In the 1970s, while most Whites, including Jews, were withdrawing from Black civil rights organizations like the NAACP, Kivie Kaplan became more involved and dedicated. One thing that makes Kaplan so interesting is that he was an anomaly during this period. The fact that he remained president of the NAACP and so dedicated to Blacks and Black causes during those turbulent times is an important part of this psychobiography.

Given his involvement in Black and Jewish causes any study of Kaplan would be incomplete without an understanding of Black-Jewish relations during his lifetime. Therefore, the first chapter of this thesis outlines the major trends in the history of Black-Jewish relations from 1900-1975. This history points out some of the major events and personalities that helped shape the relationship between Blacks and Jews. A relationship that Kivie had to continually come to terms with as it changed and as he kept one foot in the Jewish community and the other in the Black community. This chapter depends heavily on primary sources since few complete critical histories of Black-Jewish relations during this period exists. These primary sources include media articles, conference reports, organizational minutes and the personal writings of certain individuals.

The second and third chapters of this thesis is a psychobiography of the man. This means not only a written history of the events that helped shape his life but also an emphasis on what made Kivie Kaplan "tick". These two chapters deal with questions of what were the attitudinal, motivational and behavioral characteristics of Kivie Kaplan.

The second chapter is a study of Kivie and his family life, his business career, his philanthropic efforts and his involvement in the Jewish community. The third chapter deals with Kivie's involvement in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Here there are details about Kivie as the president of the association. It also deals with the various other positions he held in the Association and the other "unofficial" duties he fulfilled during his presidency. The chapter also focuses on his personal philosophies about civil rights and his various attempts to bring Blacks and Jews together.

The information for the second and third chapters was obtained primarily from "The Kivie Kaplan Papers" of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio and from "The Kaplan Papers" of the Amistad Research Center, New Orleans, Louisiana. "The Kivie Kaplan Papers" (KKP-AJA) had not been fully and formally studied before the writing of this thesis. This collection consists of 19 Hollinger boxes, approximately 15,000 pages of personal correspondence, organizational materials (UAHC and NAACP), iconographic and

biographical material and news related information. "The Kaplan Papers" (KP-ARC) consists of 6 hollinger boxes, approximately 5,000 pages of primarily organizational material (NAACP) and some personal correspondence.¹

Besides being a psychobiography this thesis also attempts to answer several other important general questions about Kivie Kaplan: What contributions did Kivie make to the Jewish community? What roles did Kaplan play in the civil rights movement in the United states? What did he accomplish as the president of the NAACP? Finally, what effects did his activities have on Black-Jewish relations? It is the final chapter of this thesis that draws conclusions that will answer the preceding questions.

¹This collection was microfilmed and is now also housed in the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, Ohio.

CHAPTER ONE

MAJOR TRENDS IN THE HISTORY OF
BLACK-JEWISH RELATIONS FROM 1909-1975

The purpose of this chapter is to set a context through which to view Kivie Kaplan's life and his involvement with Blacks and Black institutions. Its aim is to illustrate the ways in which Blacks and Jews interacted as well as the purposes and reasons for these interactions. It was in fact during Kivie Kaplan's lifetime from 1909-1975 that "The Black-Jewish alliance" was born, flourished and eventually came to an end.

Until the early 1900s there is little evidence of any organized joint cooperative ventures between Blacks and Jews. Before this time, in the North, there was virtually no contact between the small urban Black population and urban Jews. In the South, after Reconstruction, the only significant contact between Blacks and Jews was where they met as seller and buyer, and as employer and employee. Here Jewish peddlers and merchants were willing to sell to and deal with Blacks. The Jacobs drugstore chain exemplifies the way in which Jews sought to meet the needs of their Black customers. In Atlanta it was impossible to serve Blacks in stores patronized by both races and so the Jacobs family built a store specifically for their Black customers.¹ This is admittedly racist by modern standards,

¹Atlanta Independent, 7 October 1926; 20 January 1927. As cited in Arnold Shankman, Ambivalent Friends:

but the attempt to at least be willing to do business with Blacks is tolerant by segregationalist standards. Along with this, Jews were willing to sell to Blacks on credit as well as among the first to sell Blacks insurance policies. Jews allowed their Black customers to try on clothes even if they did not eventually buy them. A selling policy not practiced by most other merchants.² In addition Jews were among the first to hire Blacks to work in their stores. In most instances the Jew treated Blacks, a group who most business people refused to sell to, quite well "and put business before caste principles."³ These business practices should not be seen as purely altruistic though. Jewish businessmen saw the opportunity to tap a yet untapped market. They could make money from a group whom many others refused to sell to. Besides this, the hiring of Black workers helped to draw Blacks to Jewish stores. One account says that "Jews would employ Negroes only if Negroes patronized their stores."⁴

Afro-Americans View The Immigrant (Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982), p. 120.

²Shlomo Katz, ed., Negro and Jew: An Encounter in America (New York: McMillan Company, 1967), p. 61.

³John Dollard, Caste and Class in A Southern Town (New Haven, Connecticut, 1937), p. 129-30. As cited in Shankman, Ambivalent Friends, p. 114.

⁴Savannah Tribune, 7 August 1924; "What Ben Davis Says," Atlanta Independent, 5 March 1931; Gordon Hancock, "Between the Lines," Norfolk Journal and Guide, 11 October 1930, 14 February 1931. As cited in Shankman, Ambivalent Friends, p. 122.

Black-Jewish relations from 1909-1976 can only be fully understood within the context of the history of the Black person's struggle in America and the history of the Jewish struggle to integrate into America. But most importantly Black-Jewish relations cannot be fully understood nor assessed apart from the larger crisis in Black-White relations. I will propose then, that this crisis has gone through three distinct phases. These three phases have helped determine what the relationship between Blacks and Jews would be from 1909 onward.

SECTION ONE

PERIOD 1: SEGREGATION/DESEGREGATION the Early 1900s to the 30s

It was during the segregation/desegregation period that Jews and Blacks found the restrictions levied against them to be similar. A feeling arose among the Jewish leadership that "if it was good for Blacks then it would be good for Jews and if it was bad for Blacks then it would be bad for Jews." As a result, throughout these first few decades of the twentieth century the leadership of American Jewry went to great lengths to link their names and their fate in American society with Blacks. The Jewish leadership devoted time to organizing Black workers and Black Unions. Jews were paramount in creating and maintaining political and civil rights groups for Blacks. They spent time and used their

influence and economic resources for Black philanthropical projects including schools, health facilities and social service agencies. The preceding constitute the major cooperative efforts between Jews and Blacks during this phase of segregation and desegregation.

TWO APPROACHES TO SEGREGATION

It was during this period that two distinct approaches to segregation emerged among both Black and Jewish leaders. The first group was strongly influenced by the work and writings of Booker T. Washington. His approach was one of "Voluntary Segregation" or "Separatism," the setting up of separate Black churches, Black schools, Black agencies, Black hospitals etc. Washington's other emphasis was on education and its ability to move Blacks up the socio-economic ladder. In essence, he wanted Whites to create separate Black educational institutions in which Blacks could learn to help themselves. This philosophy led him to create the Tuskegee Institute, whose purpose was to give Blacks a basic and technical education. The Institute was set up to "show the masses of Negroes that in agriculture, industry, in commerce and in the struggle toward economic success there are compensations."⁵ He believed that only after Blacks were economically secure could they move into White societal institutions.

⁵Lenora E. Berson, The Negroes and The Jews (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 72.

Washington was also probably the first leading figure in American Black history to make a connection between Jews and Blacks in relation to their political and social problems. In 1909 he wrote in a book entitled, The Story of the Negro, that "with the possible exception of the Jew, no race has ever been subjected to criticism so searching and candid, to state it mildly, as the Negro."

The emerging Black leadership who shared in the philosophy of voluntary segregation knew that the creation of separate Black institutions would require large amounts of capital, most of which the poor Black community could not provide. This led to the call for a program of economic development for Blacks as well as an attempt by Black leaders to solicit funds from wealthy whites, many of whom were Jews. The Jews were after all a logical choice, given that they had empathy for Blacks as well as the financial resources to help them.

This "voluntary segregationalist" philosophy led to the creation of the Urban League in 1911. Its purpose was to meet the economic needs of Blacks, particularly impoverished Blacks, who were now migrating from the South to the North. Not coincidentally, the first Chairman of the League was a Jew, Edwin R.A. Seligman, a noted economist from Columbia University. He was not alone as many Jews were among the most active members of the early Urban League. Other early Jewish members of the Urban League included: Lilian Wald, a social worker and creator of a visiting nursing association

for Black nurses and nursing students; Abraham Lefkowitz, a pioneering organizer of the New York city teachers; Felix Adler, founder of the "Ethical Culture Movement". From 1914 onward the Board of the League was made up of such prominent Jews as: George Seligman, brother of Edwin; Ella Sachs Plotz, wife of the Harry Plotz, a well known bacteriologist; Julius Rosenwald and Dorothy Straus.

The second approach to segregation was represented, at least unofficially, by the approach of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), founded in 1909. Their philosophy was that of "desegregation," of Blacks and Whites sharing the same institutions equally. Most who embraced this idea despised Washington's idea of "separate but equal" and embraced "equality." Therefore these people strongly condemned separatist projects such as the Rosenwald Fund, which financed thousands of separate Black educational institutions, claiming that such projects created inequity and injustice for Blacks.⁶ It was in 1934 that the NAACP "officially" rejected voluntary segregation as a means of advancement for Blacks saying:

The NAACP is opposed to both the principle and the practice of enforced segregation of human beings on the basis of race and color. Enforced segregation by its very existence carries with it the implication of a superior and inferior group and invariably results in

⁶Hasia Diner, In The Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks 1915-1935 (Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1977), p. 178.

the imposition of a lower status on the group deemed inferior. Thus both principle and practice necessitate unyielding opposition to any and every form of enforced segregation.⁷

Since the early 1900s the NAACP's policies and actions, in contradiction to the Urban League, were based on the principle that:

the Black man's struggle for full civil and political rights must take precedence over any program of economic advancement. Once color discrimination was gone, the Black would be able to compete with whites in jobs, education and other avenues to economic stability.⁸

In practical terms, the difference between the two approaches was that the first, voluntary segregation, was more politically passive and primarily required financial support while the second, desegregation was more activist and primarily required political support. This difference would make "all the difference in the world" to the majority of American Jewry who did not want to make political waves nor specifically call attention to themselves. So during the 1910s-40s, while some Jews worked for the desegregation of Blacks and the NAACP, most chose the path of voluntary segregation with its "quieter" philanthropic work.

⁷Joyce Ross, J.E. Spingarn and The Rise of The NAACP (New York: Atheneum, 1972), p. 196.

⁸Ibid., p. 14-15.

JEWS AND BLACKS: THE LABOR MOVEMENTS

While from 1915-30 mostly German Jews were involved in the NAACP, Urban League, and Black philanthropy, the East European Jews were involved with Blacks in their labor movements. Jewish labor leaders were among the first to speak out against the policies of other union leaders like Samuel Gompers, of the AF of L, who refused to accept Blacks into his union. The predominately Jewish ILGWU and ACWU had been encouraging Blacks to join their unions since their foundings. During these early years the Jewish unions in America had been strongly influenced by Socialism. It was frequently through this Socialism that the unions tried to attract "the masses," including Blacks, into their fold. These Jewish Unions had a tradition of even standing up for Black's rights throughout the country. It was the Arbeter Ring (Workmen's Circle) who in 1920 refused to become chartered in the South because Blacks would be excluded there. It was also the Jewish labor leaders who supported Blacks' efforts to unionize themselves. A. Philip Randolph, organizer of the predominately Black, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters was hailed as a hero among the Jewish labor movement.⁹ But the Eastern European Yiddish press of the 1920s also responded positively to other types

⁹He was probably the forebear to the marches of the 1960s.

of Black efforts including the NAACP and frequently featured many articles about Black NAACP leaders. It spoke in positive and sympathetic terms about the Black civil rights movement and praised Jewish philanthropic efforts on behalf of Blacks.

JEWS AND BLACKS: ACTIVIST CIVIL RIGHTS

Civil rights in the early twentieth century was the NAACP. It was the only nationally based, politically oriented Black organization in America. Its purpose was to attain full citizenship rights for Blacks through political and legal means. Given the strong Jewish involvement and influence in law it is not at all surprising then that the majority of Jewish involvement in civil rights from the 1900s to the 1950s was in the legal field.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People began in 1908 when William English Walling, a journalist, and his wife Anna Strunsky journeyed to Springfield, Illinois to investigate a bloody race riot. A white woman had charged a Black man of assaulting her (the charge was later dropped) and mobs of Whites attacked Blacks in the streets. Walling soon published an article in The Independent calling for an end to the silence and a "powerful body of citizens" ready to reverse the tide. That predominately White group became a reality in 1909 and was known as The National Negro Committee.

In that same year 800 Blacks had attended the Niagara Conference in Harpers Ferry West Virginia in honor of John Brown, the Black propagandist. The conference was spearheaded by W.E.B. DuBois who sought to challenge the accommodationist policy of Booker T. Washington by creating a new organization. Unfortunately the "Niagara Movement" was unable to meet its financial debts and so it met a quick demise. Two years later The National Negro Committee combined with the members of the defunct Niagra Movement and adopted the name The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The group was composed of a few Black leaders, New England White Liberal Protestants and Jews. The Association's founders included: W.E.B. DuBois, the dean of Black intelligentsia; Rabbi Stephen S. Wise; Lilian Wald; Emil Hirsch; Dr. Henry Moskowitz of the Jewish Kehillah and several White Liberal Protestants. Wise and Moskowitz were among those who had answered Walling's call and helped to found the earlier National Negro Committee.

In 1910 the first national conference for the NAACP was organized by Henry Moskowitz and Stephen S. Wise. The two main speakers at this first conference were Jacob Schiff and Franz Boas, noted anthropologist. The Jews so dominated this NAACP conference that they managed to bring up and pass the "Russian Resolution," a protest against the expulsion of Jews from Kiev Russia. From 1910-1930 at subsequent civil rights conferences Jews were almost always the featured speakers. In 1913 it was a Jew, J.E. Spingarn, who as the

first president of the NAACP, embarked on a nation wide speaking tour accompanied by DuBois. Frequently as the whole nation looked at and listened to speakers on civil rights they saw and heard Jews and Blacks standing side by side.

When speaking about civil rights litigation and the NAACP no name stands out more than that of Louis Marshall. He was one of the nations most successful corporation and constitutional lawyers and a conservative Republican who had faith in the U.S. Constitution. It was the Constitution, this "holy of holies, and instrument of sacred import as Marshall called it,"¹⁰ that first brought him to the NAACP in the early 1900s. It began in 1915 when Leo Frank, a 31 year old Jewish pencil factory worker was wrongly accused of raping and murdering a 14 year old named Mary Phagan. Marshall had tried to get Frank acquitted on the grounds that a "mob spirit" was the only evidence used against Frank. But this failed, Frank was sentenced to death and Marshall went away from the case frustrated and upset. Before the sentence was carried out Governor John Stanton commuted Frank's death sentence. But on August 17, 1915, as Frank waited in jail, he was removed from his jail cell by a group of middle and upper class gentlemen of the town. The group called themselves "The Knights of Mary Phagan" and hanged him from a tree outside Marietta Georgia. These hooded knights laid the seeds for the establishment some years later of the Klu Klux Klan. Within an hour after the

¹⁰Berson, The Negroes and The Jews, p. 92.

hanging a thousand people came to see his body hanging and distorted. "One man rushed out of the crowd and cut the hemp that bound the victims feet for a souvenir, while others emboldened tore at the dead man's sleeves."¹¹ One report said that "tourists could buy a picture postcard of the hanging of Leo Frank for a nickel in half the drugstores in Georgia."¹²

For the Jewish community the Frank case caused an upsurge of interest in the affairs of Blacks. Before the Frank case Jews thought they less in common with Blacks. After the horrors of the Frank case they soon realized that the lynchings and race phobias were not only targeted at Blacks but now also at Jews.¹³ The increase of statements like those of Tom Watson, Georgia Populist only confirmed this realization. He declared that "the next Jew who does what Frank did is going to get exactly the same thing we give Negro Rapists".¹⁴ By far the most consequential aspect of The Frank case was that it escalated Jewish interest in the civil rights activities of the early 1900s.

¹¹Ibid., p. 29.

¹²Ibid., p. 30.

¹³From 1889-1918 there were 3,200 persons lynched in U.S. of those 2,522 were Black. See Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States 1889-1918 (New York: NAACP, 1919), p.7.

¹⁴Harry Golden A Little Girl is Dead, New York, Avon, 1965) p. 281.

Some time after the incident Oswald Garrison Villard of the NAACP wrote a letter to Louis Marshall linking the work of the Association with the plight of Leo Frank hoping to attract Marshall to the NAACP's cause. He received no response from Marshall at the time. Some years later it was Walter White, of the NAACP and Moorfield Storey, then President of the NAACP who used Marshall's "mob spirit" defense to win a 1923 NAACP Supreme Court case. The case, *Moore v Dempsey*, involved acquiring a fair trial for Arkansas Black sharecroppers. After the trial Louis Marshall wrote a warm letter of congratulations to Walter White complimenting him in the successful use of the "mob spirit" defense. Marshall wrote that "the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone of the Temple".¹⁵ Marshall also sent White a check as a thank you and volunteered his legal services without cost to the NAACP. Garrison had been right in predicting that the legal arguments advanced by Marshall on Frank's behalf did and would continue to serve as precedents and winning arguments in cases brought by the NAACP in behalf of poor, exploited, and unjustly treated Blacks. Once he became an NAACP lawyer, Marshall tried two major cases for the Association before his death. The first was *Corrigan v Buckley* which dealt with restrictive land use. The second was *Nixon v Herndon* which dealt with white supremacy in Texas.

¹⁵Diner, In The Almost Promised Land, p. 130.

As equally important was the fact that Louis Marshall was the founder and President of the American Jewish Committee. Marshall's appearance in the NAACP was the first time a leader of the German Jewish establishment took an active role in civil rights. Later on under Marshall's influence The American Jewish Committee would be brought into the Civil rights struggle. As Jews became more involved in active civil rights in the '30s and '40s Jewish organizations, including The American Jewish Congress and Anti-Defamation League, came to interpret their mandates more broadly to include Blacks and Black issues. It was during this time that the NAACP and American Jewish Congress began to publish a joint annual report on Civil rights in the U.S. It was also during this period that for the first time in the twenty five year history of the American Jewish Yearbook a reference to Blacks was made by a major American Jewish Leader. There Louis Marshall said he believed that there was "a special duty on the white people of the United States to protect and aide this people (Blacks)."¹⁶ Marshall, like many other Jewish leaders, was only active in Black affairs because he believed that helping Blacks would also benefit Jews. After successfully defeating a housing restriction in Washington D.C. against Blacks he said he was doing the work "in the hopes that it may incidentally benefit Jews."¹⁷ Besides believing that civil rights could

¹⁶American Jewish Yearbook 32 (1930): 30.

¹⁷Berson, The Negroes and The Jews, p. 91.

help Jews he also felt strongly about participating in the Civil Rights struggle through the context of law and the American legal system. His belief in the sanctity of the U.S. Constitution led him to work "within" that system in order to make changes.

Louis Marshall led the way for Jewish lawyers to take an active part in litigation on behalf of the NAACP. During the 20s and 30s this was the area of active civil rights in which the majority of Jews were involved. Such notable Jewish attorneys as: Jack Greenberg; William Kunstler, of the National Lawyers Guild and Carl Richlin, of the Congress for Racial Equality all became NAACP lawyers. Other NAACP lawyers such as Arthur Spingarn, Morris Ernst, Charles H. Studin, Benjamin Kaplan, Felix Frankfurter, Arthur Garfield Hays, (associate of Clarence Darrow and Louis and James Marshall) all handled cases that would set the groundwork for the historic civil rights cases after World War II. (*Sweat v Painter* and *Brown v Board of Education*)¹⁸

One of the most important and emotional cases of these early years was the "Scottsboro Case" in 1931. It probably took on greater significance than any other case for the Jewish community because it coincided with early events in Germany. As Hasia Diner writes "The case caused the organs of Jewish public opinion, usually cautious and guarded, to

¹⁸Other cases included (*Moore v Dempsey*-1923), racial exclusion; (*Corrigan v Buckley*-1924) residential segregation; (*Nixon v Herndon*-1927) White supremacy exclusion; The Dyer and Costigan/Wagner anti-lynching laws and Support for the Pullman Union.

question the security of their own status in the United States and Europe."¹⁹ Two Jewish attorneys, Samuel Liebowitz and Joseph Brotsky defended nine Black teenagers who were not able to escape the anti-Black bias of the judicial system in Alabama. Jewish opinion sided heavily with the Blacks saying that the state's legal system was based on "mob rule and race prejudice"²⁰ During this time the Yiddish Press carried some 104 articles defending the Black teenagers, condemning southern justice, and praising the Jewish defense attorneys.²¹ The Jewish community once again saw their situation tied to the Blacks' situation. Some Southern Rabbis and Jewish leaders expressed such sentiments only to find their statements condemned by some Southern Jews. In general Southern Jews tended to be more critical of civil rights than their Northern counterparts. Perhaps this is because Southern Jews might have had to face reprisals for the civil rights work being done right in their own backyards. Whatever the case most Southern and Northern Jews in most instances were careful not to stand out from their neighbors by making strong public statements nor by being involved in loud public protests. This is why most Jewish involvement in civil rights, even in the North, was on the legal front. Given this, the Scottsboro case was somewhat different.

¹⁹Diner, In The Almost Promised Land, p. 99.

²⁰Ibid., p. 98.

²¹Ibid., p. 42.

There are also other individual Jews who stand out in their work in active civil rights. Joel Spingarn held major leadership roles in the NAACP from 1912-1939. In 1908 he was a major political figure in New York State and the Republican congressional candidate for the largest congressional district in the country. He lost the election by a narrow margin and afterward decided to turn his political activity to civil rights. During his tenure in the Association he worked on many projects including a training camp for Black officers in World War I. In 1915 he organized a national effort against a film by D.W. Griffith entitled The Birth of A Nation. The film showed the ravages of Reconstruction on Southern Whites and the degeneracy of the freed slaves.

Stephen S. Wise was one of the founders of the NAACP and remained active throughout his entire life. As president of the American Jewish Congress he was a major influence in eventually bringing the Congress into civil rights work. As a rabbi, he also used the pulpit of his Free Synagogue as a platform for helping Blacks and Black leaders. Wise, unlike Marshall and most Jewish leaders, believed that in order to get things done one needed to "rock the boat". He was a Jewish leader who was willing to actively speak out, protest and use his political clout. He was one of the individual Jewish leaders who was a strong supporter of Randolph and his Union and he would often meet with Randolph to give him advice and strategies. Wise, a

Hungarian born Jew, stood out among the Jews of the NAACP not only because of his Eastern European descent but also because he was one of the first Jewish leaders who believed that "quiet philanthropy" and "legal work" was not enough. He claimed that Jews needed to be more actively involved in civil rights by not only using their economic and legal power but by also using their political power as well.

During the early 1900s three Jewish anthropologists also worked on behalf of the NAACP. Franz Boas and his two students Melville Herskovits and Alexander A. Goldenweiser were hired to work for the Association. Each of these scientists had conducted extensive research which discredited theories of Black race inferiority. These findings were used in NAACP literature and by NAACP speakers who toured around the country. Some said that Boas "did more to combat race prejudice than any other person in history."²²

Other Jews were also quite active in NAACP in its early days. Louis Marshall's son-in-law Jacob Billikopf served on NAACP committees throughout the '20s. Herbert Lehman, Democratic Governor in the 1930s was on the NAACP Executive Board before his governorship. Jacob Schiff, spokesman for German Jewry, helped sustain the NAACP's shaky finances in its early stages. In 1930 six of the forty Executive Committee members were Jews and seven of the forty five General Committee members were Jewish. There were a number

²²Thomas Gossett, Race, p. 418.

of Jews not active in the Jewish community who became involved with the NAACP in the 1930s. Among them were: Herbert J. Seligman, National Director of publicity for NAACP; Ernest and Martha Gruening and Arthur Garfield Hays, all of the NAACP legal team. The active participation of otherwise unaffiliated Jews signaled the beginnings of the spread of civil rights work from the leadership of the Jewish community to its rank and file members and to the unaffiliated.

JEWS AND BLACKS: PHILANTHROPY

In the early 1900s Black leaders from both approaches began to network with the wealthy Jewish leadership in order to raise money for their causes. Black leaders such as Walter White and James Weldon Johnson kept close watch on obituaries of wealthy Jews who had left estates which were to be distributed to charities.²³ Other Black leaders simply initiated contact with Jews hoping to convince them to donate money to their causes. It is clear from all the evidence that the Black leadership used their Jewish contacts quite often to raise money.

²³In one particular case White wrote to James Marshall, son of Louis Marshall, about the will of a Simon Straus who bequeathed \$100,000 for charitable causes. Diner, In The Almost Promised Land, p. 126.

For monetary assistance to Blacks in the early 1900s no name stands out more than that of Julius Rosenwald. He was to Black philanthropy as Louis Marshall was to civil rights litigation. Rosenwald was strongly influenced by Booker T. Washington's philosophies and writings, many of which he had studied in detail. He once even said that Washington's autobiography Up from Slavery "stirred him more profoundly than any book he had ever read."²⁴ Rosenwald would frequently visit Tuskegee and bring wealthy Jews with him whom he would introduce to Washington. After the meeting he hoped that they would want to contribute to Washington's Black causes. In many ways the relationship between Rosenwald and Washington characterizes the relationship between many Jews and Blacks in these early years.

Rosenwald was the main shareholder in Sears Roebuck and Company and one of the wealthiest Jews in America. Among his contributions to Blacks was the money he gave to Southern libraries on the condition that they be open to Blacks. He also funded schools in places where there was virtually no education available to Blacks. One Black writer says that Rosenwald's "philanthropic gifts have done more than those of any single individual to lighten our burdens."²⁵ In 1932 when he died it was estimated that one fourth of Black children were being taught in schools whose

²⁴See M.R. Werner, Julius Rosenwald: The Life of a Practical Humanitarian (New York:Harper and Row, 1939).

²⁵Shankman, Ambivalent Friends, p. 164.

construction he helped pay for. "The Rosenwald Fund" for Black Schools was said to have established 5,357 schools serving 663,615 Black students.²⁶ He also gave money to build YMCAs for Blacks in 25 cities and gave millions for urban housing for Blacks. From 1917-42 "The Rosenwald Fund" contributed \$1,701,928 to various Black health projects including three medical centers in Chicago, New Orleans, and Alabama.²⁷ Rosenwald not only gave money himself but also challenged others to do so. He often told Black leaders he was willing to give money only if they could raise a matching amount.

Julius Rosenwald was the model Jewish leader who approached segregation from the standpoint of voluntary segregation, of separate Black institutions. He wanted to try to work "within the system" and to fight by remote control. For he believed Jews could not afford to "rock the boat" in America. He was part of the Jewish elite that was against high profile civil rights work. But this did not mean that Rosenwald would never be involved with the NAACP, he was. He was among the biggest monetary contributors to the NAACP in these early years. It is clear that he was willing to participate as long as it involved money and not active civil rights work. Many who favored voluntary segregation, like Rosenwald, also counted themselves among the heaviest backers of the NAACP. This is interesting

²⁶Diner, In The Almost Promised Land, p. 175.

²⁷Ibid., p 177.

since the organization was considered the antithesis of the voluntary segregationist approach to race relations. Perhaps Rosenwald and others sharing his philosophy were involved in the NAACP because it was politically and economically expedient for Jews to do so. For Rosenwald, and the other Jewish elite like him, Jacob Schiff, Felix Warburg, Herbert Lehman, Samuel Fels and Abraham Flexner, Jews could establish this presence quietly by influence and money. Of the list of thirty five possible donors to the NAACP compiled by Arthur Spingarn in 1920 nineteen were Jewish. These Jews were all active givers but only a few were willing to involve themselves in other type of civil rights activities.

Among those who were willing to do more than giving money were Jews like: Joel and Arthur Spingarn, Jacob Billikopf, Stephen S. Wise, and Louis Marshall. But Jewish leaders like Wise and Spingarn were even different than Jewish leaders like Billikopf and Marshall. Wise and Spingarn believed in protesting and speaking out against the system by using all the means at their disposal to do so. They were willing and ready to make waves and noise in order to make the changes necessary to help Blacks. While others, including lawyers like Marshall, were willing to make waves but only within the context of the American courts. And still others, philanthropists like Rosenwald, were not willing to make waves at all and believed that funding, given within the system, would promote change.

If one looks at the Jewish activists of the period they will find Jews, who were for the most part of Eastern European descent while the lawyers and philanthropists were for the most part of German Jewish descent. German Jews, many from the American Jewish Committee, were fearful of losing the acceptance they had won in America and so they participated in "quiet" philanthropy. They were cautious and did not want to side with the wrong group. The Eastern Europeans, many from the American Jewish Congress, were closer to the horrors of racism and bigotry in their homelands. This strengthened their wills to fight openly and furiously against discrimination of Blacks.

It is clear that Black Philanthropy was not unique to Jews. Blacks had been a major object of white philanthropy since pre Civil War times. Among wealthy Whites who gave at the time were Walter Page, Pierpont Morgan, John D. Rockefeller and William E. Dodge. Despite their wealth, in the end, Rosenwald gave more than any of them.²⁸ He symbolized the fact that the most actively involved group in the area of Black philanthropy during this period was Jews. Rosenwald's philanthropy also illustrates the fact that most of the Jewish involvement with Blacks during this period was not in activist civil rights but in philanthropy.²⁹ There is no doubt that from 1910 onward Jews were involved in a

²⁸Berson, The Negroes and The Jews, p. 73.

²⁹During this period Jews gave more money to Tuskegee than to any other cause. Rosenwald alone gave more than \$250,000.

wide range of Black affairs. It is clear that less Jews participated in legal efforts than in philanthropic efforts and even less than this participated in more activist efforts to help Blacks. But it is as equally clear that Jews, according to their numbers in the population, disproportionately funded and participated in the total of Black affairs. Although their personal definitions and means of expressing their Jewish response to civil rights differed among the Jews involved in Black affairs, they all shared a common commitment to Americanization and acculturation. A society that could not accept Blacks as equals probably could not accept Jews as equals either.

SECTION TWO

WHY BLACK-JEWISH RELATIONS?

Julius Rosenwald gave a luncheon to honor his Black friend Booker T. Washington in Chicago's Blackstone Hotel, where Blacks were not ordinarily served. When asked why, Rosenwald responded by saying:

Whether it is because I belong to a people who have known centuries of persecution, or whether it is because I am naturally inclined to sympathize with the oppressed. I have always felt keenly for the colored race³⁰

Hasia Diner calls the behavior and alliance of Jews with Blacks "seemingly irrational."³¹ Why would Jews align themselves with Blacks in a country where Blacks were discriminated against openly? Why side with a people who are segregated because of the existence of a separate legal and political system based on race? If the main concern of Jewry in the early 1900s was acculturation and acceptance why ally themselves with those who are not part of the culture and not accepted as "equal Americans"? Historical evidence points to Jews as being the only people that as a group and using most, if not all, of their official institutions, worked alongside Blacks actively and openly. If one simply looks at the publications, books, newspapers,

³⁰Berson, The Negroes and The Jews, p. 73.

³¹Diner, In The Almost Promised Land, p. 236.

periodicals, conferences of or about the period one does not find much written on Black-Catholic relations, Black-Irish relations, Black-Italian relations etc. Yet, the Jewish and Black media produced pages upon pages on the subject of "Black-Jewish Relations." What is unique about Jews or Blacks or their relationship with each other that should lead to such a phenomena?

Historical evidence leads to the conclusion that this alliance was formed due to factors lying in several different areas. First, the fact that Blacks and Jews found themselves in a similar situation when it came to exclusion and discrimination. Second, it was during the early 1900s that Blacks were migrating to the urban North in large numbers. At the same time hundreds of thousands of Eastern European Jews were immigrating to these same urban centers, where their wealthier German Jewish counterparts were already well established. Last, there were certain other historical, sociological and psychological factors that brought Blacks and Jews into an alliance at the beginning of this century.

1. ANTI-SEMITISM AND NEGROPHOBIA

In many instances Jews and Blacks found themselves excluded from many of the same American institutions. Both were excluded from some universities, certain professions, social and professional groups and neighborhoods.³² They were also not allowed into certain hotels and other middle class institutions. It was the Jewish press that frequently reported cases where Blacks and Jews were both discriminated against. Even though a pattern developed where the Jewish Press would report discrimination against Blacks only when it also affected Jews, Blacks and Jews began to believe that they shared a common adversary and a common fate. Instances such as the 1922 Harvard University policy of imposing quotas on the number of Jews accepted, only helped to reinforce this belief. So it is no coincidence that immediately after this particular incident the Jewish Press reported the expulsion from Harvard of Roscoe Conklin Bruce, relative of a Mississippi Black U. S. Senator, from the school's dormitory.

Many of the bigots of the time made no distinction between Blacks and Jews as both were to be equally despised. Father Coughlin, radio anti-Semite; Henry Ford, auto magnate and owner of anti-Semitic newspapers; William Dudley Pelley, of the Silver Shirts; and Wesley Evan, dentist turned

³²Prior to WWI there were restrictive housing laws in effect against Jews and Blacks in Dallas, Atlanta, St. Louis, Richmond, Baltimore, Sharon Connecticut and St. Petersburg Florida.

imperial Klu Klux Klan chief saw the world as being contaminated by the inferiority of Blacks and Jews. But the hatred of Blacks and Jews did not end with these hard liners as some of it filtered down to the general population. One man wrote that it was not the Bob Jordans or the William Dudley Pelley's which posed the greatest threat, but the nice people who at their segregated country clubs recited doggerels which went:

You kiss the Negroes
I'll kiss the Jews
We'll stay in the White House
As long as we choose.

As the relationship between Jews and Blacks grew stronger because of a common enemy, the bigots who despised Blacks began to also resent Jews. Jews were frequently being accused of "being too friendly with the Negroes in town." Blacks and Jews also saw themselves as being in the same situation. Whatever the intensity or specifics of hatred towards them, Blacks and Jews both began to see themselves as "outsiders". As one historian says:

Not even the most vociferous bigot viewed the Black man as an evil, cunning father, who in league with other Black men, was plotting to take over the world. (The anti-Semitic view of the Jew) Rather he (Black) was seen as somehow 'childlike' in Freudian terms as the bad son, the subhuman brute with the superhuman sex drive. But whether these fears focused on the evil powers of the mind or on sex, they have managed to put the Negro and the Jew beyond the pale of Anglo-Saxon America.³³

³³Berson, The Negroes and The Jews, p. 61.

Though they found themselves in a similar situation there is no doubt that there were differences in the Black's and Jew's ability to end discrimination. Jews had greater access to those things necessary to fight discrimination, including more economic and political power. Besides this, just the fact that Jews were white gave them a definite advantage over Blacks. These differences and similarities cast Jews as a kind of middleman between Blacks and Whites and a kind of "big brother" to Blacks. This middleman mentality resounded from Blacks as some even referred to Jews as "Non white, white people".³⁴ Jews began to see themselves as the champions of the Black cause. It is not clear whether Blacks saw Jews in exactly the same light.

One should ask the question if Jews sided with non Jewish whites in their hatred for Blacks in order to gain acceptance into White Anglo Saxon America? Some Jews did, especially in the South, where there were cases of Blacks who resented Jews "whose philosophies were the same as those pursued by other white groups...to curry favor with the ruling classes they had joined the Negro haters."³⁵ Some surveys of the time also indicate that Jews simply had the

³⁴Chicago Defender, 30 September, 1922.

³⁵A Jewish alderman in Atlanta introduced a segregation ordinance. See Hertzberg, Jews of Atlanta, p.308.

exact same attitudes towards Blacks as those around them.³⁶ Though some Jews' attitudes might have been the same as their neighbors, the actions of many Jews and Jewish leaders were often times quite different than those of the general population. Stories about Jews mistreating Blacks, even in the South were infrequent.

There is little doubt that Jewish leaders deliberately chose to closely ally themselves with Black leaders. Jews, some with pogroms still fresh in their minds, empathized with the Blacks in America. To them "The promised Land" was not suppose to foster hatred similar to that which they had left behind. The Forward wrote about the first race riots of this period in St. Louis and Carteret New Jersey:

the blood steams in the veins when we read about what is happening in East St. Louis. A regular pogrom on people, who had the misfortune to be born with Black skin...Negroes who lived in their homes for twenty years and many who were even born there were forced to leave...in the middle of the night and flee..naked and barefoot."³⁷

Once Jews saw themselves in a similar situation as Blacks a major problem arose. How could Jews be a part of White America, which meant accepting the segregation of Blacks,

³⁶Hortense powdermaker, a Jewish anthropologist did a survey of a Reform Synagogue's Sisterhood in Greenville and found that there was "no difference between attitudes of Jews and Protestants towards Negroes. Conversations with some Jews who had moved from the North indicated that some had become more Southern than the Southerners...in order to be accepted by the community." The Crisis, 43 (1936):122.

³⁷Ibid., p. 44.

while at the same time being associated with Black America, which meant fighting the segregation of Blacks and Jews? Jews somehow managed to be a part of both groups by acting in a way to maintain a careful balance in their actions. They remained a part of White America by not making a lot of loud public noise about the mistreatment of Blacks. They remained true to Blacks by not mistreating Blacks themselves and by taking action to help Blacks while claiming that the discrimination affected Jews as well.³⁸

During this period there was a definite and direct correlation between the amount of anti-Semitism and the amount of Jewish involvement in Black affairs. As anti-Semitism rose Jewish interest in Black-Jewish relations rose and as anti-Semitism declined so too Jewish interest in Black-Jewish relations declined. Interestingly, in 1911 when the "Russian Passport" scandal³⁹ broke Jewish involvement in civil rights increased significantly. In a speech given by Julius Rosenwald he said that:

In Russia the Jew is subject to a thousand infamous restrictions for no

³⁸It is clear from the small number of articles in the Jewish Press from the early part of the 1900s that Jews were not concerned with Black areas that did not affect them in some way. i.e. segregated streetcars, public facilities. But there were numerous articles on issues that did effect Jews i.e. Exclusion from Harvard and other Middle Class institutions. See Diner, In The Almost Promised Land, p.28-117.

³⁹Two American Jews were prohibited from travelling to certain cities in Russia and were eventually expelled from the country altogether because they were Jews. The U.S. claimed this violated the U.S.-Russian Treaty of 1892.

earthly reason except that he is a Jew and must be kept down. We Anglo Saxons of course, cry out against this as a barbarous outrage, and comment superiorly on the baseness of Russian civilization, and straightway turn around and exhibit the same qualities in our treatment of the Negro, which today is little less barbarous than is the treatment of the Jew in Russia...As an American and as a Jew, I appeal to all high-minded men and women to join in a relentless crusade against race prejudice⁴⁰

2. IMMIGRANTS AND MIGRANTS

From 1917-1927 hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants arrived in the United States; And most settled in urban centers. Similarly, between 1915 and 1940 about two million Blacks left the South and headed to the urban centers of the North. For the first time Jews and Blacks were living in close proximity to each other, working with each other, dealing with each other in business etc. The new Jewish immigrants that had come to America had no pre conceived notions or past history with Blacks in their homelands. So from their perspective their relationship with Blacks began with a clean slate. For the Black, this White person who was willing to live and work beside him was to be befriended. This created a healthy environment in which Blacks and Jews could come together in various cooperative efforts.

⁴⁰Berson, The Negroes and The Jews, p. 75.

The Yiddish press of the time reflected the attitudes of the Eastern European urban Jews. They mostly printed articles that were extremely sympathetic to the plight of the Black victim of American racism. The papers also featured articles on Black leaders and the achievements of civil rights organizations. The press criticized residential segregation, educational discrimination and the denial of Blacks into Christian Churches.⁴¹ It hailed court rulings, such as *Nixon v Herndon*, where white supremacy was declared unconstitutional, as major victories. The press also featured many stories on the relationship and similarities between Blacks and Jews.

Some Black intellectuals like Booker T. Washington believed that the Black should emulate the immigrant Jew. He thought that the Black, like the Jew, could achieve upward mobility through economic means. Washington wrote that:

The Negro should model themselves on the Eastern European Jewish Community which produced its own world within a world." In this type of a closed society, with its own inner reality Negroes will find dignity and self respect.⁴²

Other Blacks expressed sentiments that:

As money is the American God, and as the Jew has it he is revered...we laugh at the Jew being a race scheming to get a

⁴¹Diner, In The Almost Promised Land, p. 49.

⁴²Berson, The Negroes and The Jews, p. 70.

dollar. We should do well if we imitate
the Jew.⁴³

This desire came to fruition as Blacks filled spots in the service professions left vacant by Jews who moved out of them.

Another interesting phenomenon happened as Blacks began moving into the cities. For the first time organized Black protests against discrimination began. There is no direct evidence of Jews organizing these protests but one can presume that the presence of Jewish labor organizations, Jewish socialists and Jewish political organizations in the cities helped to influence the creation of the idea. After all it was the Yiddish press which early on reported the activities of Black protest organizations in glowing and encouraging terms.

During the 1920s when a xenophobia produced by nativism and anti-immigrationism swept across America Blacks and Jews were it's primary targets. Perhaps Jews saw themselves in a similar situation to Blacks because like Blacks their language, customs and dress appeared to be somewhat "un-American." Or perhaps it was because some of the native Blacks and Jews who were already well-established in the cities saw their immigrant brethren as different. Just as the German Jews experienced some amount of embarrassment and difficulty in dealing with their Eastern European counterparts so too Northern Blacks had similar feelings

⁴³Norfolk Journal and Guide, 24 August 1929.

about Southern Blacks. The wife of a Chicago Black physician writes, "We had been accepted as equals, but as soon as the Southern Negroes began coming in we were relegated to their class. Our white friends shunned us."⁴⁴

3. HISTORICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

Most Jews believed that their involvement in civil rights for Blacks provided them with a special mission and a chance to participate in America. Through their involvement they could be "truly American" because they would be working to uphold the sacred principles of democracy, of the Constitution, Bill of Rights, Declaration of Independence, of equality and justice. It is quite clear from all the evidence that Jews also found that civil rights was a forum for presenting their own causes while still remaining "truly American." Marshall publicly noted that one reason he was involved in the NAACP was "in the hope that it may incidentally benefit the Jews."⁴⁵ One such benefit that Jews hoped would result from their relationship with Blacks was that the anti-Semitic image of Jews as greedy, selfish and just looking out for themselves would fade away. In retrospect, Jewish involvement with Black civil rights did project the image of the Jew of the 1920s, '30s and '40s as generous, selfless and tolerant. Also some Jews hoped that

⁴⁴Berson, The Negroes and The Jews, p. 59.

⁴⁵Diner, In The Almost Promised Land, p.8 153.

if they focused attention on Black civil rights, less attention would be focused on anti-Semitism.

The attitude that Jews and Blacks were fellow sufferers developed among the faithful of the Black community. They compared their own experience with the experience of the Jewish slaves of Egypt in the Bible. Booker T. Washington found the most fascinating portion of the Bible to be the story of Moses leading the children of Israel out of the house of bondage, through the wilderness into the promised land. Washington wrote that:

the Negro slaves were looking forward to a time when Moses would arise from somewhere and would lead them as he led the ancient Hebrews out of the house of bondage.⁴⁶

Blacks believed that Jews could truly empathize with their suffering. DuBois was quoted in The Daily Forward as saying that "The Negro race looks to Jews for sympathy and understanding."⁴⁷ This assumption was a major rubric upon which the Black-Jewish alliance would be built. It continued to be a prevalent attitude until the '60s. A Stanford University sociologist writes:

from 1920-1960 there was a tendency within the Afro-American community to say that the Jewish people understood the plight of Black people because they

⁴⁶Booker T. Washington, The Man Farthest Down, (Garden City, New York) pp. 240-1.

⁴⁷The Daily Forward, 5 August 1923, p.3.

had suffered greatly themselves in the past.⁴⁸

Some Jews, particularly those with a lachrymose view of Jewish history, also saw Blacks as co-partners in their own suffering. In early twentieth century America the Jew and Black saw Blacks as a kind of "stand in" for the suffering Jew of the past. While the Jew saw himself as the experienced champion of overcoming that oppression and suffering.

⁴⁸Joseph R. Washington Jr., ed., Jews in Black Perspectives: a Dialogue (Crandbury New Jersey: Associated University Press, 1984), p. 21.

SECTION THREE

PERIOD 2: INTEGRATION

the 1940s, '50s and, Early '60s

It was during the period of integration that the seeds for the disintegration of the Black-Jewish alliance were sown. According to one historian "Those seeds were as much a result of the success of the alliance as by the flow of historical events which were beyond the control of Blacks and Jews."⁴⁹ This is not to say that the Black-Jewish alliance came to a sudden and full halt during this period, it did not. But the emphasis of it's work had begun to change and this would begin to weaken it as time went on.

1. THE SUCCESS OF THE ALLIANCE

The main goal of the Black-Jewish alliance of the early 1900s was desegregation, to make America's political, economic and social institutions fully accessible to Blacks. By the 1930s this goal had begun to become a reality as desegregation had begun to take place in many of America's main institutions. In political institutions like the Democratic "New Deal" coalition the traditionally Republican Black voter began to be courted and Blacks became a major voting bloc in many political races. Many labor unions began to make the organizing of Blacks a priority and after ten years the Pullman Company finally recognized A. Phillip

⁴⁹Diner, In The Almost Promised Land, p. 238.

Randolph's Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. The Supreme Court began to decide cases which indicated that the doctrine of "separate but equal" was beginning to erode. The Black-Jewish alliance had proven successful for Blacks as their situation had greatly improved.

As desegregation became more and more of a reality it seemed that Blacks needed Jewish philanthropic support less and less. Now that Blacks had access to what America had to offer, the problem for Blacks was "integration". How to make Blacks active participants in the economic, social, political and cultural life of the country. This is not to say that desegregation was still not an issue, it was, particularly in the South. But as the pace of Desegregation increased the need to integrate became more and more important. The realities of integration drove the Black leadership to conclude that "integration" could only be accomplished by active civil rights. By protesting, picketting, demonstrating and tapping political resources.⁵⁰ How were Jews then, the quiet philanthropists of Black civil rights, to respond to this call for loud activism? Many of the earlier "quiet" philanthropists withdrew their support from Black causes while other Jews responded positively to the call. Some Jews who had been disinterested in quiet civil rights now embraced this new activism. As before Jews

⁵⁰The first real move toward integration came in in Montgomery Alabama on December 1955 when Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white man and was jailed. Reverend Martin Luther King called for the Black boycott of all Montgomery's buses.

continued to lend their time and money to Black causes. There were rabbis, communal leaders and students who were involved in the protests, legal cases and political battles of the 40s and 50s and in the sit ins, marches and lobbying of the 60s.

2. HISTORY

History also changed the Black-Jewish relationship. In 1915 the number of organizations and prominent Americans willing to work for civil rights could be counted on one hand. During this time Jews were atypical among other Whites in their public commitment to Blacks. But by the 1930s the groups and individuals supporting Blacks were numerous. As a result Blacks did not have to rely solely on Jews as in the past. Not only because they had other white allies but with the end of segregation they had access to a greater number of areas in which they could be heard themselves. It was a bus boycott in the 1950s that marked the first time that Southern Blacks of an entire community arose en masse to protest. This trend of Blacks taking civil rights into their own hands continued into the 1960s when, after the Birmingham March, "Northern Blacks in large numbers joined the revolution."⁵¹ Another indication of the increase of Black involvement in civil rights, particularly in leadership roles, was the election in 1934 of Louis

⁵¹Silberman, Crisis in Black and White, pp.317-355.

Wright, the first Black, non Jewish, board chairman of the NAACP.

As stated earlier Jews were involved with Blacks not only to help Blacks but also to help themselves. It was during the 1930s that the socio-economic situations of America's Blacks began to change. Blacks did not need Jewish help as much any more. After World War II Jewish insecurity in America began to diminish considerably and Jews began to enter into the mainstream of American social and economic life. At the same time Jews were in the forefront of American politics and law. During this period Sidney Hillman was the liaison to President Roosevelt and at different times three Jews sat on the U.S. Supreme Court. Jewish individuals were also making their marks on the culture of the nation, in literature, art, music and academia. America opened up to Jews and many began to find their way into the most influential circles of American life. So Jews did not need to help themselves as much anymore as well.

It was also stated earlier that as anti-Semitism decreased so too Jewish involvement in helping Blacks decreased and vice versa. By the late thirties anti-Semitism was on the decline. Cultured anti-Semites became more discreet in their expressions of anti-Semitism. So as Jews felt less anti-Semitism and more prosperity the two preceding factors (Jews helping themselves and anti-Semitism) that had made the earlier Black-Jewish alliance

important fell by the way side and so some Jews began to withdraw from the alliance.

JEWS AND BLACKS: CIVIL RIGHTS

Though some Jews withdrew from Black affairs many Jews continued to work actively in several different areas of civil rights work including legal efforts, public protests, marches, freedom rides, and sit ins. As in the past there were individual Jews as well as Jewish organizations that stand out in their commitment to civil rights. Along with this a rather new phenomenon developed in the twenty year period following World War II. During that time being involved in the civil rights movement became a kind of status symbol in the Jewish community. Even some of the most conservative and respectable elements of the Jewish population, which had been indifferent before, became involved with Black civil rights. Shedding their unwillingness and indifference to be identified with the Black man, they openly and officially embraced his cause. As Will Maslow, head of the Commission on Law and Social Action of the American Jewish Congress, put it "a consensus has been achieved in the Jewish community".⁵² It seems clear from all of the historical evidence that Jews were heavily represented in most areas of the movement.

⁵²Berson, The Negroes and The Jews, p. 103.

Accordingly, some reports state that "Jews constituted up to 50% of all white students who went to the South to protest and march."⁵³ Others say that their numbers were very high in civil rights groups including: SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee); CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) and COFO (Council of Federated Organizations).⁵⁴

Despite this, there were loud cries from the Jewish leadership for increased support from the Jewish community. Aaron Henry, Black president of the NAACP in Clarksdale Mississippi, said in respect to Jewish support that, "In the plight for human dignity, we have never underestimated our opposition, but we have overestimated our support..."⁵⁵ Some responded to such allegations by Jewish and Black leaders by saying that Jews were already contributing far more than their "proper share to the civil rights movement, which is commendable and historically appropriate."⁵⁶

How is one to understand this supposed discrepancy in the perception of the number of Jews active in the civil rights movement from 194s-1960? This debate continues even today. This discrepancy between perception and reality

⁵³Priscilla Fishman, ed., The Jews of The United States (New York: Quadrangle, 1973), p. 273.

⁵⁴Number of Jews estimated were between 20-50% see Henry Cohen, Justice, Justice: A Jewish view of The Negro Revolt (New York: UAHC, 1968), p. 19.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 121.

⁵⁶Katz, Negro and Jew, p. 2.

though, seems to have been created as a result of several factors.

First, some Southern Jews might have believed that it was not in their best interest to be involved in civil rights. They were comfortable with the way things were. Others, even if they were involved might not have wanted to publicly confess their involvement, for fear of condemnation from their neighbors. Frequently, when Southern Jews supported Blacks there was an anti-Semitic backlash afterwards. But this did not stop Northern Jews from travelling to the South to take part in Southern civil rights activities. In 1964, sixteen Rabbis and Al Vorspan, Director of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism flew to St. Augustine, Florida, to protest segregation at the Monson's Motor Lodge. All of the protesters were eventually arrested and placed in jail.⁵⁷ It was during the 60s that Jewish young people, would go to the South, protest, and get arrested. Many times it was the Southern Rabbi, who lived near the jail, who would go and bail them out. Some Southern Jews claimed that the Northerners would come to the South, "stir things up", and then leave Southern Jews to deal with the effects. One Southerner said "progress will come with time and from within; it will not be made by outside agitation."⁵⁸

⁵⁷"In St. Augustine," Midstream (September 1964)

⁵⁸Berson, The Negroes and The Jews, p. 121.

Perhaps for some Southern Jews it served their interests best to deny any Jewish involvement in civil rights.

Second, in the early 1900s a large number of Jews were involved in Black philanthropy while fewer were involved in activist civil rights. When the need for philanthropy decreased in the 40-60s the total number of Jews involved in Black affairs also decreased. So even though more Jews were involved in civil rights than previously,⁵⁹ the total number of Jews involved with Blacks in all areas was less than before. This might have given the impression that less Jews were involved in activism for Blacks than actually were.

Third, if prominent Jews were involved in civil rights it was usually not under the official guise of Black institutions such as the NAACP and Urban League, as in the past, but instead under the direction of Jewish institutions. It was Maurice Eisendrath, of the UAHC, who led the effort to persuade the major Jewish institutions of America to officially embrace civil rights as a part of their programs. From this call came the Commission on Law and Social Action of the American Jewish Congress, the Commission on Social Action of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and committees and commissions of the Anti-Defamation League and American Jewish Committee.

⁵⁹This is further suggested by the fact that a high percentage of the civil rights activities took place on college campuses and more Jews went to college than non Jews.

Jewish civil rights leaders moved from Black organizations, like the NAACP and Urban League. They continued to work for civil rights for Blacks but now from Jewish defense organizations like the ADL and American Jewish Committee. This movements seems to have been beneficial to civil rights as a whole. For the first time, Jewish leaders representing Jewish institutions and Blacks representing Black institutions officially consolidated and shared their resources. In the mid '40s Will Maslow, of the American Jewish Congress brought his seven full time lawyers to work with the NAACP. This was seven more lawyers than the Justice Department had assigned to Civil rights cases at the time. This NAACP/AJC alliance served as the central axis for all organizations involved in influencing official government policy on civil rights issues. So it is no exaggeration when Maslow said:

many of the civil rights laws were actually written in the offices of the Jewish agencies by Jewish staff, introduced by Jewish legislators and pushed into being by Jewish voters.⁶⁰

The relationship between the NAACP and the Congress lasted until 1954, when The Supreme court handed down its historic school desegregation case. Reflecting back Maslow said that it was a marriage of convenience. He said

you can't fight discrimination against one minority group without fighting it against others. It was logical for Jews and Negroes to cooperate...it was in our

⁶⁰Washington, Jews in Black Perspectives p. 94.

interest to help them. We had the staff, the money and political muscle to do it.⁶¹

Unlike Julius Rosenwald who was interested in Black causes as it related to philanthropy or Louis Marshall who made the fight for Blacks an extra curricular cause, Maslow was for a decade a full time Jewish professional involved in Black Civil rights, the first Jew to ever do so in the history of Black-Jewish relations.

The most important and final victory of the NAACP/AJC alliance came in 1954 with the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v Board of Education of Topeka*. Here, Thurgood Marshall and Maslow together argued that the fourteenth amendment, which claimed that all born or naturalized citizens should be afforded equal protection under the law, had been violated. The landmark decision declared that "separate but equal" was no longer legal. The decision not only "legally" put an end to the remnants of segregation in America but it encouraged social, economic and political integration to take place. It is clear that alone, Blacks could not have created the social and political climate that led to this landmark Supreme Court decision.

Unfortunately, after this case the NAACP/AJC alliance broke apart and the role of Jewish agencies in civil rights diminished. From this time on civil rights passed into the hands of Jewish individuals who participated in the

⁶¹Berson, The Negroes and The Jews, p. 96.

demonstrations marches and sit ins of the '60s. During this time Jewish civil rights leaders moved from the NAACP and other Black civil rights organizations to Jewish defense organizations. But the impression of some Black leaders was that if Jews were not affiliated with the NAACP and the other Black organizations then Jews were abandoning civil rights and Blacks altogether.

Finally, during the 1960s perceptions about Jewish involvement in civil rights were clouded due to the nature of this new activist. He/She was for the most part the average Jew and not necessarily the highly visible leader or well known Jew. Thus, in most cases there was less publicity and thus public knowledge concerning their activities. Some did not identify themselves with the Jewish community and so they were not counted as Jews as far as their involvement in civil rights. Michael Henry Shwerner, a young Jew, was not well known until he was found dead in a swamp in Mississippi. He worked in a small settlement house for Black boys in New York, where he was arrested and jailed several times for protesting for Blacks' rights. In 1964 he went to Mississippi to institute a massive voter registration drive known as the "Mississippi Summer Project". A Rabbi in Meridan warned him of the danger to himself and to Jews from those who but did not favor integration. His involvement was typical of many of the young Jewish activists of the late fifties and early

sixties. Some time later Shwerner was found dead with another Jew, Andrew Goodman and James Chaney, a Black man.⁶²

Besides being activists some individual Jews participated in the civil rights activities of the '60s in other ways. Once again there were many Jews involved in the field of law. Jack Greenberg was active in the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund which provided money to help Blacks with civil rights litigation. There were social workers like Saul Alinsky, who created the Industrial Areas Foundation which worked in the Black ghettos. He developed a community organization model for the ghetto based on the Lower East Side model of a mutual and cooperative society. Needless to say, Jews were involved in the March in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963.⁶³ They were also numbered among the 250,000 in August 1963 who marched on Washington calling for the passage of the Civil Rights Bill. Jews were also at the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery where Blacks walked for the right to vote.⁶⁴ There are even reports of Jews who participated in "sit ins" and "freedom rides".⁶⁵ In all of these cases it is hard to calculate the number of Jews who participated in them.

⁶²They were murdered on June 21, 1964 only one day after the Civil rights Bill was passed.

⁶³Jewish Exponent, 15 March 1985.

⁶⁴Five months later the Voting Rights Act was passed.

⁶⁵Dan Perlmutter and Herschel Kaminsky organized Students for Integration (SFI). See Crisis 67 (June-July 1960).

SECTION FOUR

THE FIRST RIFTS IN BLACK-JEWISH RELATIONS

During this period, for the first time, a number of groups were started to promote "better" relations between Jews and Blacks. In 1944 a group was started in Philadelphia called "The Philadelphia Fellowship Commission". Its Board of Directors included the most prominent Jews and Black professionals in the city. In 1953 "The Committee for Negro Jewish Relations" was created to bring Blacks and Jews together. In 1969 The "Ad-Hoc Committee for a Black-Jewish Rapprochement" was created in New York. Obviously these groups, and groups like them, were only necessary because the Black-Jewish relationship had started to deteriorate. There were several factors that led to the instability of the relationship from 1940-1966 including: the Holocaust and World War II, Blacks as consumers and Jews as business people, the beginnings of Black anti-Semitism and the emergence of several myths.

1. THE HOLOCAUST AND WORLD WAR II

The period around World War II was a mixed blessing for Black-Jewish relations. On the one hand, it relieved tension because lower and middle income Black veterans were helped by the GI Bill. It provided them with opportunities to get a higher education or to study in a trade school.

Also Veterans Administration (VA) mortgages were available so that Blacks could acquire better housing. New employment opportunities arose as the war created a shortage in manpower. During this time hate and bigotry turned away from Blacks to the new national enemies, Nazis, Italians and Japanese. The idea of equality that was used to counter Nazi racist doctrine gained wider acceptance on the home front. Being against Jews and Blacks smacked of Nazism. For a short time the war effort served to help Blacks and thus to lessen some of the tensions in the relationship between Blacks and Jews.

On the other hand, the extermination of European Jewry increased tensions. Some Blacks were upset that people wept for the Holocaust abroad but were indifferent to the plight of Blacks at home. One Texas paper wrote that "Hitler might tell us to wash our own dirty linen before telling him that his is soiled."⁶⁶ Jews also reacted to the Holocaust by turning inward as they focused on their own survival. With European Jewry destroyed, American Jewry saw itself as the only hope for Jewish survival. Thus the focus in many Jewish institutions began to shift from universal concerns, to particular concerns, from Black civil rights to Jewish education, youth programming and community events. In addition, after the creation of the State of Israel in 1948,

⁶⁶Houston Informer and Texas Freeman, 8 April 1933. As cited in Shankman, Ambivalent Friends, p. 131.

Jewish energies were refocused away from Blacks and civil rights to the building of the "Jewish State".

2. JEWS AND THE BLACK CONSUMER

After World War II many people began to move out of the urban centers and head for the suburbs. While most other whites moved out of the cities some Jews, many of whom owned businesses, stayed behind. At the same time many urban Blacks found themselves economically stifled and few were able to move out of the cities. The Black population of the cities grew still larger as the half a million Southern Blacks who had served in the military had found conditions in the army much better and were encouraged to move to Northern cities. As the urban population increased so too the economic problems increased. All of these factors put urban Blacks, many of whom were poor, and middle class Jews, many who owned businesses, near each other in a different kind of relationship than in the past. For the first time, real life Blacks and Jews were coming into contact with each other as landlord and tenant, as store owner and customer, as social worker and client and as teacher and parent.

Some Blacks called the Jews exploiters and blamed them for their economic deprivation. Some Blacks even claimed that Jews owned and ran the Black "slum" areas. Others saw Jews simply as part of the White majority who collected rent checks and charged interest. The fact is that Jews represented no more or less than their percentage of the

population when it came to owning businesses in these areas of the cities. Despite what some Blacks believed Jewish affluence did not derive from monies made from Blacks. The Jewish businesses in these ghettos were for the most part small family businesses run by Jews who had been there for several generations. Still one can not deny that there were Jewish slumlords in the cities. In fact on April 29, 1964 David Gurin and a group of young Jews handed out a circular addressed to the New York Board of rabbis to "Excommunicate Jewish slumlords in New York". They submitted a list of 250 Jewish landlords who owned 500 slum buildings in Manhattan. The protesters said "The house of Israel must be cleansed of those who exploit the poor."⁶⁷

From the Black community's perspective it did not matter how many of these slumlords were Jewish. To them, the fact that any Jews were slumlords, was as much a "slap in the face" to Blacks as Black anti-Semitism was to Jews. The situation created a kind of irony and ambivalence in the relationship between Blacks and Jews. The Jew involved in civil rights had to deal with the Black anti-Semite. While the Black who used the Jew as a model of success had to deal with the Jewish slumlord. One Black leader expressed this ambivalence when he said some very violent things about Jewish slumlords and in the very same breath urged Blacks to help themselves and respect themselves "in the ways Jews

⁶⁷Conference on Jewish Social Studies, Negro-Jewish Relations in the United States (New York: Citadel Press, 1966), p. 62.

do."⁶⁸ This urban confrontation between Blacks and Jews resulted in further alienation and increased hostility between the two groups. It must be made clear however, that this alienation was mostly among the Black and Jewish masses, particularly those living in the ghettos, and not among the leadership. Major animosity between the leaderships would not happen until the late sixties and early seventies.

3. BLACK ANTI-SEMITISM

Until 1933 there had only been a smattering of Black anti-Semitism in the U.S. But after that time some anti-Semitism did begin to appear in the Black community.⁶⁹ One of the earliest and most active written sources of Black anti-Semitism was The Liberator magazine of Harlem. It adopted the position that Jews are the real oppressors of the Black. It continued with its anti-Semitic propaganda all the way into the sixties when a three part series entitled "Semitism in the Black Ghetto," written by Eddie Ellis, appeared in its pages. It claimed that Jewish merchants were responsible for inferior meat and dilapidated

⁶⁸Katz, Negro and Jew, p. 11.

⁶⁹Conference on Jewish Social Studies, Negro-Jewish Relations in the United States, p. 62.

buildings and had become affluent by exploiting Blacks.⁷⁰ It bombarded the "Rosenwald Fund" for funding Black Schools which it claimed were nothing more than "freak factories because they produced freak Black men with White minds."⁷¹ In addition the articles claimed that Jewish money controlled the NAACP and Urban League. There were also a few individual anti-Semites that appeared during these years. Robert Jordan, West Indian head of the Pacific Movement, claimed that the Jew was the controller of the government and thus mortal enemy of Black people. Eugene Brown, the "Black Hitler", organized a campaign against the white merchants of Harlem.

During this period there was an increasing number of Black riots in major cities where stores and businesses had been destroyed. Previously there numbers had been small but in the 60s their number increased as riots broke out in Los Angeles, Philadelphia Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Buffalo, Detroit and St Louis. Some of the stores and properties destroyed in these riots were owned by Jews. These incidents were seen by the press and community as isolated instances and they tried to justify them.⁷² Even Jews did not want to believe that Blacks could intentionally

⁷⁰The Liberator, January 1966. As cited in Arthur Stein and Robert Weisbord, Bittersweet Encounter: The Afro American and The American Jew (Westport Connecticut: Negro university Press, 1970), p. 145.

⁷¹The Liberator, January 1966. p.6.

⁷²Diner, In The Almost Promised Land, p. 79.

slander and attack them after all the years that Jews had stood by Blacks.

Obviously, as evidence indicates, there were some isolated instances of anti-Semitism expressed by a small number of individual Blacks. But there is no evidence of categorical and systematic anti-Semitism in the Black community. It is clear that anti-Semitic action was also not a part of any program of any Black organization. Not even the riots can be seen as anti-Semitic as evidence indicates that they were only "anti-White." Witnesses at the riots said that they did not remember any anti-Semitic slogans but only anti-White epithets.⁷³ James Baldwin has suggested that Jews were the most visible white target for Blacks' anti-White hate.⁷⁴ Polls of this period indicated that for Blacks "Jews are by and large not singled out as being worse than other whites."⁷⁵

Most of these isolated instances of Black anti-Semitism coincided with the rise of Nazism in Europe and thus the rise of anti-Semitism in America among all peoples. It seems that Black attitudes toward Jews have always been a

⁷³Marc Lee Raphael, ed., Jews and Judaism In The United States: A Documentary History (New York: Behrman House Publishers, 1983), p. 313.

⁷⁴James Baldwin "Negroes are Anti Semitic because They're Anti White."

⁷⁵National Opinion Research Center interviewed 1200 Blacks in various cities. Commentary Magazine (February 1946):8. Cohen, Justice, Justice, p. 111-112. Conference on Jewish Social Studies, Negro-Jewish Relations in the United States, p.3-9.

reflection of the social and economic class the Black belongs to. Perhaps as Blacks began to attain a middle class status they began to accept some middle class values (like anti-Semitism), as a means of gaining acceptance. Whatever the case, discussions of Black anti-Semitism for the most part remained muted and hushed in Black and Jewish circles until the next period in the late 1960s.

4. MYTHS OF THE PAST

It seemed that the relationship between Jews and Blacks had been based on several suppositions that were just now being proven false. The previously held notion that Blacks, like Jews, could pull "themselves up by their bootstraps" did not happen. The opportunities that existed for Jews at the turn of the century no longer existed for Blacks. As Bayard Rustin, a Black leader complains:

Even the Jews have the fantasy about pulling yourself up by the bootstraps. Somebody is always telling me how his grandfather had a little shop, and he sold candy and cigars, and the kids lived with the mother in the back. Then a few years later he moved upstairs so they could expand the business. The thing winds up with the family owning Macy's....Negroes nurture a persisting myth that the Jew of America attained social mobility and status solely because they had money. It is unwise to ignore this error for many reasons.⁷⁶

⁷⁶Berson, The Negroes and The Jews, p. 135-136.

In the early twentieth century the Black and Jew also believed that justice and social acceptance were about to be granted to both of them. This acceptance came to the Jew but to a lesser extent to the Black. For the second and third generation Jews of the '50s and '60s, their immigrant pasts had little effect on their current social reality. They were now part of middle class white suburbia and far from Blacks geographically, economically and socially. Jews for the most part seemed more concerned about the suburbs than the slums and more concerned about assimilation than integration. There were some exceptions however; particularly among younger Jews. As Jack Newfield of The Village Voice wrote:

There were some Jews who were the children of economic surplus and spiritual starvation who sought to give meaning to their lives by identifying them with a cause greater than their own personal needs.⁷⁷

As these myths crumbled Black resentment rose and the love turned to rage. Some Blacks believed that the Jew had been a hypocrite. Some claimed

"the liberal Jew had been in the forefront telling the South to integrate, while he lived in Lily white communities in the North."⁷⁸

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 126.

⁷⁸"The Black and The Jew: A Falling Out Of Allies," Time Magazine (January 31, 1969): 57.

The Black leadership also realized that the present discrimination against Blacks was in no way felt by Jews. They were no longer going to buy the myth that Negroes and Jews were brother sufferers in the same boat.

This breakdown in the idea of the common destiny of Blacks and Jews can also be seen in the rationale that Jews used for their lack of involvement in civil rights. The Jewish leadership no longer promulgated the idea that "what was good for the Black was good for the Jew". Instead civil rights was promoted as a response to the "the Jewish and prophetic traditions." This change and new promotion was most evident in the Reform Movement, whose members made up the majority of Jews involved in civil rights at this time. It was the Reform Movement that published a book entitled Justice, Justice whose purpose was to justify Jewish involvement in Black civil rights using The Bible, Talmud, teachings of the Chasidim and ideas of Tzedakah.⁷⁹ It also answers questions of Black inferiority and the Blacks being responsible for their own plight. Obviously the book is an attempt to rejustify involvement with blacks not in terms of "common destiny" but in terms of "tradition says to do so", which may have been a less motivating factor for American Jews. The answers to the questions are in response to some negative things about Blacks that some Reform Jews might have been using to distance themselves from Black causes.

⁷⁹Henry Cohen, Justice, Justice: A Jewish view of The Negro Revolt (New York: UAHC, 1968).

The idea that Blacks were as interested in Jews as Jews had been interested in Blacks was being proven false also. A writer in The Crisis, the official publication of the NAACP, wrote that:

Such Jewish publications as Commentary, Conservative Judaism, Midstream and American Judaism have devoted considerable space to comments on Negro-Jewish relations. There has been lacking such extensive discussions in the Negro press.⁸⁰

With the breakdown of previously held notions, the appearance of Black anti-Semitism and the problems between Blacks and Jews in the cities, the tensions between Blacks and Jews increased. With this, the once strong Black-Jewish alliance faced a rough road ahead.

⁸⁰Henry Lee Moon, "Negroes, Jews and Other Americans," The Crisis (April 1967): 1.

SECTION FIVE

PERIOD 3: SELF DETERMINATION
the Late 1960s to the '70s

In the late 60s many young Blacks felt deep rooted disenchantment with the White establishment. Much of the civil rights legislation and many of the programs which had aroused earlier hopes did not receive the funding necessary to implement them. The progress seemed more theoretical than practical and symbolized an incomplete and hollow victory for Blacks. In response to this frustration the young Black leadership called for Blacks to do for themselves that which the White establishment had been unable to do. In 1966 Stokely Carmichael of the SNCC became the first established Black leader to proclaim the birth of "Black Power". Out of this idea of Black self-determination there also grew a greater Black self-identity and pride. "Black is Beautiful" and "Black Awareness" became the slogan of this new ideology. A "Renaissance" took place in many Black communities, particularly in Harlem. From there came a bevy of books, novels and poetry glorifying Blackness and the need for racial identity. The cult of blackness reached an apogee as the followers of Marcus Garvey called for American Blacks to return to their African

homeland.⁸¹ At the same time many "Black Power" conferences and rallies took place all over the country.

As self-identity and determination increased so did the question of white leadership in Black organizations. Some more militant groups called for the immediate removal of all whites from Black organizations. In 1966 the SNCC, the only major civil rights organization that did not have Jews in main leadership positions, was the first to vote for the removal of "all whites" from their staff.⁸² Of course this new "Black militancy" of some of the Black groups was unacceptable to majority of Jews.⁸³ Jewish leaders were stunned by the calls for the removal of White Jews, the lack of gratitude and the challenge to the sacrosanct notion of integration. As other less militant Black groups, such as the NAACP and the Urban League embraced less radical forms of "Black Power" the Jewish leadership was confronted with many important questions. But the main question was whether Jews could support "Black Power" at all and then if so, how much could be supported and at what price? Some Jewish organizations answered with surprise and resentment while others simply withdrew their support completely from Black

⁸¹At the peak of his movement Garvey probably had two million followers."Ross, J.E. Spingarn and The Rise of The NAACP, p. 105.

⁸²Washington, Jews in Black Perspectives, p. 122.

⁸³New York Times, (January 1967). Here a survey financed by the Ford Foundation found that "Jews have misapprehensions about the militancy and separatist beliefs of Negroes."

causes.⁸⁴ Conservative Judaism wrote that "we are faced with the most fateful domestic issue since the 1930s, and perhaps in all American Jewish history."⁸⁵ Generally, Jews were most uncomfortable with aspects of this new ideology which mixed Black pride with expressions of anger and hostility toward Whites. Conservatives such as Bertram Gold, Executive Vice President of the American Jewish Committee responded to the question saying

"black power is incipient racism, it appeals to violence, it's irrational and above all it is a rejection of white leadership and even of white cooperative effort."⁸⁶

Even Liberals felt that self determination and autonomy were separatist notions contrary to their own cherished concept about integration. A 1969 Harris Poll indicates that 59% of all Jews believed that Blacks were moving too fast toward racial equality.⁸⁷

But Black power was there to stay and it was clear that it's consequences would be felt by Jews also. At Brandeis University, the first of the nations Jewish sponsored

⁸⁴Morris Schappes, "Black Power and the Jews," Jewish Currents, (January 1967).

⁸⁵"Negroes and Jews: A Hard Look," Conservative Judaism 21 no.1 (Fall 1966): 13.

⁸⁶Bertram Gold, Jews and The Urban Crisis (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1968), p. 5.

⁸⁷The Lou Harris surveys are "Sources of Racial and Religious Tensions in New York (July 1969) p.98 and "National Survey" (March 1970). As cited in Raphael, Jews and Judaism In The United States, p. 306.

schools of higher learning, 65 of its 103 Black students barricaded themselves inside Ford Hall. Once inside they issued non-negotiable demands for an autonomous center of Afro American Studies and dropped a banner out the window which read "Malcolm X University".

THE END OF JEWISH INVOLVEMENT WITH BLACK CIVIL RIGHTS

Lenora Berson writes that in 1971:

In the 'great liberal coalition' Negroes remained the junior and usually silent partner. White liberals speak for, and in the name of, Negroes and Negroes have been the objects rather than the subjects of civic action. Things have been done for, about, or to Negroes, not by them. and Negroes have resented being the perpetual recipients.⁸⁸

Resentment came from the Jewish side as well, as Jews felt betrayed and disappointed by the reduction and exclusion of Jews from some civil rights organizations. These built up resentments, the "Black power" movement and other factors caused the eventual withdrawal of Jews from Black civil rights organizations in the mid-seventies.

Among these other factors was the fact that during this period the Black struggle moved from civil rights in the South to economic rights for Blacks in the big urban centers in the north and west. This, was a cause which was much closer to home to Jews and one which they were much less interested in. Beside this, all of America had refocused

⁸⁸Berson, The Negroes and The Jews, p. 402.

its attention away from civil rights to Vietnam. It must be noted that in most cases Jews were not thrown out of civil rights groups but they wanted out as much as the Black leaders wanted them out. Once Jews became disassociated with Black civil rights the relationship between Blacks and Jews changed dramatically. The movement once known in the Jewish community as "civil rights" now became known in that community as "The Negro Revolt".⁸⁹ The cover story of Newsweek on January 31, 1969 was entitled "The Black and Jew: A Falling Out of Allies." It must also be noted that the disintegration of the Black-Jewish civil rights alliance was partly due to the success of that alliance as well. It was as a result of that alliance that Blacks were now self-determinant and thus the struggle had turned from civil rights to Black rights.

⁸⁹See UAHC textbook published in 1968 entitled "Justice, Justice: A Jewish View of The Negro Revolt." It was to be used for Adult Education and religious schools.

SECTION SIX

THE CONTINUING RIFT IN BLACK-JEWISH RELATIONS

1. BLACK ANTI-SEMITISM

"The popular impression that anti-Semitism is running rampant in the Negro Communities provides Jews with what they consider a justification for being indifferent to the civil rights movement. The philosophy is 'if they hate us why should we lift a finger?'⁹⁰

Whether anti-Semitism was used as a justification or not it is clear that it was more prevalent in the Black community during this time than it had ever been before. As stated earlier, the civil rights legislation, most importantly the Civil Rights Act of 1964, solved only some of the problems that Blacks faced. Blacks were disappointed as the Laws outlawing discrimination did little in helping them to attain middle class status. This frustration caused Blacks to look for a scapegoat. At first it was only the Black militant groups who were anti-Semitic. Later on it spread to some of the larger community and eventually to some of the Black leadership. Although most of the responsible Black leadership did not engage in active anti-Semitism they also rarely rejected explicit expressions of it.

One major anti Semitic incident occurred in 1968 in the predominately Black Ocean Hill-Brownsville School District. Here confrontations occurred between Black Parents and

⁹⁰Cohen, Justice, Justice, pp. 110-111.

Jewish teachers. The problems began when the parents called for quotas on the number of Black teachers in the school. In response to the request the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), which was predominately Jewish, went on strike for 36 of the first 48 days of school. During this time a wave of anti-Semitism swept through the school district. The UFT reprinted some 500,000 copies of explicitly anti-Semitic literature that had been distributed against the teachers. One leaflet read:

The Germans in Germany killed you Jews because you tried to control the economy of Germany and that is what you are trying to do to the Black man in the United States...The Germans did not do a good enough job with you Jews.⁹¹

On December 26, 1967, a Black teacher Leslie Campbell read the poem of a Black fifteen year old over radio station WBAI FM. It was dedicated to Albert Shanker, the president of the UFT.

Hey Jew Boy with that Yarmulke on your head
You pale faced Jew boy I wish you were dead;
I can see you Jew boy --no you can't hide,
I got a scoop on you--yeh, you gonna die...

At first most of the anti-Semitism which resulted during confrontations between Jews and Blacks was condemned by the Black leadership. But later on the record was not so consistent as some leaders spoke out against anti-Semitism,

⁹¹Berson, The Negroes and The Jews, p. 326.

some remained silent, and a few participated in it themselves.⁹² The first public denouncement of Jews from a main line Black leader came in 1967 from Stokeley Carmichael, of the Black Panthers. But still the Urban League and NAACP did not take an official anti-Semitic stance.

The myth that the Jew's past relationship with the Black would prevent Black anti-Semitism fell by the way side. What good would it do to tell an angry unemployed Black high school dropout of the work of Julius Rosenwald or Louis Marshall? In the '70s the Black economic progress which had been fairly steady since World War II came to a sudden stop.⁹³ One writer wrote that the Black anti-Semitism of the '70s was "fundamentally a cop out, the same thing that people of all societies engage in when the going gets rough."⁹⁴ Candice Van Ellison, author of Harlem on My Mind⁹⁵, wrote that

"almost all of the high priced delicatessens and other small food stores are run by Jews. The lack of competition in this area allows the already exploited Black to be further exploited by Jews...Blacks felt themselves to be more completely

⁹²Moon, The Crisis, (April 1967), p.6-7.

⁹³ U.S. Department of Labor The Negroes in The U.S. Bulletin no. 1511, June 1966. pp 20-26.

⁹⁴ Time Magazine, (January 31, 1969): 58.

⁹⁵Harlem on My Mind was an exhibit that opened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and was strongly condemned as being blatantly anti Semitic.

American as they turned more anti-Semitic..."⁹⁶

Whatever the reasons for Black anti-Semitism the truth remains that during this period there were more major incidents of it than ever before. Some have suggested that these incidents of Black hatred of Jews was not directed against Jews because they were Jewish, but because they were White. Evidence suggests that Blacks did not dislike Jews any more than they disliked other whites.⁹⁷ It is a mistake to see Jews in a special confrontation with Blacks. When one considers the Black-Jewish relationship one cannot consider it outside the color relationship. This color relationship was very important to recognize since it led to the major Black-Jewish controversy over quotas.

2.ZIONISM AND PAN AFRICANISM

A different type of anti-Semitism appeared with the re-emergence of Black Pan Africanism in the '70s. The movement actually began in the early 1900s. In 1917 Marcus Garvey, a Black Jamaican established a newspaper The Negro World. Through its news items and editorials he preached a kind of

⁹⁶Harlem on My Mind, p.14.

⁹⁷ Gary T. Marx, Protest and Prejudice: A Study of Belief in The Black Community. (New York, Harper & Row, 1967), p.147. A similar study was conducted by the ADL in 1964 with similar results. As cited in Cohen, Justice, Justice: A Jewish view of The Negro Revolt, p. 111.

Negro Zionism which he called the "Back to Africa Movement." He maintained that all the Blacks in the world were one people and should see themselves as a nation and return to Africa. Many other Black National movements arose during that time period as well. At first the parallels between these Pan Africanisms and early Zionism helped to strengthen the relationship of Jews and Blacks.

Garvey's movement was organized around an all Black Corporation, The Black Steamship Corporation, from which he began to collect capital. His appeal was met with a flood of donations. For several years in the '20s, he even managed to hold an annual month long convention in New York. The conventions were greatly scorned by the American Press but warmly embraced by the Yiddish Press, even though Garvey openly expressed his distaste for Jews. He was one of the few Black leaders who ever bid for the support of the KKK. Because the movement's strength was greatly dependent on Garvey it came to an end when Garvey was arrested for mail fraud.

In the 1970s with the rise of "Black Power" and "Black Identity" the time was ripe for the reemergence of a new Black Nationalism. But this new ideology would not unite Jews and Blacks as past movements had. Now in many instances it was connected to the new Black religious cults, like The Nation of Islam and Malcolm X's Black Muslims. But these movements openly denigrated American Jews. A certain amount of resentment also grew within these groups as the

success of Zionism and the founding of the State of Israel served as painful reminders of what they had not yet achieved. In 1968 The "Black Coalition For New Politics" (a group made up of all the Black Civil Rights organizations in the U.S.) passed a resolution condemning Zionism and Israel.⁹⁸ This was the first instance that a national group, representing all Blacks, officially condemned Israel and Zionism. Now the Black Nationalist movement became strongly committed to being anti-Zionistic which filtered down to being Anti Semitic. As Berson writes:

Black Nationalism has always expressed strong feelings of anti-Semitism. Despite similarities between the ideologies of Jewish and Black Nationalism, anti-Semitism has long been a feature of Black Nationalism.⁹⁹

As Black Nationalists became more anti Semitic they began to be courted by Arab Leaders who helped to foster further anti- Semitic attitudes. These courtesies and the recognition of Black Leaders by Arab Leaders were gratifying to the egos of Black leaders and their followers. This new alliance also created new Black perceptions about the State of Israel itself. In the late 60s a SNCC newsletter claimed that "Zionists conquered the Arab homes and land through force and massacres." Along with this article there was a picture of a Jew lining up a group of Arabs in order to shoot them. The caption read "this is the Gaza Strip,

⁹⁸Cincinnati Enquirer, (15 August 1967).

⁹⁹Berson, The Negroes and The Jews, p. 169.

Palestine, not Dachau, Germany."100 From a Black perspective the State of Israel could not be seen apart from Black attitudes toward the U.S. and its White population. If the Black saw America as oppressing him, and Israel as an American creation, then he also came to see Israel as racist. In the 70s Israel's friendly foreign policy toward South Africa helped to raise additional tensions between Blacks and Jews in America. The anti-Semitic overtones of Black nationalism and the continued condemnation of Israel seemed to leave only a slight hope for any further alliance between Blacks and Jews.

3.AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

It was the controversy in the mid-seventies over Affirmative Action that would mark the end of the Black-Jewish alliance. It was a growing Black identity that lead to proposals for increased opportunities for Blacks consistent with their percentage in the population. The Black leadership's call for quotas to take precedence over meritocracy was accepted and government dictated Affirmative Action programs for education and employment were put in place. As long as the issue was no discrimination in entry into colleges and professional schools Jews and Blacks stood

shoulder to shoulder. Jews did not oppose Affirmative Action on principal but only when it effected them directly. For instance, Affirmative Action in the skilled trades did not really "bother Jews very much."¹⁰¹ But in the cases of DeFunis and Baake the Jewish community strongly condemned the quota system.¹⁰² It is not incidental that the DeFunis case dealt with law school and the Baake case with medical school. It is also not coincidental that these two graduate schools were attended by a large number of Jews. So when it became Affirmative Action, fewer places for White Jews in these institutions, Jews strongly objected. With the higher percentage of Jews that went to colleges and professional schools Jews would be affected by Affirmative Action probably more than other group. There is no doubt that in the past, Jews supported Black's when it was in their interest to do so. Here for the first time Jews officially and organizationally "opposed" Blacks because it was in their interest to do so. Affirmative Action did not cause the end of the Black-Jewish Alliance but was merely the final symptom of a series of causes that destroyed the alliance.

One could look at the totality of Black-Jewish relations from 1909-1975 in the following way. In the first period of "Desegregation" Jews saw that "It was bad for the

¹⁰¹Washington, Jews in Black Perspectives, p. 110.

¹⁰²With the exception of the "official" policy of the UAHC.

Black and it was bad for the Jew." Under these circumstances all Jews could accept a coalition with Blacks and so the Black-Jewish alliance was extremely strong and flourished. In the second period of "Integration" Jews saw that "It was bad for the Blacks but not so bad for the Jews". Even under these circumstances some Jews could accept a coalition with Blacks and so the Black-Jewish Alliance remained in tact. But in the third period of "Self Determination" when Jews saw that "Its good for the Blacks but bad for the Jews". Here under these circumstances few Jews could accept a coalition with Blacks and so the Black-Jewish Alliance was no more.

CHAPTER TWO
A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE PERSONAL LIFE OF KIVIE KAPLAN

SECTION ONE
Kivie Kaplan the Family Man

Akiva (Kivie) Kaplan was born on April 1, 1904 to Benjamin and Celia (Solomont) Kaplan. Kivie's maternal grandfather was Solomon Solomont a kosher butcher in Boston, and a generous contributor to the Talmud Torah in Malden, Massachusetts, which bears his name. Kivie's paternal grandfather Chaim Elijah Kaplan was born in Lithuania where he studied rabbinic texts and Jewish tradition. Some family members claim he had formal training and was a Rabbi. In the early 1900s Chaim, leaving his family in Lithuania, journeyed to America to look for a new life and a possible position as a Rabbi. Chaim did find a rabbinic position in Worcester, Massachusetts, but he only worked in that post for a short while. During that time he did manage to put aside enough money to send for his four children and wife from Lithuania. It was the necessity to support his family and his traditional background that led him into the Matzah Baking business. Chaim Kaplan and his two partners were the founders of the Boston Matzah Baking Company. It was a small business representing Manchewitz's Matzah for the New England area.¹ He was a wealthy man and upon his death on

¹ "Letter from Emma Berman containing genealogical information on Kaplan Family," Biographies File, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

October 8, 1920 he left a total of \$5,500 to various Jewish organizations in Boston.²

Ben Kaplan, Kivie's father, had come to America about eight years earlier than Kivie's grandfather Chaim. Upon his arrival in the U.S. Ben supported himself by selling second hand bottles. This small business blossomed and as a result he was able to open a small glass and bottle factory in Pittsburgh. But in 1913 due to economic conditions and poor management his business went into decline. He knew enough to sell the factory before he lost everything and so he sold the business for \$25,000 cash. With this capital he bought a motion picture theater which also turned out be another unsuccessful venture. Next he turned to the tannery business hoping to find success there. For some time he did manage to build up a substantial business in the tannery. But once again the economic conditions of 1929 and his lack of expertise in business forced the closing of the tannery and the loss of most of his assets. His marriage also suffered during these difficult times and as a result he and his wife Celia were separated and never got back together again. His parents' lives seemed to have strongly influenced Kivie Kaplan. His mother Celia spent most of her energies on supporting the Jewish Women's Convalescent Home. She served as it's Treasurer and Secretary for thirty years. From her, Kivie received his strong social conscience for

² "Kaplan Family" Genealogy Files, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

helping those in need. But it was his father's tannery, where Kivie Kaplan worked from age 12-20, where he learned the tannery business.³ After completing his high school education he would make millions in this business.

On June 3, 1925 Kivie married Emily Rogers, his third cousin whom he had known since he was twelve years of age. For most of their lives they lived in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. Here they raised their three children: Sylvia (Grossman) Kaplan (born March 12, 1927), Jean (Green) Kaplan (born July 29, 1930) and Edward Kaplan (born March 4, 1942). Perhaps it was his parents' separation or maybe his strong patriarchal instincts that led Kivie to a deep sense of the importance of family. He would talk about his children in his correspondence, in his conversations, in his interviews and where ever he went. The Kaplan family was close and would frequently get together for weekends, holidays and family events. Of the relationships with his children the most interesting existed between Kivie and his son Edward. Edward was a disciple of Abraham Joshua Heschel and a professor of French and religion at Amherst College. He wrote scholarly articles in many well known publications including Journal of American Academy of Religion and Judaism.⁴ There were times in their

³Ibid.

⁴"Language and Reality in Abraham Joshua Heschel's Philosophy of Religion" in Journal of American Academy of Religion, March 1973. "Bachelard and Buber" in Judaism, Vol. 19 No. 4 Fall Issue 1970. "Three

relationship when Kivie felt somewhat distanced from his son. This resulted from the fact that Edward, like Kivie, was very busy trying to become a success. Edward expressed disappointment that, while growing up, Kivie was sometimes too busy to spend time with him. Edward writes to Kivie saying:

Why can't I spend time with you? When a young man has a famous and well known father he usually works [hard] to equal him. This is not always a healthy situation but a frequent one.

...Sometimes you haven't paid attention to my work, particularly my thesis but instead your own work... All my life especially when I was young I was always known as Kivie Kaplan's son... If I am ever to have any self respect I must do it for myself and in my own way... My independence from you is really a way of saying that I want to be like you, but do it myself.. You know the life I am trying to lead is what I learned from you and I am grateful to you for that example.⁵

Concerning Edward's feelings Kivie wrote:

This is probably the hardest letter in my almost 69 years that I have to write... You are too hard on us in your attitude towards us as parents.. I do have certain commitments...⁶

Dimensions of human Fullness: Poetry, Love and Prayer" in Judaism, Vol. 22 No. 3, Summer Issue 1973.

⁵Letter from Edward Kaplan, Amherst Mass. to Kivie Kaplan, Chestnut Hill, Mass (later cited as KK), 2 December 1972; Box 15/Folder 4 (later cited as 15/4), The Kivie Kaplan Papers, Manuscript Collection #26, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio. (later cited as KKP-AJA).

⁶Letter, KK to Edward Kaplan, Amherst, Mass., 30 November 1972. 15/4 KKP-AJA.

Tensions were evident when Edward wrote a chapter for a book about his father and Kivie expressed concern about some of what his son had written.⁷ But most of the dilemmas between the two resulted simply because they had different views about what was important in life. Edward was an independent intellectual striving for achievement in academics. Kivie, on the other hand, was not an intellectual and relied upon others to help him succeed. Edward wanted to become an important scholar and Kivie wanted to become an important national figure. There were times when Edward resented the fact that Kivie tried to involve the entire family in the causes that Kivie felt so strongly about. Edward felt this first hand as Kivie would take him to many of the NAACP conventions and conferences. Edward decided not to take up Kivie's causes, civil rights, as his vocation. He did not want his father's social causes to impose upon his life as it had imposed upon his father's life. This must have been difficult for Kivie to accept. But just as it was hard for Edward to participate in Kivie's causes it was hard for Kivie to share in Edward's academic world.

But other family members did become greatly involved in their father's causes and he in theirs. An indication of Kivie's strong belief in his cause was his desire to involve

⁷Letter, KK to Norman Feingold, Washington, D.C., 2 September 1974, Box 3/Folder 8 (later cited as 3/8) The Kaplan Papers, Collection No. 76-20, Amistad Research Center, New Orleans Louisiana, Microfilms. (later cited as KP-ARC)

everybody, including his family, in it. Kivie's granddaughter Amy Grossman married Richard Narva, a coast guard officer. After their marriage Kivie set out to interest them in civil rights and himself in their causes. Richard's father, Morton Narva was the editor of Response Magazine and so Kivie got involved with supporting it's publication. With Richard as his agent, Kivie also made his own personal investigation of the proportions of discrimination against Blacks in the United States Coast Guard. Such inter-family involvement was commonplace for Kivie Kaplan.

Kivie and Emily spent three months every winter from 1964 onward in Safety Harbor Florida. Similarly, for thirty years they spent the summer months at the Tashmoo Inn at Martha's Vineyard. Wherever Kivie was he would take his dictation machine and send the tapes to his secretary Lee Prevoir to transcribe. Kivie Kaplan wrote a great number of letters weekly and at one point probably a hundred a week.⁸ After he became president of the NAACP in 1966 his correspondence increased significantly. It was from this time onward that he wrote his greatest number of letters. During this time he initiated a lot of correspondence by answering congratulatory letters sent to him on account of his new presidency. First, he would receive a letter from so and so congratulating him on becoming the president of

⁸The Kivie Kaplan Collection in the American Jewish Archives alone, contains approximately 15,000 pages of correspondence.

the NAACP. Then he would write them back a very detailed thank you note. Some would not continue the correspondence but most, out of deference for his position, would write Kivie a letter commenting on his letter. He would answer that letter and so on.

Kivie also initiated a lot of correspondence by reaching out to help others. There is no doubt he loved to become very involved in other peoples live and problems. On March 16, 1958 the Jewish Community Center of Nashville was dynamited by local anti-Semites. Immediately after the incident the Rabbi of the community, who was active in the integration of public schools, received a threatening telephone call from the anti-Black "Confederate Underground". The caller told William Silverman's wife that "we are going to shoot down your nigger-loving husband in cold blood."⁹ After other threatening phone calls and vandalism to their home the police were called in to guard their house 24 hours a day. It was during that time that Kivie Kaplan called Rabbi Silverman, whom he did not know, to invite him and his family to stay in the Kaplan home in Boston until the situation blew over. Silverman thanked

⁹Feingold, Norman S. and Silverman, William B., eds. Kivie Kaplan: A Legend in His Own Time. New York: UAHC, 1976. p.20.

Kivie for his offer but told him that he chose to remain in Nashville. Kivie told Silverman that

"from this time on, you are my friend. You will receive either a letter or telephone call from me every week of your life."¹⁰

As usual, Kivie followed through on this promise. There were many other people who began their correspondence and relationship with Kivie for similar reasons and in similar ways.

Among those who Kivie corresponded with frequently were: Balfour Brickner, a top official of UAHC; Roland Gittelsohn, Rabbi of Temple Israel of Boston; Albert Vorspan, Director of Social Action Commission of UAHC; Alexander Schindler, Vice President and then President of UAHC; Norman Feingold, Director of B'nai Brith Vocational Service; Gloster Current, Director of Branches NAACP; Aaron Henry, President of Mississippi NAACP and Black politician; Richard Hirsch, Director of UAHC Religious Action Center and World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ); Whitney Young, The Urban League; Edward Muse, Director Life Memberships NAACP; Charles Evers, Governor of Mississippi; Edward Brooke, Black Senator from Massachusetts; Bishop Stephen Spottswood, Chairman of the Board NAACP. Much of his other correspondence was addressed to local and national NAACP leaders and to other Black leaders around the country.

¹⁰Ibid.

His other writing was to people he knew less intimately and communicated with less frequently. He met many of these correspondents only a few times and they seemed to correspond with him out of courtesy for his position as the President of the NAACP. Among this correspondence were many letters to politicians asking for political appointments for family and friends; to university presidents and professors concerning the awarding of honorary degrees; to leaders of organizations whose Boards he served on; to writers asking them to autograph copies of their books for him. Among Kivie's less frequent correspondents were: Mrs Martin Luther King Jr., Senator Edward Kennedy, Tom Bradley, Hubert Humphrey, John Volpe, Lois Mark Stalvey an author, and Abram Sachar president of Brandeis University.

It is interesting that very little of all of Kaplan's correspondence is staid or formal but very intimate. He wrote this way even to those he barely knew or even to some he had never met. It did not seem to matter whether the letter was addressed to a senator, close friend, family member, NAACP official, wealthy businessman, foreign dignitary, or stranger. Kivie would always talk about how busy he was, about his children, about certain books, news articles or speeches he had read, about sickness in the family and other intimate details about his life. For instance to Carl Alpert, Executive Director of the Board of Governors of the Technion, whom he had never met before, he wrote a first letter telling how his son Edward was working

on his PhD in French literature, details about Edwards marriage and wife, about his own wife's contracting a blood condition and how his doctor had restricted foreign trips for him. Kivie also enclosed a hate article about himself as well as a comment from Rabbi Gittelsohn who said that he "hoped he had more Jews as good as Kivie."¹¹ These were strange comments to make to someone whom he had never met before and who probably never heard of Gittelsohn. Similarly, to Henry Kissinger, whom he barely knew Kaplan wrote:

I keep extremely busy, and try not to overdo, as the doctor has asked me to slow down and live; but, it isn't easy to do that as I have been working for Jewish and non-Jewish causes for 49 years, and the NAACP for 41 years.¹²

Through Kivie's correspondence one sees a man who wants to share the specifics of his personal life with everyone. It is not unusual to do this with those you know very well but it is quite unusual to write so intimately to important individuals whom you do not know well. Perhaps this made Kivie feel important as he "rubbed elbows" with the elite and important persons in the country. Some would say he was naive to believe that everyone cared about what his children were doing or how sick his wife was. Perhaps he was just a

¹¹Letter from KK to Carl Alpert, Haifa Israel, 1/1 KKP-AJA.

¹²Letter, KK to Henry Kissinger, Washington D.C., 5 October 1973., 6/10 KKP-AJA.

simple and honest person or maybe as his son Edward suggests:

You should also reflect on the reason why you like to tell so many people about me, people who are complete strangers to you and me. It might be in some part that you are also proud of yourself for what I accomplish.¹³

Kivie Kaplan was not an impressive writer and never wrote any articles for publication other than a letter to the editor in the "Open Forum" column of the Jewish Spectator.¹⁴ Still, he wrote a multitude of letters and never missed responding to any of the many letters that he received. Though his writing was far from perfect it did manage to get right to the point of what he was trying to say. This was true no matter how encompassing or complex his point was. Much of his correspondence is filled with unsophisticated and somewhat simple-hearted ideas. In all of his writing he comes across as being quite frank, straightforward, unpretentious and sincere. He is also perfectly blunt in what he says as he chose to hide few, if any, of his emotions and feelings on particular subjects.

Kivie was extremely generous for he would give gifts to many of the people he met or learned about from others. He believed the giving of gifts would help enhance old relationships and open the doors to new ones. In fact many

¹³Letter, Edward Kaplan to KK, 2 December 1972, 15/4 KKP-AJA.

¹⁴April 1969, page 25

times these gifts were the catalyst that helped to further his contacts with people whom he knew he would have but one opportunity of meeting. For Kivie, networking with different people was an important part of his life and something which he enjoyed immensely. He would send the gifts, receive a thank you and then continue to write to that person. Among the goodies were neckties with the scales of justice on them, almonds which he had shipped from California, pretzels sent from Pennsylvania and various kinds of buttons. The supply of "gifts on hand" got so extensive that Emily would often complain to Kivie about the lack of closet and storage space in their house.

Kivie Kaplan bestowed hundreds of gifts upon people but nothing exceeded the number of books he distributed. He purchased so many books that he was able to arrange special quantity discount rates with publishers and booksellers. The following list represents a typical single order for books placed by Kivie Kaplan.

50 autographed copies of Gunther Plaut's 3 Million More
 100 Institutional Racism in America
 100 of Coretta Scott King's books
 100 Jerome Holland's books with signatures
 100 Basic Reform Judaism by William Silverman
 10 Accidents by Wiesel
 10 Jews of Silence by Wiesel
 10 Gates of the Forest
 10 Town Behind Walls
 100 Legends of Our Times 15

¹⁵Letter, Roberta Halpern, New York to KK, 5/5
 KKP-AJA.

Among his favorite books to give away were: The Education of A Wasp, by Lois Mark Stalvey of which he gave away at least three thousand copies. There was also The Way of The Upright, by Richard Hirsch of which he give away about two thousand copies.

In a one year period Kivie ordered over three thousand books from the UAHC alone to give away. When James Benjamin, Manager of Marketing Services for the Union, left that position in 1974 he made it a point to write Kivie a letter saying, "It was a real pleasure working with you over the years."¹⁶ But some booksellers were not as elated with Kivie as his individual book orders sometimes required a lot of work. Often Kivie would have the bookseller send the book to the author to autograph it. Then the author would channel it back to the bookseller who would in turn ship it to individuals with a note saying "Compliments of Emily and Kivie Kaplan." Problems associated with these "individual care packages" arose when Kivie asked for too many personal services. One book dealer wrote to Kivie.

You order one book at a time and we lose money. Frankly the whole deal is a money losing proposition and now you write me about nickels and dimes...you want prices of three years ago.¹⁷

¹⁶Letter, James Benjamin, New York to KK, 1/5 KKP-AJA.

¹⁷Letter, Jonathan Levine, Connecticut to KK, 14 May 1973, 7/3 KKP-AJA.

Another item that Kivie Kaplan gave away in large numbers was his "Keep Smiling " cards. By 1969 he had printed and handed out about 100,000 of these little cards. He apparently got the idea from his son in law Morton Grossman. Morton owned a lumber company whose business card said "Smile" on the front and the name, address and phone number of the company on the reverse side. Kivie's cards said "keep smiling" on the front and had sayings from his friend's, Ralph Harlow's book, Thoughts for Hard Times like These printed on the back. Harlow was a retired professor of theology at Smith College and a dedicated Christian minister. He had worked throughout his life for many pro-Jewish causes. Harlow was the founder of the American Christian Palestine Committee, an organization that spoke out for and supported the Jewish State of Israel. As a religious leader he had many influential contacts in the Jewish and non Jewish communities and introduced many of these people to Kaplan. In fact Kivie met Roger Baldwin, president of the ACLU and Abba Eban through professor Harlow.

Kivie Kaplan had a very interesting style of speaking. He was not highly educated nor was he a dynamic or captivating speaker. He outwardly acknowledged that his public speaking abilities were at best mediocre. Most of the minutes of the various boards he served on indicate that he did not even like to give committee reports and therefore he frequently turned this responsibility over to others.

This man was not a great thinker or an "ideas man". As a result, some of his ideas and philosophies seemed simple-minded and sometimes naive. Often he would rely on the advice of his close friends when making major decisions. Kivie's strengths were that he always stated his positions and views without being formal or superficial and that he was a man that could not tolerate hypocrisy or sham. He was a dreamer, visionary and idealist who believed that he could change the world. In the end, Kivie might not have been able to persuade someone to take his particular position but this was alright with him as long as they listened to him fully and openly.

Although Kivie was a Republican he was non-partisan in choosing everything from political candidates to his friends. He tried very hard to embrace everyone as a friend so that he could convince them to involve themselves in civil rights. He voted for or against candidates, chose friends, supported projects and people based upon their stances on civil rights. When he was asked why he voted for Humphrey over McGovern he replied "because Hubert Humphrey used to go to NAACP Conventions."¹⁸ It did not seem to matter to Kivie whether someone was Jewish or Catholic, Black or White, a Republican or Democrat. What was important to him was that they be involved in his cause of civil rights. Their individual philosophies and ideologies for doing so did not even matter. What was important was

¹⁸Detroit Jewish News, 7 July 1972.

whether they were somehow involved in or at least expressed an interest in Black or Jewish causes. These same criteria were extended to writers, activists, clergy, politicians and office workers alike. It did not matter to Kivie that he was a Jew and joined Ralph Harlow's church. As long as Harlow was involved in civil rights he was willing to do anything for him.

Kaplan was just not interested in those that were not interested in what he was doing. He had little patience for those Jews who wanted nothing to do with Black causes. In one instance he wrote a strong letter refusing to give money to the Jewish Theological Seminary because it's President Bernard Mandelbaum refused to support the NAACP.¹⁹ Kivie rarely spoke out at meetings except to make statements involving Blacks and civil rights. At one Bnai Brith Career and Counselling Service meeting where the issue of jobs came up, he quickly brought up the matter of affirmative action. He warned those present that any resolution condemning affirmative action "could result in severe repercussions throughout the country."²⁰ Kaplan added that the entire committee should read Thinking about Quotas, by Leonard Fein. Equality for all people, especially for Blacks, seemed to dominate every area of Kivie Kaplan's life.

¹⁹Letter, Bernard Mandelbaum, New York to KK, 28 November 1966, 7/8 KKP-AJA.

²⁰Minutes of BBCCS, 28 April 1973, 16/2 KKP-AJA.

Kaplan was a man who would come to the aid of just about anyone who needed it. If he could not assist them by himself then he would put them in touch with someone who could. To some, he seemed a little bit strange in an age when to care was to be suspect. He would frequently write to supervisors to praise the work of their employees. He once wrote to a Boston area Howard Johnson's to tell them how efficient one of their waiters had been. Another time he wrote to the telephone company to praise the help he had received from one of their operators. He even wrote to the city of Norfolk commending officer S.P.Griffith who assisted Kivie when he got lost. The way he treated others was the way he also expected to be treated himself. He was a pure idealist and truly believed that a world could exist where everyone would work together and help one another. This was Kivie's vision for the world. A vision for which he worked so diligently. Kivie was a humble man, not dazzled nor blinded by wealth, honor nor fame. For Kivie Kaplan, if people treated him fairly, took his work for Judaism and Blacks seriously and involved themselves in this work then they would gain his respect, loyalty and devoted friendship. Other than his family and civil rights he seemed to care about little else in life.

There is no doubt that Kivie traveled extensively and widely, particularly after he became the NAACP president in 1966. The following schedule was typical of the type of

itinerary he had day in and day out from 1966-1975.

We left Safety Harbor on March 12 and drove 256 miles from there to Thomasville Ga., where I spoke with 10 of the officers and NAACP Board for dinner and then I spoke that evening at a mass meeting. The next morning we drove 157 miles to Macon in time to speak for the Ministers' luncheon and we were there for three days for the Region Five Convention. Then on to the Chapel Hill branch in North Carolina and so on until we go home to Boston on March 26.²¹

It is no coincidence that during this period Kivie began to develop serious health problems. In the late '60s he incurred a heart condition, an enlarged heart, a dilated valve, high blood pressure and was twenty pounds overweight. In 1971 he contracted diabetes followed by a major heart attack and then a pacemaker. During this period he writes that:

We came home and I found myself very sick, with a very, very bad case of diabetes and complications. The emotional stress that my system went through stirred things up wrong because I've never had diabetes and it put me in the hospital for two weeks. The doctors want me to slow down and live.²²

But Kivie did not listen and wrote in the same letter that he was now going to:

Speak at the Parish Church on October 17 in Brookline; I will be in Mississippi on the 20th for four days. We will be

²¹Amsterdam News, 10 May 1975.

²²Letter, KK to Alpert Vorspan, New York, 20 October 1971 13/11 KKP-AJA.

in Fall River, Mass. the 25th, for the NAACP speaking engagement; Then to Pennsylvania where I will be with the Philadelphia Central branch of NAACP and visiting Lincoln University and then we go to California..²³

Kivie always said that "he would rather wear out than rust out." So he ran himself ragged until late 1974 when the death of his good friend Bishop Stephen Spottswood of the NAACP opened his eyes to his own faltering health. But it was too late as a few months later on May 5, 1975 Kivie Kaplan died of a heart attack on his way to a UAHC meeting in New York.

²³Ibid.

SECTION TWO
Kivie Kaplan the Businessman

When Kivie's father Ben opened a tannery in the 1920s, Kivie and his two brothers Archie and Joe worked there. Each of the three sons were promised 10% of the business upon their fathers retirement. But later on, due to quarrels between Kivie's two brothers and between the two brothers and their father, Ben decided to cut Archie and Joe off from any inheritance. As a result of the difficulties with their father the two left their father's tannery and went into their own business. A short time later Kivie left his father's tannery and went into the business with his two brothers.

So in 1924 with \$12,000 in capital the three Kaplan brothers opened a single factory and the Colonial Tanning Company was established. Twenty-four years later sales reached 20 million dollars and by 1961 they climbed to over 32 million dollar a year. Their seven tanneries now produced half of the patent leather in the United States. The company was not only successful in sales but very progressive in company-employee relations. It's workers were among the highest paid tannery workers in the country.²⁴ The tannery employed about 400 workers and maintained a waiting list of those wanting to work there. It was also the first tannery in the country to hire Blacks

²⁴Wall St. Journal, 11 August 1953.

and by the mid '30s 20% of the employees were Black. Kivie Kaplan make no distinction whatsoever throughout his life between Blacks and Whites.

The workers were treated quite well by the general manager of the company, Kivie Kaplan. There were no private offices and so everyone worked in one large room in the hope that there would be good communication between management and labor. There was a pension plan for all employees paid by the company and a life insurance policy where the worker and company shared the cost of the policy. Every employee received an automatic yearly cost of living increase as well as full paid vacations. The company would sponsor employee outings, such as clambakes and picnics, and give monetary gifts for Christmas, Thanksgiving, weddings or the birth of a child. Kivie created an Advisory Board of Employees to handle employee suggestions and a Profit Sharing Committee that distributed 30% of the profits before taxes to the workers. In the air-conditioned employee dining room 40,000 free meals had been served by 1959. From here Kivie got his gift giving and "care package" idea. On Kivie's orders, Irene Glaser the manager of the lunch room would prepare "care packages" for the employees to take home. No doubt the success of Colonial was due to the times it operated in, to good business decisions and to it's emphasis on employee morale.²⁵ His business experience

²⁵At the time the United States Armed Forces were using a lot of leather and Colonial received many of these Government contracts. Colonial was also the

would serve as a model for the way that he thought the world should operate. He would try to create such a world as the president of the NAACP.

Kivie retired from business in 1962 and worked full time for the NAACP. Harry Golden writes that "Kivie Kaplan turned the business, lock, stock and barrel over to his employees...because he said he must 'march with the Negroes,' "26 Kivie similarly wrote in most of his correspondence that he retired from business because he "thought it was more important to serve in the fight for human dignity than to make money in business."27 Or he would say "I retired from business and I thought it was more important for me to serve than to make money."28 Such reasons for Kivie's retirement might be partially true but they do not tell the whole story. Years earlier there had been frequent quarrels between Archie, Joe and Kivie. At one point the tensions got so bad that Archie wanted out of the business and so Joe and Kivie bought him out. There were hard feelings between the brothers and Archie and Kivie did not talk to each other for fifteen years, even though

first company to recognize the possibility of exporting leather and the first to develop a superior patent leather finish.

²⁶Feingold, Norman S. and Silverman, William B., eds. Kivie Kaplan. p.239.

²⁷Kivie Kaplan. Interview, 30 June 1970. Cincinnati, Ohio. Recording No. 836, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

²⁸Letter, KK to Lester Avnet, New York, 20 January 1969, 1/2 KKP-AJA.

they lived on the same street. But the problems did not end and the two remaining brothers, Joe and Kivie, argued more frequently and bitterly as time went on. One observer writes that "Although the business was outwardly healthy the business suffered internally from low employee morale and a stalemate on all decision making."²⁹ A short time later, Joe died and Kivie was left as the sole owner of the tannery. For a short while Kivie was recharged with a new zeal for business. But then he began to delegate to others, perhaps less able, and the business went on the decline.

On June 6, 1961 a fire broke out in the main plant of the Colonial Tannery in Ayers, Massachusetts. This plant was the main source of production for the entire company. The cause of the fire was unknown but caused over 2 million dollars worth of damage to the factory. One of Kivie's fellow businessmen suggests that given the internal situation of the business "the fire that totally destroyed Colonial's main factory was less a disaster and more a way out for Kivie."³⁰ Kivie did not use the 2 million dollars in insurance proceeds to build a new plant but liquidated the business and acquired the proceeds from the sale of the business plus the money from the insurance settlement.

Kivie was a shrewd businessman but maintained his integrity and honesty throughout his business career. Some

²⁹Feingold, Norman S. and Silverman, William B., eds. Kivie Kaplan, p. 85.

³⁰Ibid.

might not call him a "good" businessman because he put so much of the profits back into the business and employees. But this is how Kivie wanted it and besides it really seemed to work. He always believed that the better the worker's morale the greater their productivity. His decision after the fire of 1961 to become a leader, president of the NAACP and philanthropist was probably a good decision. From being a burnt out businessman among many businessmen he suddenly became an important and recognized national White leader of the largest Black civil rights organization in America. From being a man with financial difficulties he became a wealthy philanthropist. From being a person caught in a troubled career he became someone with new and exciting opportunities for meeting notable people. As a wealthy philanthropist, he could become someone who was greatly needed and treated with immense respect. All of this points to the fact that Kivie Kaplan's retirement from business changed his life dramatically and made him a more important figure.

SECTION THREE
Kivie Kaplan The Philanthropist

Kivie began his major philanthropical activities after his retirement in 1961. From then on Kivie was involved in small and large philanthropic efforts. Virtually every request for a donation that Kivie received, and there were many, he would either personally donate or else put the solicitor in touch with someone who he believed would make the donation. He wrote to Rabbi Leonard Goldstein that:

"I have suggested some prospects here at the Spa for Dr. Zeitlin to talk to-some very wealthy Canadian people and American people and I am hopeful that he will be very successful in getting good results with some big contributions."³¹

Kivie donated his money to various causes throughout his lifetime. There are too many to mention each one individually but some of his major contributions are listed below.

Jewish Memorial Hospital	\$1,000,000
(Emily R. and Kivie Kaplan Building)	
Jewish Memorial Hospital	\$100,00
(Emily R. and Kivie Kaplan Wing)	
Jewish Memorial Hospital air-conditioning	\$25,000

³¹Letter, KK to Leonard Goldstein, New York, 27 January 1971, 4/5 KKP-AJA.

Brandeis University (Lincoln Hall)	\$75,000
Religious Action Center-UAHC	\$100,000
Hebrew Union College-Jerusalem School's new building	\$100,000
World Union for Progressive Judaism	\$100,000
Reform Jewish Appeal	\$80,000
Tougaloo College	\$40,000
Temple Israel Boston	\$100,000
National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods	\$25,000
Mutual Real Estate Investment Trust	\$50,000
(For the development of integrated housing)	

He also supported other causes with donations ranging from \$500-\$1,000. Among the causes he supported were: the Leo Baeck School in Haifa, the United Farm Workers, many Black colleges, the campaigns of many politicians, and various Black and Jewish causes. Whether the donation was small or large he was almost always asked to serve on the board of that organization, either before or after the donation was made. There were very few instances where Kivie refused such offers and so he was listed on paper as serving on many organizational boards throughout the country. But in reality he rarely attended any board meetings with the exception of those connected with the UAHC, BBCCS (B'nai Brith Career and Counselling Services), NAACP and a few Black Colleges. He rarely missed any of the meetings connected with these organizations. Some of the other

boards and organizations that Kaplan was moderately involved in included: treasurer and chairman, the Endowment Fund Committee of the Jewish Memorial Hospital; treasurer, Roxbury Cemetery Association; member, Finance Committee Newtown-Welltown Hospital; executive committee, Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Boston; board member, Hebrew Free Loan Society; board of trustees, Lincoln University and Tougaloo College; member, Brandeis University Associates; treasurer, Mason's Shawmut Lodge. On all of the boards he served on he found himself involved with committees that dealt with either finances or fundraising. Kivie rarely spoke out at most of these board and committee meetings. The instances where he did speak out he offered fundraising advice or stood up for Blacks and the policies of the NAACP.

Kaplan's correspondence contains many letters he wrote criticizing board members that did not give their fair share to the Institution on whose board they served. On Kivie's request, Benjamin Engel of the UAHC sent him detailed figures of the donations of select members of the UAHC Board of Trustees. Kivie used this information to check on how much the various board members were giving. He despised those members who did not give their fair share since he considered fundraising and donating as the main responsibilities of a board member. Kivie simply saw fundraising, not policy making, as the main priority for organizational boards.

Kivie would occasionally make contributions to individuals and organizations that he knew little about. He seemed less concerned with the internal workings and policies of the organization and more concerned with the overall cause and person involved in the solicitation. He never questioned motives but he refused to give money to those solicitors who were deceptive or manipulative. Robert Goldman wrote to Kivie asking him for funds saying Kivie's relatives had helped his cause. Kivie responded strongly saying:

"I have yours of March 18th and you mention amongst other things about my relatives having helped? and I think you are a little bit harsh in the way you outline the facts in your letter.

When I get back I will certainly be glad to give this further thought. In the meantime, please send me a list of the various contributions that the various relatives have made as well as your financial condition and your budget so that I will know exactly what we are talking about."³²

Kivie refused but few requests for donations and when he did his standard line went:

I am not crying as we are happy people as far as our financial situation is, but as you know I'm retired 8 years and have absolutely no business income, and we give away over 40% of our income and a small percentage of capital each year so that it is almost impossible for us

³²Letter, KK to Robert Goldman, Cambridge Mass., 27 March 1970, 4/5 KKP-AJA.

to take on anything new, as much as we would like to."³³

One particular example illustrates his extraordinary philanthropic efforts on behalf of the UAHC and other organizations. In the early seventies Rabbi Stephen Schafer asked Kaplan to support the efforts of a Abie Nathan. Nathan was trying to establish a "Peace Ship" to broadcast to the Arab countries and Israel in an effort to establish better relations between the two peoples. Nathan had sold his properties and businesses in Israel for \$80,000 but needed another \$22,000 to set sail. Kivie knew little about Nathan and depended heavily on Schafer and other UAHC leaders for advice about how and why he should help this man. Kivie carried on a long and detailed correspondence with Schafer concerning Nathan's efforts and got deeply involved in the whole situation. Kaplan gave his own money to the cause and wrote letters to others to get support for Nathan. It was Kivie's style never to simply write a check and forget about it. He seemed to take every cause he contributed to as a "personal responsibility."

This was typical of many of Kaplan's Jewish philanthropy recipients, especially those of the UAHC and Temple Israel. There were very few main line Jewish leaders to whose requests Kivie did not accede. He always got deeply and personally involved when he gave money to a

³³Letter, KK to Marion Beaven, October 1970, 1/3 KKP-AJA.

particular Jewish group. He wanted to know the intimate details of the projects they were involved in and to know know intimately their personnel. He particularly liked to know the "behind the scenes" stuff. Kivie seemed to like to get involved in the projects he gave money to because they put him in direct contact with important Jewish leaders and organizations. He also learned the "inside stories", many of which he might not know had he not given money. Many times he used these "inside stories" to gain greater credibility with others. Also, because of his philanthropic efforts, many of these Jewish leaders always had their doors open and telephone lines open to Kivie Kaplan. There was a definite relationship between his correspondence and the money he gave. Right before and right after he gave a substantial amount of money, correspondence from that organization and it's officials would increase dramatically.³⁴ Besides this, by supporting Jewish causes Kivie expected reciprocity from those Jewish leaders with his fundraising efforts on behalf of Black causes.

Kivie also supported many small and less well known Black organizations. He was a strong supporter of Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, Mississippi, and served on it's Board of Directors for many years. He gave that Black college large amounts of money and persuaded others to make

³⁴This is particularly true with the UAHC when he gave \$100,00 in 1959 to build the Religious Action Center and in 1973 when he gave \$100,000 to the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

contributions to their cause. As indicated earlier, Kivie rarely spoke up at many of the Jewish meetings he attended. But at the meetings of Black organizations he was more vociferous. Here Kivie took a more active role giving out advice as the "successful white fundraising expert". His Black philanthropic efforts put him in direct contact with some Black leaders and at least made his name well known to all Black leaders. His reputation gave him enough status to get into the door and to see and to correspond with, the nation's top Black leaders.

His Black philanthropic efforts also made Kivie feel that he was a part of the larger Black cause. A cause which needed "white money" desperately, since the black community could not provide all the necessary funding for it's projects. A cause which also placed a tremendous amount of significance on Black education and thus Black colleges such as Tougaloo. Therefore those few, like Kivie, who were wealthy and worked to raise money for Black colleges and causes were important and invaluable to the Black leadership. At the same time Kivie expected Black leaders to reciprocate his generosity by supporting the Jewish causes that he was involved in. But most of the time the Black leadership and organizations had little time or adequate resources to support causes outside of their own.

Kivie Kaplan did not use his finances for loud applause but he did like to be acknowledged for his work. Unlike other philanthropists he often worried and bothered with

Black and Jewish organizations and individuals of lesser
repute. Unlike some wealthy philanthropists he liked to
mingle with and "roll up his sleeves" with people of non
comparable social and economic status to him. Perhaps
because being a modest, simple, nonaffected and
simplehearted person he felt he had something in common with
them.

SECTION FOUR
Kivie Kaplan The Jew

By far Kivie Kaplan's major involvement with Jewish institutions was with the Union of America Hebrew Congregations (UAHC). In 1958 he was appointed to serve on it's Social Action Commission and in the early 70s he served on the Board of Trustees and the Israel Commission. As a member of these different committees his responsibilities involved different aspects of fundraising. He frequently corresponded with many of the UAHC officials, expressing his concerns about the inadequate fundraising that was being done by the Union. In 1974 he wrote to Alexander Schindler saying:

Fund raising has been a very serious bone of contention as far as I have been concerned...I have been extremely critical about our low level of giving. We must strengthen our teams...³⁵

Besides being a kind of fundraising "cheerleader" Kaplan was extremely critical of those who had the means to give and did not give more. He believed that there were two types of leaders. The first was a leader by virtue of certain qualities such as intelligence, charisma and political ability. Others, like himself, were leaders because they would give as much money or raise as much money as they were able to, for the cause. He believed that it was the

³⁵Letter, KK to Alexander Schindler and Alan Iselin, New York, 2 October 1974, 11/3 KKP-AJA.

responsibility of the second type of leader to serve the first. Therefore, he saw many of the UAHC leaders, Schindler, Vorspan, Eisendrath, Balfour Brickner, Hirsch, as running the show and himself as providing the means for them to do so. About Alexander Schindler he wrote:

It looked like he was down in the dumps, almost going around like a "schnorer" with his hat in his hand almost begging for this money, and I don't think a tireless, dedicated leader like Alex should be put in a position like that, that those of us who have the guts and courage and the money, the ability the will and the interest should make it easy for our dedicated leaders who lead a really rough life, when you take their family into consideration and all the travelling that is necessary.³⁶

About himself and others similar to himself he writes:

We must take each leader from A to Z and analyze them, and I am not one for getting blood out of a stone or milking anybody or taking advantage of anybody, because this is not in my book, but I certainly am one who believes that those leaders who can afford to pay the price for being a leader should pay the price...³⁷

Kivie helped to finance many projects of the UAHC, some important ones in particular. He gave \$50,000 for a new Torah Commentary and pledged \$250,000 to build a summer camp in New England. His correspondence indicates that he was treated quite well before and during the time he gave his

³⁶Letter, KK to Howard Metzenbaum, 28 May 1973, 8/2 KKP-AJA.

³⁷Letter, KK to Matt Ross and Al Vorspan, New York, 16 June 1974, 10/16 KKP-AJA.

gift but afterward he complained of "shabby treatment" from the Union. He wanted to be more involved in the decision making process that went along with projects but UAHC officials did not want to grant his requests all of the time. There were times when Kivie seemed to feel as if the UAHC sometimes took his generosity for granted. The Emily and Kivie Kaplan Camp for Living Judaism was never built. Apparently the site had been picked and finances arranged but at the last minute the UAHC leadership decided that they were in too much of a financial crunch at the time to build a new camp. Unfortunately Kaplan was not consulted concerning all of these events and he became quite upset when he heard about the cancellation of the project.

But generally Kivie Kaplan was extremely loyal to the top officials of the UAHC. It was through his correspondence with UAHC leaders, UAHC memos and UAHC meetings that Kivie got much of his information about current events and situations, about what Jews believed, and sometimes even about what decisions to make. Once, before he went to a youth conclave in Sarasota, Florida, he wrote to Al Vorspan and Hank Skirball asking for

some suggestions as to what I should stress with the kids...I think if you just gave me notes I will know the subject...Your cooperation on this will be greatly appreciated.³⁸

³⁸Letter, KK to Al Vorspan and Hank Skirball, New York, 15 January 1970, 12/12 KKP-AJA.

He would sometimes even use this information and correspondence word for word, quoting it's source. Kivie was very loyal and faithful to the UAHC even though he had a limited knowledge of what the Union did.³⁹ Nevertheless, he promoted the UAHC wherever he went. When ever he would speak to an NAACP group he would try to arrange also to visit a local Reform synagogue.

The Union leadership saw Kivie as a simple man whose speech was plain and his presence not commanding."⁴⁰ They recognized the importance of maintaining a good relationship with him because of his generosity. But the relationship also included meeting his frequent requests for help for someone in need. Alexander Schindler wrote:

Rare is the call which I receive from Kivie which does not ask my help for someone--a staff member, a colleague, a friend, a chance acquaintance, a total stranger, it does not matter. Kivie pleads in his case.⁴¹

His earliest involvement with the UAHC was in 1958 when he joined it's Social Action Commission. Kivie was one of 62 persons on the Commission and did not sit on the Executive Committee and therefore was probably not involved

³⁹On one visit to California KK had a difficult time explaining to a Temple board just what the UAHC programs were. In a letter from Alexander Schindler, New York to Rabbi Joel Goor, San Diego, Ca. 24 November 1971, 11/13 KKP-AJA.

⁴⁰Alexander Schindler in Feingold, Norman S. and Silverman, William B., eds. Kivie Kaplan p.255

⁴¹11/13 KKP-AJA.

in many of the major policy decisions of the Commission. His major involvement with the UAHC Social Action Commission was as a fundraiser, as a link between certain Blacks and Jews, and as a gatherer of information and resources for his personal and professional use. In fact it was from this agency that Kaplan made the most requests for printed and published materials⁴² Albert Vorspan and Kivie Kaplan were very close as their correspondence indicates. Vorspan was Kivie's source of information on the civil rights movement and on the situation between Blacks and Jews. The correspondence between them is filled with pages upon pages of such information. Vorspan provided Kivie with printed statements of Black leaders who spoke out against anti-Semitism, statements of Jewish leaders concerning Blacks, information for Kivie's speeches and talks and reprints from the Jewish press. There were times when Kivie even confided in Vorspan concerning the amount of his contributions. In many instances Vorspan also served as the "go-between", between Kivie and the UAHC leadership. In turn Kivie financially supported the Commission and circulated and paid for the distribution of the publications and speeches of many UAHC leaders, particularly Vorspan's.

Kivie Kaplan probably knew and corresponded with more rabbis than any lay person in America. He use to carry the alumni directory of HUC-JIR wherever he went. Many of his closest friends were Reform rabbis such as Sam Volkman, who

⁴²5/6 KKP-AJA.

was torn about performing his daughter's intermarriage.

Kivie wrote to him saying:

"Sam, I realize that this isn't going to be easy for you and you have your arguments and you're probably right on your arguments, but I say that where it comes to your own daughter, that you should swallow hard and perform this marriage.⁴³

Kivie considered rabbis as the same type of leaders as UAHC officials and so he was always willing to serve them. Whenever a rabbi was let go or fired he tried to help him find a new job. Again, he was more concerned with the individual than the details of their dismissal. Especially if they were involved or minimally interested in his causes he would do anything for them.

He had great empathy for rabbis, particularly for Southern rabbis. When they ran into trouble because of stands they took he would immediately come to their aid. Ideologically, Kaplan was more critical of the North than the South. He said "at least in the South the Negro knows where he stands. The North speaks through both sides of it's mouth. They desegregate in the North but do not integrate."⁴⁴ When Rabbi Philip Schechter, a dedicated civil

⁴³Letter, KK to Sam Volkman 12 February 1972, 13/9 KKP-AJA.

⁴⁴Democrat Argus, 10 August 1967 as cited in "Biographical Information on Kivie Kaplan", Nearprint Biography Files, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

rights worker, ran into problems with his congregation Kaplan wrote to Vorspan.

Al, the only thing we don't want to do - and I am sure that you are on my side regardless of the politics involved-is to let a thing like this just get whitewashed..

some young social action Rabbi in the future [will] get his head chopped off as Phil Schecter did even though he may have made a mistake or two and who doesn't make some mistakes every once in a while? The only difference is-when a doctor does, he buries it, and a businessman pays for it and a rabbi is a sacrificial lamb; or better still, a sacrificial ham, so I don't think we ought to allow this thing to go off scott free without getting into all the angles.⁴⁵

The Central Conference of American Rabbis passed a resolution in 1973 expressing their friendship and good wishes to Kivie and Emily Kaplan. A Conference official, Joe Glaser wrote that "this represents the first time in the 84 year history of the CCAR that such an action was taken with a resolution."⁴⁶ Kivie was a great advocate of his own rabbi, Roland Gittelsohn of Temple Israel. He frequently asked the Rabbi for advice and would pay for and personally distribute many of Gittelsohn's books and sermons.

By far Kivie's largest contribution to the Social Action Commission was his funding of the Religious Action Center in Washington D.C.. As early as 1953 UAHG President

⁴⁵Letter, KK to Albert Vorspan, New York, 20 April 1971, 13/12 KKP-AJA.

⁴⁶Found in 4/7 KKP-AJA.

Maurice Eisendrath had called for the establishment of a Social Action Center in Washington D.C. In 1959 he had persuaded the delegation attending the UAHC Biennial to approve it and Kivie Kaplan to give the \$100,000 necessary to purchase a building. However between 1959 and 1961 a battle ensued about the creation of such a center. An effort was spearheaded by Alfred Bachrach, President of Temple Emanu-El in New York to block the establishment of such a center. Behind him were Southern congregations who were against the UAHC having a center to express it's public stands on racial integration; anti-Zionists who feared the spreading of the UAHC's pro-Israel position; conservatives who were worried about a central lobbying body of the UAHC which might jeopardize the rights of individual congregations. Concerning this debate Vorspan writes "Few debates..generated as much emotion or were so laden with long range and symbolic significance for the Reform Jewish Movement in this country."⁴⁷ But through a strong lobbying effort by Union leaders a second resolution was passed at the 1961 Biennial convention reaffirming the need to establish a center. But all of this did not seem to matter to Kivie as long as in the end the Center was built. In 1962 the Emily R. and Kivie Kaplan Religious Action Center at 2027 Massachusetts Ave Washington D.C. was dedicated. Unfortunately in the years that followed many would forget

⁴⁷Feingold, Norman S. and Silverman, William B., eds. Kivie Kaplan. p.162.

that it was "The Emily R. and Kivie Kaplan" Religious Action Center and about Kivie Kaplan's large contribution to the Center's creation. In an article in 1987 entitled "The Religious Action Center at 25" appearing in Reform Judaism, the official publication of the UAHC, there is no mention of Kivie Kaplan in the article itself or in the pictures of the dedication ceremony of 1962.

It was through the Social Action Commission that Kivie marched with 250,000 others in Washington in 1963. The Religious Action Center coordinated an effort to bring 1,100 Jewish youth to Washington for this March. But, as was the case with many organizations he was involved with, Kivie believed that the Commission was still not doing enough. He was often frustrated that there were only two full-time staff members working for the Social Action Commission. Kivie believed the two full time workers, Al Vorspan and Balfour Brickner, were not enough because there were "duties for six" at the Commission. He concluded that even these two "were a myth, names on stationery" because they had so many other responsibilities for the UAHC.⁴⁸ Social Action, particularly toward Blacks, was Kivie's whole life and he wanted it to be the whole life of the UAHC as well. Kivie wanted to remedy the situation and gave \$100,000 to the Union for Vorspan to "do work in Washington."⁴⁹ This is

⁴⁸Letter, KK to Balfour Brickner, New York, December 1973, 1/16 KKP-AJA.

⁴⁹Ibid.

the \$100,000 that eventually went to establish the Religious Action Center in Washington D.C.

In 1976 a short time after Kivie Kaplan died a book was published entitled Kivie Kaplan: A legend in His Own Time. The idea for the book came in February 1970 and was intended to honor Kivie while he was alive. The book took a long time to put together, five years⁵⁰, and went to the publisher in March 1975. Kivie died in May of that year and the book was not available in print until 1976. Therefore the book, originally intended to honor him, now became a memorial to Kivie Kaplan. The idea for and editing of the book was the work of two of Kivie's closest friends Norman Feingold and William Silverman. Feingold had been a close friend of Kivie's for years and Kivie had served on the board of B'nai B'rith Career and Counseling Services (BBCCS) while Feingold was it's Director. Rabbi Silverman had also known Kivie for years since the time Kivie had invited him to Boston from Nashville. When the project first began in 1971 Rabbi Silverman and Kaplan agreed that Al Vorspan would be the best one to write the book. But for unknown reasons Vorspan turned the offer down. Kivie appeared not to want the book written but Feingold and Silverman persisted in wanting to carry out the project. Finally Kivie agreed and

⁵⁰The book took such a long time because some of the writers Kivie wanted to write declined and so new writers had to be sought. Some writers took their time in turning in their chapters and there were some problems with the publisher. From Letter, William Silverman, Kansas City, Mo. to Herman Pollack, Brookline Mass, 12 December 1973, 12/8 KKP-AJA.

suggested that. if a book had to be written that different individuals write about various episodes of his life, with Silverman and Feingold serving as editors.

The editors wanted the UAHC to publish the book but for a long time the Union refused to publish it. Silverman had several other publishers lined up if in the end the UAHC still refused. Eventually the Union did agree to publish it but only under the condition that they need not put more than \$5,000-\$7,000 towards it's publication.⁵¹ Kivie Kaplan had been depositing his personal papers in the American Jewish Archives since 1966. But unfortunately, neither Kaplan nor the large collection in the Archives was consulted when most of the individual writers created their chapters. Therefore the book contains personal memories. vignettes etc. about Kaplan rather than historical and biographical facts. As a result there are many inaccuracies in the book. Professor Howard Berman's chapter on genealogy is written on hearsay since he could not find a substantial genealogical history on the Kaplan family.⁵² Through their correspondence the editors made other comments about the poor quality of some of the chapters. In addition

⁵¹Letter, William Silverman, Kansas City, Mo. to Herman Pollack, Brookline Mass, 12 December 1973, 12/8 KKP-AJA.

⁵²See letters from Berman to Feingold asking him to ask Kaplan about his family background. Letter, 7 March 1974, 3/8 KP-ARC.

most of the writers and their chapters were cleared with Kivie at his suggestion.

If people have suggestions of who should write about me then drop their names to me first so that I can clear them because there are some people I wouldn't want to bother or wouldn't be interested in, and others I may and some that I may forget.⁵³

The book's contents suggest that it is more a collection of memories than any kind of biography. The objectivity of the book is at the very least questionable since all of it's writers were close personal friends of Kaplan's and/or the benefactors of Kaplan's financial generosity.

On February 2, 1972 Kaplan was elected to serve on the UAHC-CCAR Joint Commission on Israel. His interest in Israel had peaked through his association with Richard Hirsch, former Director of The Religious Action Center, and then director of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. As a result of Rabbi Hirsch's influence Kivie gave money for many projects in Israel including: The Israeli Archives, Reform Congregations in Israel, a new center at HUC-JIR in Jerusalem, the publication of Israel and American Jewry: 1967 and Beyond, the financing of Near East Report. After the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War in 1973 Rabbi Robert Samuels, headmaster of the Leo Baeck School in Haifa, called from an anti-aircraft installation in the Sinai, to ask Kivie for a contribution to the school. The government had

⁵³Letter, KK to Norman Feingold, Washington D.C.
28 June 1973, 3/4 KP-ARC.

cut subsidies due to the war and he needed money for the school's payroll. As a result Kivie gave an immediate \$100,000 to the World Union for Progressive Judaism hoping that some of the money would find it's way to Samuel's school. Not surprisingly, The Jewish Agency condemned Kaplan's gift because they thought it would not meet what they considered the most immediate need, the war effort.

Kivie was very involved in an organization called American Friends for Religious Freedom in Israel. The group was dedicated to providing opportunities for pluralism in Israel. It called for the Israel government to support Reform Synagogues as well as the recognition of Reform Rabbis as chaplains in the Israeli Army. Kaplan joined it's Executive Board in 1967 despite the claims by many of his associates that the organization's membership included a number of atheists. As a result of the continued suggestions of Dick Hirsch, Joe Glaser and Roland Gittelsohn Kivie did finally withdraw his support from AFRFI in 1970. By this time the organization became inactive anyway, due to lack of funds and leadership. Kivie's support of American Friends was not atypical since over the years Kivie had supported some controversial and some non-mainstream organizations. Perhaps this came out of his need to try to be involved in everything or his inability to turn down most of those in need of help.

On December 1968, by invitation of Dr. Eugene Mihaly, Kivie made a visit to the Hebrew Union College in

Cincinnati, Ohio. His visit included a talk in the chapel, a meeting with the Student Social Action Committee, a meeting with the faculty and a meeting with the local branch of the NAACP. After his visit to the campus HUC President Gottschalk asked Kivie to find a "serious" Black Jew who wanted to attend HUC-JIR. Gottschalk also wrote to Kivie asking him to sponsor a fellow at the school for \$3,500 a year to work on issues that dealt with interracial and intercultural problems between Jews and other groups.⁵⁴ From his visit at HUC and through the influence of several Union leaders⁵⁵ Kivie came to believe that the students and faculty of HUC had no interest in his cause, in Social Action. Therefore he refused both of Gottschalk's requests.

Kivie's Jewish education was minimal. He grew up in an Orthodox home where he learned enough Hebrew for his Bar Mitzvah. He was not a practicing traditionalist as on Yom Kippur Day 1974 after the morning service he went to a day long NAACP meeting. But he frequently attended worship services even though he did not consider himself "a Temple goer"⁵⁶ His reason for going was to hear the night's speaker or to visit the Rabbi of the congregation.

⁵⁴Letters, from Fred Gottschalk, Cincinnati to KK, 9 and 19 July 1971, 5/1 KKP-AJA.

⁵⁵See a letter from Balfour Brickner, New York to KK, 17 January 1968, 1/16 KKP-AJA.

⁵⁶Letter, KK to Rabbi Daniel Kaplan, 5 August 1971, 6/8 KKP-AJA.

Kivie and Emily sent their daughters to a Conservative Religious school when the girls were young. When his three children reached adulthood they all married Jews and became closely and actively identified with the Jewish community. Kivie loved to be with young people and accepted invitations to speak at many youth conclaves and meetings. He strongly believed in the importance of the involvement of Jewish youth on organizational boards. Throughout the years he continually asked all Jewish organizations he served on to have their boards comprised of 15% youth. He believed in the idealism of youth and that as the "old bigots died out these young people, who were wising up to racial justice," would create a better climate for social justice in the country.⁵⁷ Kivie thought that this new generation could make major societal changes if they could be allowed to serve on organizational boards.

To Kivie Kaplan Judaism was social action and social action was Judaism. The two could not be separated. He expressed this view to the Jewish and Black groups whenever he spoke to them. He said that all of Judaism was based on the idea:

"that all men are created equal in the eyes of God and that we are not free until everybody is free.

⁵⁷He expressed this in an interview in Richmond News Leader, "Waiting for Old Bigots to Die," 16 March 1972.

When we have our Passover Seder each year and repeat year after year after year- that we are out of slavery and that we shouldn't forget that and that we should not consider ourselves free until everybody is free...are they going to do something about it in the next 364 days, or are they hypocrites.[?]⁵⁸

To Kivie the Jewish work to ensure that "everybody is free" should begin by helping Blacks since he believed that they faced the greatest threats to their freedom and to the freedom in all of America. To Kivie Judaism, Social Action and freedom for Blacks were closely intertwined. He said

We must also remember that we Jews have suffered, having had over 12,000,000 of our people killed in pogroms prior to the 6,000,000 of Hitler and that we never had first class citizenship until we came to the United States; and as far as the Blacks are concerned, there were over 12,000,000 of the Black people coming to be slaves who were either killed or died on the way to the United States.⁵⁹

Another thing that you must remember is that if we had some minority working with our German Jews and helped them, we wouldn't have had 6,000,000 of our brothers and sisters cremated.⁶⁰

Though the accuracy of such a statement is questionable the fact is that for Kaplan the fate of all of Judaism was intrinsically bound up with the situation of the Blacks.

⁵⁸Letter, KK to Matt Ross and Al Vorspan, New York, 16 June 1974, 10/16 KKP-AJA.

⁵⁹Letter, KK to Mrs. Daniel Friedman, Brooklyn 18 January 1973, 3/16 KKP-AJA.

⁶⁰Letter, KK to Carl Alpert, 3 May 1968, 1/1 KKP-AJA.

Kivie believed, like the Jews of the early 1900s, that "If it was bad for the Blacks it was bad for the Jews". But he believed that although both have suffered Negroes have had a proportionately worse time.⁶¹ His motivation to give money to Black causes was similar to that of the early Jewish philanthropists. Like them, he believed that "unless we have a strong American community where every minority is safe, [the Jews would be] next on the totem pole, after the Black people."⁶² Like the Jews who watched the Frank case, Kivie saw the persecution of Blacks leading to the persecution of Jews. He would constantly state these ideas and philosophies in the meetings of the Jewish and Black organizations he was involved in. But Kivie was frustrated throughout the years as he felt Jews were not doing enough for Social Action. He believed this meant that they were not being Jewish.

We get more support from Jews than White Christians; we do not get near enough. If we took the 10 most generous Jews and tabulated them and found out what they did for civil rights we would get sick...We have too many Jews who are bigots.⁶³

⁶¹Philadelphia Jewish Times, June 1, 1972 as cited in "Biographical Information on Kivie Kaplan", Nearprint Biography Files, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

⁶²Letter, KK to Meyer Balser, April 1972, 1/3 KKP-AJA.

⁶³ Kivie Kaplan. Interview, 2 December 1968. Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio. Recording No. 627, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Kivie claimed that he was non-partisan when it came to Judaism. He contributed mostly to Reform causes but did give to some Conservative and Orthodox causes. Again, a person's affiliation did not matter as much as their involvement in social action. He had some family who were Orthodox and Kivie helped helped found an Orthodox congregation. In addition, he was a Trustee of a Conservative Synagogue near Boston. Outside of this, he had very little other involvement in Conservative and Orthodox causes. Almost all of his Jewish involvement was with the Reform Movement. This is not surprising since, of the three branches of Judaism, it had the strongest program of Social Action.

CHAPTER THREE

KIVIE KAPLAN AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLESECTION ONEKivie Kaplan's Early Involvement in the NAACP

In 1932 on their way back from a trip to Central America Kivie and Emily Kaplan made a stopover in Miami. Here they hired a Black taxi driver to show them around the Miami area. During the tour Kivie spotted a sign on a Miami Beach hotel that read "No Dogs or Jews allowed". His Negro driver, aware of the pain it must have caused his Jewish passenger, remarked that discrimination was old hat to him. He told how he could not go out after 8 P.M. without a permit. As if that was not enough the driver continued saying "We Negroes can't even go swimming in the ocean". As a result of this experience, Kaplan went home and joined the Boston branch of the NAACP. Sometime after that Ralph Harlow, a close friend and a national NAACP Board member, convinced Kaplan to work on the national level.

The two originally met in 1937 at Temple Israel in Boston at the wedding of Kivie's cousin and Ralph's daughter. Harlow was a professor at Smith College, a religious Christian and the founder of the Christian Pro-Palestine Committee. The group's purpose was to promote the Jewish State of Israel to Christians. Kivie financially supported Harlow's organization, visiting lecturers to his classes and the publication of his book reviews. He also distributed hundreds of copies of Harlow's Life After Death,

a book on the after life. There was one chapter in the book entitled "Kivie and I take A Trip." In this chapter it speaks about Kivie having psychic contact with his dead mother and father. In return for Kivie's generosity Harlow introduced him to many intellectuals and important Christian leaders. They became quite good friends and every summer their families vacationed together at Martha's Vineyard.

In 1927 it was Spingarn, the Association's first President, who instituted the Life Membership program of the NAACP. Its purpose was to garner additional income for the NAACP. Up until then the organization's only income was from \$4 and \$6 memberships¹ and from a few larger donations, which were usually very difficult to secure. Unfortunately, during the first few years of the Life Membership program only four life memberships had been sold. At that time a life membership cost \$500 and could be paid in either \$50 or \$100 installments a year.

In the '30s and '40s when the need for the NAACP's legal work increased its financial need also became greater. Life memberships seemed the only way to raise the necessary funds. Immediately after joining the NAACP, Kivie began to work in selling NAACP Life Memberships. He sold his first to James Weldon Johnson and the second to Dr. Ernest Alexander, a noted Harlem dermatologist. All in all he sold

¹Regular memberships were: \$4 for adult members; \$6 for adult members with a subscription to Crisis Magazine; \$1 for youth members; \$2 for members 17-21 years of age.

a considerable number during that early period from 1934-1954. In 1954 it was on Ralph Harlow's recommendation that Kivie Kaplan was appointed to the National Board as the Chairman of Life Memberships. Even though Kivie had sold a considerable number of Life Memberships his efforts for the NAACP were virtually unknown before this time. As one NAACP official says, "few had heard of the efforts of the Boston leather manufacturer in the field of race relations."² In the years that followed Kivie also served as the treasurer on the Board of Directors of The Crisis, the NAACP's official publication and as Chairman of the NAACP Special Contribution Fund, a tax deductible fund set up in 1964. The monies collected for the Fund were used to feed the hungry, for voter registration and for Black education. In 1966 Kivie was elected as the National President of the NAACP and served until his death in 1975.

In 1954 as the Chairman of the Life Membership Committee Kivie would sell Life Memberships wherever he went. At first business associates were among his prime targets. A business associate writes:

few escaped his bulldog tenacity. Many whom he signed up admittedly understood neither Kivie's motivation nor his cause. But to Kivie that was almost besides the point.³

²Feingold, Norman S. and Silverman, William B., eds. Kivie Kaplan: A Legend in His Own Time. New York: UAHC, 1976. p. 176.

³Ibid., p. 84.

Kivie was a great salesman and truly believed in his product. He had found something that not too many people were interested in doing at the time and something no one could do as well as he could. Kivie definitely found his niche. After he was appointed to the National Board, while the NAACP branches raised a few thousand dollars Kivie would personally raise tens of thousands. Kaplan recognized that the very existence and effectiveness of the NAACP depended primarily upon the amount of financial support it received.⁴ And at the time Life Memberships were the main source of income for the Association. During this period, the NAACP was in dire need of money as its yearly deficit was in excess of \$400,000.⁵ Because of this, Kivie Kaplan "super salesman" of Life Memberships, became an extremely important person in the Association. Without Kivie's help there is no doubt that the NAACP would have faced a perhaps disastrous financial burden. Certainly without Kivie's help the NAACP would not have had the financial resources to carry on all of the civil rights work it did in the '50s and '60s.

Encouraged by his earlier success Kivie extended his list of prospects and sold life memberships to everyone with whom he came in contact. Vacationers at his summer resort, waiters in restaurants, clergy he met on the streets, his

⁴To fight school desegregation in the South it cost the NAACP \$250,000 a year. According to 4/5 KP-ARC.

⁵Letter, KK to Sammy Davis Jr., Beverly Hills, Ca. 8 August 1972, 2/16 KKP-AJA.

Black maid, people he met on airplanes and personalities in government, sports and the entertainment world could not escape Kivie's tenacity. Kivie never let up with his pursuit and even sold 17 Life Memberships on one of his trips to Europe. He created a life membership category for organizations and sold many memberships to fraternities and sororities. It did not matter who the potential subscribers were or where he was, Kivie would try to sell everyone NAACP Life Memberships. When he had taken over as Chairman of the Life Membership Committee only 300 life memberships had been sold from 1910-1954. By the time he became President in 1966 there were 22,000 life members of the NAACP. Most of this was due primarily to the efforts of Kivie, who took out 60 life memberships in his own family alone.

Kivie liked to tell about how many life memberships he had personally sold. But there was some discrepancy between the total numbers he claimed had been sold by the NAACP and the actual number of Life Memberships. Apparently, there had been some problems in the system of computation from 1962-1966. For instance the reported numbers in 1970 was 49,475 but due to the computation error the actual number was 22,880.⁶ It is not clear whether Kivie even understood this discrepancy or not. Still, even with these reduced numbers it does not diminish Kaplan's accomplishments as Chairman of Life Membership of the NAACP.

⁶Memo, Edward Muse, N.Y. to Gloster Current, N.Y., 5 January 1972, 9/3 KKP-AJA.

In 1958 at the 49th NAACP Convention the y"Kivie Kaplan Life Membership Award" was established to be given early to the seven NAACP branches that sold the most Life memberships. Kivie was an idealist and always believed that people were not trying hard enough and could sell many more memberships if they wanted to. So, when the NAACP set the 1972 goal for memberships at 500,000 Kivie recommended the goal at 5,000,000. He said it

shouldn't be hard-with the number of freedom loving people there are in this country who are just waiting to be asked.⁷

Kivie believed that more was better whether it was number of life memberships, number of branch numbers, the number of books given out or the amount of a contribution. He believed if more donations were received, if more people would work for the cause, if more Jews were involved with Blacks, then the better the chance that racial equality between Blacks and Whites could be achieved. He never gave up the belief that it was all possible in his lifetime. He believed that if a person refused a life membership they were refusing to be actively involved in civil rights. When soliciting a Rabbi for a life membership Kivie writes:

I think that some of us have to give a second thought to our support for civil rights through the NAACP and other reliable organizations rather than brushing it off that we can't afford it, and that we are over committed, and

⁷Letter, KK to Gloster Current, N.Y., 8 February 1972, 9/3 KKP-AJA.

things like that...I've seen too much of this over the years-of lip service and not action. This is a time for dedication, and rededication, and action, and not words.⁸

Most people are either "platform liberals" and some of them are liberals with their mouths. I know this very rich woman who was telling me how much she loved the Negroes-she was a widow and her maid used to live with her, and she took her to dinner, took her to the theater and she always kissed her, and when I had suggested that she take out a Life membership for herself or for the maid or for both, she immediately got very, very "poor" so I had told her she had better stop talking with her mouth but to talk with her heart, and pocketbook.⁹

Kivie would say "Freedom isn't free" and "money doesn't talk, money screams." He was a visionary but sometimes he forgot that not everyone shared his vision in terms of Life Memberships. Nevertheless, in the history of the NAACP no one has ever been as dedicated to the cause of Life Memberships as Kivie Kaplan. This is the area in which Kivie Kaplan had his greatest direct effect on the NAACP and thus on civil rights in America.

⁸Letter, KK to Rabbi Jerome Lipnick, 24 May 1969, 7/7 KKP-AJA.

⁹Letter, KK to Mrs. Robert Lichten, Dallas Texas, 17 September 1969, 7/7 KKP-AJA.

SECTION TWOKivie Kaplan's Personal Philosophies and the NAACP

Kivie Kaplan used to say that the NAACP was the "oldest and largest and most respected and most feared civil rights organization."¹⁰ Even though others might disagree with parts of this statement there is no doubt that Kivie believed it with all his heart and demonstrated it in his actions. There is also no doubt that Kivie Kaplan "was a company man," who had a blind faith in the work of the NAACP. Kivie felt so close to his Black "brothers and sisters", as he called them, that when he spoke about them he would say "we" or "us". He so identified with the Black struggle for freedom that he often spoke as if he were Black himself. He would often say that "the Whites are stalling as long as they can before accepting integration."¹¹ Fundamentally, he believed that civil rights should be everybody's cause and that Blacks and Whites needed to work together to help integrate Blacks into American society.

From his correspondence it seems that he did not know the day to day internal workings of the Association. But he knew its stated philosophies quite well and would state them routinely wherever he went. He believed in every aspect of the work of the Association and there is no evidence of his

¹⁰Letter, KK to Harry Seigman, 2 April 1972, 12/2 KKP-AJA.

¹¹St Petersburg Times, 21 February 1971.

disagreement with any NAACP actions. As long as he was allowed to run the Life Membership program as he saw fit, he remained loyal to the cause, a cause which he believed could not be supported without Life Memberships. This was true even when he moved from life memberships to the Association's presidency. As long as he was allowed to run the Life Membership program as he saw fit, he remained a loyal president. The NAACP advocated non-violent means to attain equal opportunity for all people through education, legal work, and the development of housing. Kivie continually emphasized the non-violent aspects of the NAACP and its number of youth members. Kivie claimed that the NAACP, with its non-violent philosophy had the largest number of youth members of any organization in the country 67,730. This he said, "debunks the myth that all Black youths are radicals."¹² He made such claims to differentiate the NAACP from the Black "militant" groups which were despised by the Jewish community because of their anti-Semitic leanings.

Kivie Kaplan, like the first Jewish Philanthropists involved with Blacks such as Rosenwald and Schiff, could work for the NAACP because of the organization's moderate and non-extremist principles. Kivie could support an organization which worked within the the legal system. Some

¹²Kivie Kaplan. Interview, 30 June 1970, Cincinnati, Ohio. Recording No. 836, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

of the early Jews' "don't rock the boat" philosophy was an important part of Kivie Kaplan's own principles. He said:

too many of us prefer to have the James Forman militant type of breaking into churches and synagogues like he did at Riverside Church, demanding reparations for the Negro rather than doing it in a gentlemanly way..¹³

John Morsell, Assistant Executive Director, speaking for the NAACP said:

We [NAACP] are committed to a practical politics of accomplishment, utilizing the system as we find it, in the conviction that its own processes provide the mechanism for needed change in it.¹⁴

Kivie had been involved with the Masons Association for over 25 years. When Kivie found out that a Massachusetts Masons Lodge was discriminating against Blacks, by denying them membership he fought it. But he did not resign from the Association because he believed in fighting from within.

Kivie also had a tendency to support the underdog. One of his proudest accomplishments was his support for Boston's Memorial Hospital, the "poor peoples' hospital" as he called it. This same desire to support the underdog drew him to work for Black civil rights and the NAACP.

Another NAACP principle that Kivie fought strongly for was no Black separatism. The organization had opposed

¹³Letter, KK to Jerome Lipnick, 24 May 1969, 7/7 KKP-AJA.

¹⁴Memo, John Morsell to NAACP Staff 9 March 1972, 2/15 KKP-AJA.

separatist philosophies since its beginnings in the early 1900s. During Kivie's presidency the United Church of Christ granted \$1 million to the Massachusetts Black Ecumenical Commission. The NAACP and Kivie protested this action calling it Black separatism. Their response was condemned by other Black civil rights organizations which embraced this type of support. With the emergence of Black Power and Black Self Determination many Black civil rights organizations called for the establishment of separate Black institutions to further Black identity. But to the NAACP and Kivie integration was the primary goal and the actions of these other Black civil rights organizations were antithetical to this goal. His belief was that Blacks could be integrated through economic equality. Thus, Kivie expected the money he raised to go to the funding of programs of economic development. Kaplan would say that:

the problems of American Blacks are primarily economic and we won't have any rest in this country until Black earning power is more equal to that of Whites.¹⁵

The NAACP's difference in approach and condemnation of the policies of these other Black groups put the NAACP and Kivie Kaplan at odds with most other Black civil rights organizations in America.

¹⁵The States Item, New Orleans, La., 17 May 1972.

Kivie believed that the churches and synagogues "were the backbone of the NAACP."¹⁶ He was partially right, since during one period there were at least 100 clergy who were presidents, secretaries or treasurers of NAACP branches. In 1972 Kivie suggested a NAACP church secretary to serve as a link to religious institutions. He also wanted to appoint a White Catholic priest, White Protestant Minister and Rabbi to every local NAACP board. No doubt he also hoped that this would increase the number of Life Memberships coming from these White religious groups. Whenever he corresponded about this particular suggestion he made sure he always added

Of course there is only 2.9% of the population [which is] Jewish so we don't have enough Rabbis to go around but we should use them as far as they are available.¹⁷

Kivie always believed that there were not enough Jews involved in civil rights. As time went on, and Jews began to withdraw from Black organizations, he became more and more embarrassed about the lack of Jewish involvement in certain Black causes.

In almost every instance the civil rights philosophies and policies of the NAACP paralleled those of the UAHC. So Kivie found it easy to remain loyal to both groups at the same time. Both supported affirmative action, integrated

¹⁶Chapel Hill Newsletter, 22 December 1974 as found in 5/7 KP-ARC.

¹⁷Letter, KK to Rev. Kenneth Buford, Alabama, 8 August 1972, 2/5 KKP-AJA.

housing, integrated schools and condemned militant Negroes, particularly those involved in riots. Kivie could also remain loyal to the NAACP because it was one of the few Black civil rights organization that would still accept a White Jew like Kaplan. Unlike other Black civil rights groups the NAACP had a long history of White involvement. Kivie could remain in the NAACP while other Jews were withdrawing from other Black civil rights groups because it was more moderate and worked within the system. It was not anti-Semitic. He felt needed since the Association depended on Life Memberships to meet its financial needs. It claimed to focus on human rights¹⁸ rather than Black rights.¹⁹ All of these factors left the door to the NAACP open for Kivie Kaplan.

Kivie was being somewhat naive when he said that the NAACP was "the most respected and most feared civil rights organization in America."²⁰ Based on this he viewed the NAACP as "the big brother" that watched over all other civil rights organizations. But in reality, other Black civil

¹⁸Whether this was in fact the case is questionable since all of its programs by the 1960s dealt exclusively with Blacks.

¹⁹Kivie said "in the struggle of the Negro for equal opportunity we are automatically fighting for all underprivileged people of this country, White and Negro." As cited in Democrat Argus, 10 August 1967, as found in "Biographical Information on Kivie Kaplan", Nearprint Biography Files, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

²⁰Letter, KK to Harry Seigman, 2 April 1972, 12/2 KKP-AJA.

rights organizations did not look at the NAACP in this way. To these groups the aspects of the NAACP that allowed a White man such as Kivie Kaplan to be involved indicated that the Association was "selling out." One man wondered

whether the NAACP has become so establishment oriented that it has limited capacity to fight the problems that confront Black people because it may have become part of that problem itself.²¹

Another man wrote to Kivie that:

We need more than letters sent to communities to help stop riots. It's good publicity but we know full well that in many large areas Negroes look at the NAACP with scorn."²²

On January 12, 1972 there was even an attempted takeover of the NAACP offices in New York by some radical Black leaders.

Obviously some looked at Kivie Kaplan, the organization's President with similar scorn. To some, the fact that Kivie, a White man, was President represented the fact that the NAACP "may have become part of the problem." By the late sixties calls for exclusively Black leadership in Black organizations, including the NAACP, increased significantly. But by Kivie's statements on the subject, one could conclude that these negative attitudes toward him did not bother him very much. Still, one can not help but feel that inside he must have felt somewhat worried and betrayed. He had dedicated his life to a cause that now,

²¹Letter, Samuel Jackson to KK, 6/3 KKP-AJA.

²²New York Post, 13 January 1972, p. 3.

some were saying, he had no right to be involved in. There is no doubt that if he was not involved as a leader in the NAACP he would have been just an average and relatively unknown individual. At the most, Kivie would have been a Jewish philanthropist who was somewhat important in certain smaller Jewish circles. He would not have been a nationally known leader. If Kivie left the NAACP, as many Blacks requested, he would lose the clout he had with American leaders; the press coverage on him would be reduced; he would have fewer speaking engagements; less public recognition for his accomplishments. If Kivie gave up his presidency he would have been less of a novelty in the Jewish community since he would no longer be the Jewish president of a major Black organization. The loss of all of the preceding had to worry and upset Kivie. He must have been disturbed that he was fighting against discrimination of Blacks while many Blacks were rejecting him because he was White. He was in a precarious situation during this time period. He could remain in the NAACP and continue to be rejected by many Blacks and Black leaders, who called for his removal, or he could resign from the NAACP and lose all of the above benefits. He said he had no choice but to "bite the bullet" and push onward hoping for a change back to what it once was. The Detroit Jewish News writes:

Kaplan wishes for a return of the good old days, when young Jews were involved in the civil rights cause. He acknowledges that the Blacks themselves

started to turn away White volunteers, but he hopes it is temporary.²³

Outwardly, he never completely gave up the image of the NAACP and himself as big brothers to some of the Black militant organizations. When the openly anti-Semitic and often violent Black Panthers were involved in a court battle Kivie made a contribution to their defense. He justified his decision saying:

It is sad that people do not recognize that all people are entitled to fairness regardless of circumstances, and I was very severely criticized by Jewish friends for contributing to the defense fund for the Panthers, although I did write them that I was for a fair trial for them but that I was against the violence and the anti-Semitism and certainly would have contributed much more if not for those two things.²⁴

As the President of the Association Kivie was the only White person in a top titular leadership position of a major Black organization during the period. At least part of Kivie's involvement in the NAACP had to do with his feeling that as a White he belonged to a group that had historically discriminated against the Black. He felt that he owed Blacks something for this. Unlike most others, including some Jews, he saw the NAACP as an organization that worked

²³Detroit Jewish News, 7 July 1972 found in "Biographical Information on Kivie Kaplan", Nearprint Biography Files, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

²⁴Memo, KK to Gloster Current, 2/14 KKP-AJA.

for Blacks and Whites. This belief led to his often stated complaints about the lack of White involvement in NAACP.

I would feel happier if we had more White people in it [NAACP]. I think that the problem that we are trying to attack is not a Negro problem, it's a White problem, and the only way that you can attack the White problem is with white people.²⁵

He was fairly successful in getting Whites to serve on NAACP Boards and extremely successful in selling Life Memberships to them. By far the majority of Life Memberships were sold to Whites. Kivie realized that the involvement of more Whites in civil rights would not only help the NAACP but also himself. If more Whites were involved then Kivie would not have to feel so alone. In addition, the increased involvement of Whites might change the attitude that Black organizations had to have only Black leadership and that Whites had nothing to contribute.

Kivie Kaplan was involved with the NAACP because he shared their principles and personally benefited from his work with them. But he also was involved because he was good at selling Life Memberships. Everyone likes to do

²⁵Memo from KK to Life Membership Committee, 19/7
KKP-AJA.

something in which they excel and Kivie Kaplan was no exception. His son Edward writes that:

at NAACP conventions he [Kivie] would be in his fullest glory, adulated by the people for his great fundraising accomplishments and salesmanship.²⁶

The amount of actual power, influence, control and authority that Kivie possessed as the President of the NAACP is questionable and will be discussed in the next section. But Kivie did not seem to care about these things anyway. He was definitely a leader in the sense of a pacesetter and trendsetter. He believed that he could set the pace and create trends for others to follow in terms of Life Memberships to fund the work of the NAACP. He led the way in always being the first to sign himself or others up for the fundraising campaigns of the Association. He was the first to sell, push or promote whenever the NAACP started a new program or embarked on a new policy.

²⁶Feingold, Norman S. and Silverman, William B., eds. Kivie Kaplan. p. 66.

SECTION THREEKivie Kaplan as the President of the NAACP

There is no doubt that as the President of the NAACP Kivie Kaplan had little power or control over making policy for the Association or in supervising the everyday running of the operation. Basically, his main duties were as a fundraiser and public relations spokesman. This Presidential job description was not new as Kivie's predecessor, Arthur Spingarn, also a White and a Jew, had similar types of responsibilities in the Association. As a writer of the history of the NAACP says:

Arthur Spingarn retired as Chairman of the Legal Department in order to succeed his brother as President of the Association. However with the powerful Board Chairmanship in the hands of Wright, the presidency reverted to the largely honorary post it had been during the tenure of Moorfield Storey... Spingarn became a considerably less important figure with the Association after 1935. If an arbitrary date must be set for the passage of the "control" of the Association to Blacks it is 1935.²⁷

The post of President had originally been created to give Moorfield Storey an honorary position.²⁸ He was one of America's foremost constitutional lawyers and the NAACP leadership hoped that by giving him a titular position he

²⁷Ross, Joyce. J.E. Spingarn and The Rise of The NAACP. p. 243-4.

²⁸Ibid. p. 55.

would be persuaded to do legal work for them. This was in fact the case since after he became NAACP president he provided free legal services to the Association. This same situation continued into Kivie's tenure where he provided them with free fundraising services, especially his ability to sell Life Memberships. During Kivie's tenure as President the real power lay with Roy Wilkins, Executive Director and Bishop Stephen Spottswood, Chairman of the Board of Directors.

In his correspondence Wilkins wrote that:

Kivie Kaplan is not Chairman of the Board, but National President. His one official duty as set forth in the constitution is to preside at the annual meeting of the NAACP each January.²⁹

There were times when Kivie was invited to some of the NAACP briefings and meetings. But in most cases the NAACP leadership told Kivie, "we didn't consider most meetings sufficiently out of the ordinary to bother you with them."³⁰ In addition, at every conference and meeting that dealt with the policies and decisions of the Association it was Wilkins and not Kaplan who represented the NAACP. The fact is that unless decisions about fundraising or Life Memberships were involved Kivie did not care about being involved anyway.

²⁹Letter, Roy Wilkins, N.Y. to Sam Jackson, Washington D.C. 2 January 1969, 14/8 KKP-AJA.

³⁰Letter, John Morsell to KK, 26 June 1972, 8/12 KKP-AJA.

Despite this, Kivie spoke to as many or probably to more groups than any other NAACP official. But, unlike Wilkins and others, he spoke about Life Memberships. He was usually the featured speaker at local branches and smaller regional conferences and not at larger national conferences. Unlike Wilkins, Morsell, Current and the other Black officials who were listed as "Executive and Professional Staff" Kivie was often called the "lay president" of the NAACP. Also, unlike the others he was not on the NAACP payroll. As not part of the professional staff Kaplan felt that he should pay all of his own expenses when travelling or working for the NAACP.

Surprisingly, some of the less informed Jews saw Kivie Kaplan as the policy-making leader of the NAACP. But most of the Jewish leadership, did not see Kivie's function as President in that same way. Will Maslow, Director of the American Jewish Congress writes that

no Jews have leadership positions in Negro Organizations. The only Jew to head a Negro civil rights organization was Kivie Kaplan, President of the NAACP. His position is "Ceremonial." He is not involved with policy decisions, and therefore cannot be considered within the definition of a leader.³¹

³¹Jewish Post and Opinion, 29 July 1966.

Even a UAHC publication intended to get Jews re-involved in civil rights in the late sixties stated that "The NAACP, led by Roy Wilkins.."32

Kivie himself was acutely aware that he was not the one who ran the NAACP. This seemed to be acceptable to him. He agreed that it was alright if

Blacks wanted to run the operations and to have Whites assist them. Whites should assist Blacks. They [Whites] should swallow hard and take second, third or fifth row.33

But this did not stop Kivie from making suggestions as to how certain things should be done in the Association. He would often begin such suggestions by saying "I don't like to get into staff matters but I had this in my heart."34

Kivie and Roy Wilkins seemed to have a good working relationship as long as each did not overstep their bounds into the others' domain. Wilkins was the policy maker, staff director and administrator while Kivie was the fundraiser and life membership organizer. Roy Wilkins was glad to have Kivie fulfill the role of fundraiser and not be involved in other areas of the Association. Wilkins was

³²Cohen, Henry. Justice, Justice: A Jewish view of The Negro Revolt. New York: UAHC, 1968.

³³Kivie Kaplan. Interview, 2 December 1968. Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio. Recording No. 627, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

³⁴Letter, KK to Roy Wilkins and Gloster Current, N.Y. 20 April 1972, 14/8 KKP-AJA.

quoted as saying:

He [Kivie] did not waste time with ideologies. He believed that if you found a niche in which you could be happy, work at it. Give it not part time, but full time. He devoted his short speeches to raising money, no matter what the topic under discussion. In board meetings he paid attention, but casually, to the endless talk about ideological approaches and parliamentary moves. His attention focused on Life Memberships.³⁵

Wilkins was quite upset with Kivie when he did get involved in policy decisions and vice versa. At a 1973 board meeting of the Crisis Magazine Kivie appointed a certain Warren Marr as the new editor of the magazine. Wilkins wrote to Kaplan protesting:

It is unfortunate that any matter having to do with personnel, certainly in as critical an area as editorship of the principal magazine of the Association should have been taken. Of course, it is doubly unfortunate since there was no consultation with the chief Executive Officer of the Association [Wilkins].³⁶

Kivie was as equally upset when he wrote about Wilkins heading a fundraising effort.

I was glad to hear that Roy Wilkins will be there on March 13th...I am amazed to see that he is there to raise funds.

³⁵New York Post Magazine, 31 May 1975 found in "Biographical Information on Kivie Kaplan", Nearprint Biography Files, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

³⁶Memo, Roy Wilkins to KK, 5 June 1973, 14/8 KKP-AJA.

This seems to be a little out of his field and I am wondering just what the situation is?³⁷

When Wilkins was asked to write a chapter for the book on Kivie he agreed. But he assigned the task to a young assistant. Kivie was quite upset as he wrote to Norman Feingold.

Confidentially, one of Roy Wilkins' top assistants assigned a man (new 2 years) to interview me for his chapter. I was greatly disappointed. I spoke to Roy and suggested he put one of the older staff who knows me on it and he agreed to do this. I felt much better about this.³⁸

Wilkins seemed to care little about the book except to use it as an an opportunity to promote the NAACP. His chapter is filled with a history of the NAACP and very little about Kivie Kaplan. The only thing he mentions about Kivie and the NAACP is about his great work with the Life Membership Campaign and his being a "super salesman."³⁹ There is no mention of any other aspect of Kivie's Presidency.

There were other duties involved with Kivie's Presidency which he took upon himself because he saw them as part of his "unofficial" responsibilities. He accepted

³⁷Letter, KK to William Silverman, Kansas City, Mo., 20 March 1969, 12/4 KKP-AJA.

³⁸Letter, KK to Norman Feingold, 7 July 1973, 3/4 KP-ARC.

³⁹Feingold, Norman S. and Silverman, William B., eds. Kivie Kaplan. p. 149

these additional commitments because of his interest in civil rights and because he believed he could derive some benefit from doing them. He also took on some of this work because he thought that if he did not do it then it would not be done. This was the case with the Life Membership Campaign as well as with some of his other activities. At times he probably worked as hard carrying out these less official duties as he did working for Life Memberships.

He could be found attending meeting after meeting and giving speech after speech while he traveled all over the country, particularly in the East. Kivie describes a typical two week period and some of these other duties:

On the 2nd I had a luncheon meeting on [the] Negro-White Masonry problem in which I am very much involved. The 3rd we go to Friday evening services. On the 4th there is an all day NAACP meeting 9:30-5:00. [to plan a convention] Then we go to Israeli night at Temple Israel. Sunday we go to Worcester; and I meet with a minister there on the United Church of Christ Ecumenical contribution of \$1,000,000. On the 6th, I have a noon NAACP local branch meeting; on the 7th a luncheon meeting and a dinner meeting; on the 9th a meeting at the A. Philip Randolph Institute; and on the 10th 11th and 12th I am coming into New York to the NAACP office. On the 14th I meet with Senator Brooke in Washington.⁴⁰

He volunteered to go to Mississippi in 1964 as part of the NAACP team investigating the murder of three young social activists, two of whom were Jews. Upon investigating

⁴⁰Letter, KK to Henry Seigman, 4 April 1970, 4/4 KKP-AJA.

the incident the team found that the murderers only wanted to kill the "bearded Shwerner Jew" and the other two were killed only because they were witnesses to his murder.⁴¹ During his Presidency Kivie participated in a few public protests including: the Selma Alabama March in 1965 with Martin Luther King Jr and picketing in Chicago, Atlanta and Washington D.C. Soon after Kivie became President he made a decision about how much active protesting he planned to get involved in. He also gave his reason for doing so saying:

I'm not going to get into all of these picketing things, but on key things, it's a good morale-builder for the rest of the team to see the top officials come out.⁴²

He also felt that it was part of his other responsibilities to bail out those that faced financial problems. He accommodated, in some way, just about every Black leader that would ask him for funding. This held true regardless of the group the person was associated with. Even the Black Panthers, which were anti-Semitic and CORE, which had thrown Whites out of their top leadership positions, received some amount of support from Kaplan. In fact, he was one of the few NAACP officials, Black or White, who had not totally withdrawn all support for these and

⁴¹Kivie Kaplan. Interview, 2 December 1968, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio. Recording No. 627, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

⁴²Interview, Don Sider, found in 19/7 KKP-AJA.

other radical Black groups. Still, most of his financial aid went to mainline Black organizations like the A. Philip Randolph Institute, Amistad Research Center, NAACP Special Contribution Fund, Tougaloo College and Lincoln University.

He also felt that it was his responsibility to make sure that Blacks were proportionately represented in all facets of American life. He would write to colleges, organizational boards, the armed forces, housing companies and private companies asking them what proportion of Blacks they had involved in their groups. For example, he once wrote to Nathaniel Jones, the General Counsel to the NAACP, to investigate why there were not more Black models in the Tog Shop Clothing Catalog. He would frequently speak out against interfaith groups that did not have Black members. He used his presidential position to speak out to make sure that Blacks were fairly represented.

Kivie was also the best public relations person the NAACP had at the time. He would speak throughout the country promoting the NAACP and its Life Membership Program. Each year on his way down to vacation in Safety Harbor, Florida, he would stop and speak at least 50 times to various groups about the NAACP. Kivie did not consider himself a fine orator or public speaker. Nevertheless, he would talk about the major problems that Blacks faced, the philosophies and policies of the NAACP, and how the programs of the NAACP were going to attack the problems.⁴³ He

⁴³Ibid.

received much of his factual information for these talks from John Morsell of the NAACP. There is much correspondence between the two where Kivie asks Morsell for facts, numbers, statistics, information, about NAACP policies etc.

It is interesting that at a few of Kivie's speaking engagements there were Black, as well as White, local branch members who did not know that he was the Association's National President. But these instances were limited. There were more instances where Whites, especially some prominent individuals and top government officials, did not know that he was the President of the NAACP.⁴⁴ The printed literature and news articles of the period and his personal correspondence suggest that he was relatively well known in Black and Jewish leadership circles but was hardly a well known national figure for the Black, White and Jewish masses.

Many people knew Kivie because of the extensive networking together of people that he was involved in. He would network Blacks to Blacks, Whites to Blacks and Jews to Blacks. He felt that many of these people could help one another financially or politically or that they shared similar interests. Given his personality and lack of concern with ideology, he was good at being a kind of neutral liaison between people. Kivie approached many Black

⁴⁴Letter, Elliot Richardson, Secretary HEW, Washington D.C. to KK, 10/9 KKP-AJA.

leaders to encourage them to deposit their personal papers in the Amistad Research Center, a Black archival center in New Orleans. He would put rabbis and government officials in touch with Black civil rights leaders, particularly those from the NAACP. He would try to further knowledge of books, speeches and publications of Blacks to the Jewish community and vice versa.

Kivie's connections to White and Jewish leaders sometimes served as the only apparent sign that the NAACP was more than a Black organization. His was the only publicly visible sign that the NAACP had direct ties with the White Gentile and Jewish communities. This was extremely important seeing that a large percentage of the NAACP funding still came from these communities. Kivie also re-enlisted the support of some of the Whites who had left civil rights in the late '60s. They had felt rejected during the rise of Black self-determination and its rejection of White leadership. After Kivie became president in 1966 one such woman wrote saying:

At one time I was close to Thurgood Marshall and Walter White but left when the new regime was not interested in utilizing my voluntary services. If I can help in any way let me know.⁴⁵

One reason that, from its very beginning, the NAACP thought it was important to include Whites on its boards was for fundraising purposes. During the 1970s Kivie was the sole

⁴⁵Letter, Irma Bognadoff to KK, 7 January 1966, 1/9 KKP-AJA.

White leader of the NAACP in soliciting wealthy Whites for contributions. He frequently made requests that a portion of the estates of wealthy Jews go to the NAACP. In one such instance he wrote.

Dear Mr. Schottenstein,

I am Kivie Kaplan, National President of the NAACP. It has been called to our attention that Mr. Leo Yassenoff, May his Soul Rest in Peace, had left an estimated estate of \$14,000,000 to charity and that he leaned toward minority groups. In looking over the news release, I see nothing about the NAACP Special Contribution Fund which is tax deductible and which has been doing a very outstanding job as the material enclosed herewith explains.⁴⁶

Not surprisingly, Kivie headed many of the NAACP national fundraising projects. He helped to set up the NAACP National Department of Tours. He hoped that many friends and associates would sign up for the various NAACP world-wide trips. He hoped the profits would help the NAACP and that it would provide an opportunity for Blacks and Whites to meet. In 1972 the first trip, a pilgrimage to Israel, was planned and advertised. But the Association was unsuccessful in getting the minimum of 30 people needed. Other trips netted similar results and had to be cancelled as well. Kaplan also helped found the first NAACP branch in a prison. The group began at the Lewisburg State Penitentiary in Lewisburg, Pa. The prison branch's first

⁴⁶Letter, KK to Melvin Schottenstein, Columbus Ohio, 4 October 1971, 11/11 KKP-AJA.

membership payment of \$600 was sent to the National Office in December of 1973. It was Kivie who also suggested that Frank Wills, the Black guard who reported the Watergate Break-In, receive an honorary Life Membership from the NAACP.

Still none of these other duties exceeded the amount of time and effort that Kivie Kaplan as President of the NAACP put into the Association's Life Membership campaign. It was the selling and promotion of Life Memberships for which Kivie spent the majority of his time as President. In fact, after he became the National President in 1966 his work for Life Memberships intensified. Even as president he referred to himself as "a salesman for the NAACP." There is no doubt that from Kivie's and everyone else's perspective, his primary function even as the national President was to raise funds. When he was going to speak to a group and they requested the presidential curriculum vita the National Office sent a sheet entitled "Kivie Kaplan and The Life Membership Program of the NAACP." It described the National President exclusively in terms of his involvement with the Life Membership Program.⁴⁷ In addition, Kivie's greatest amount of correspondence from 1966-75 (the term of his Presidency) dealt with Life Membership issues. The majority of this correspondence was with Edward Muse, Director, Life Membership Division, NAACP.

During his Presidency he continually called for more staff to work with Life Membership but his words were not

⁴⁷A copy of the sheet is found in 5/1 KP-ARC.

heeded. Kivie would say that the only way to make money is to spend it. Wilkins would respond saying that with a \$400,000 a year deficit they could not afford to spend any more money than they had to. This remained a continual struggle between Kaplan and Wilkins over the years. To Kivie, unlike other NAACP officials, the acquiring of Life Memberships was the most important thing to be done. In 1971 Kivie called for a goal of 5,000,000 members of the NAACP. When he made this suggestion to Wilkins Kaplan said he:

was kind of disappointed that Roy mentioned that I was a lit bit overly ambitious and he would be satisfied with a million.⁴⁸

Kivie called the selling of Life Memberships "the big ball" and the most serious problem the NAACP faced. He spent a great deal of his time as President trying to convince others that this was so. He claimed that the NAACP and civil rights would only persist if these memberships were sold. He truly believed this and it was also to Kivie's advantage to convince people that this was true. The more seriously the problem was perceived, the more important and indispensable Kivie Kaplan became to the NAACP.

From the mid '60s onward the NAACP leaders were satisfied if the Association and its programs could simply survive. Given all the problems they faced they were not interested in increased growth and expansion. This put Roy

⁴⁸Letter, KK to Stephen Spottswood, Washington D.C. 13 February 1971, 12/14 KKP-AJA.

Wilkins in an interesting position relative to Kivie and Life Memberships. He needed to give Kivie his attention and his time not only because he was the titular President but also because he depended on Kivie to sell a certain number of Life Memberships. With the income from the Life Memberships the NAACP could continue to survive and function. At the same time Wilkins also realized that Kivie's vision of what the number of Life Memberships should be "was only icing on the cake" since there was no interest in increased growth and expansion. Therefore he gave little time or attention to Kivie when it came to his call to sell more. Here and in other instances, Kivie's idealism and Wilkins's pragmatism caused some tension between the two over the years. From 1972 onward they both lost as the number of Life Memberships sold fell below that "critical number" needed for the Association to merely maintain current services. During this period the NAACP was forced to cut some its programs. Despite this, Kivie continued to actively work to sell Life Memberships until his death in May 1975. The Memorial tribute to Kivie, at the 66th NAACP Convention five months after his death, summed up Kivie's main contribution to the NAACP saying:

Even more, he was a source of strength in undergirding the financial base of the NAACP without which our work might have floundered.⁴⁹

A 1981 Crisis article mentions Kivie saying:

⁴⁹Crisis Magazine, October 1975, p. 268.

In two decades he probably did more to boost Life Memberships than any other member of the Association.⁵⁰

Since its inception in 1909 the NAACP had a White person as its President. In part this was due to the fact that Whites had more access to the political and financial resources that the Association needed. It also projected an image that the NAACP was not only a Black organization but a civil rights organization for all people. The bottom line was that a White President projected a better public image of the NAACP. And as early as 1919 a NAACP annual report stated that "public opinion" is the main force upon which the Association relies for a victory of justice.⁵¹ Kivie Kaplan served as the last White President of the NAACP.

The reasons that led to Kivie being the last White President of the Association were related to the resentment towards him during his Presidency. Some attacks on Kivie's presidency came directly from some Whites who hated Blacks. Other attacks came from Young Blacks who resented White leadership. Still other hostility came from Jews who felt Blacks were becoming anti-Semitic. In many ways the resentment against Kivie as the White President of the NAACP, merely mirrored the problems between Blacks and Blacks, between Blacks and Whites and between Blacks and Jews during that period.

⁵⁰Crisis Magazine, January 1981.

⁵¹NAACP 10th Annual Report, 1919, p. 91.

But there was very little animosity toward Kivie from the older Black leadership within the NAACP. Its officers still recognized the benefits of a White President. One NAACP official said:

I was initially sorry when he [Kivie] was elected President, because I felt he wouldn't give enough time to the Life Membership campaign...we feel a White titular head is a good thing for an interracial body. We said by Kivie Kaplan's election that we don't need an all Black organization. The NAACP is not a Black association nor is it a White association. it is an American organization.⁵²

But these same supportive sentiments were not expressed by the new "young Turk" leadership of the Association nor by many other Black civil rights organizations of the late '60s and early '70s. With the rise of Black Power and the acceptance of the idea of Black self-determination Blacks began to resent Whites, like Kaplan, in leadership roles in their organizations. During this period Blacks also attacked the White establishment as the reason for their problems. To some, Kivie Kaplan, was a part of that establishment, and thus a part of their problems.

In 1970, for the first time, Kivie was purposefully not invited to sit at the head table nor placed on the main program of a Regional Conference.⁵³ The only other major

⁵²Feingold, Norman S. and Silverman, William B., eds. Kivie Kaplan p. 154.

⁵³Kivie said "and of course this must have been deliberate." Letter, KK to Gloster Current, 6 November 1970, 2/14 KKP-AJA.

insurgency against Kivie, from within the NAACP, came in 1972 at its National Convention in Detroit. Jack E. Robinson, President of the Boston Branch, proposed a resolution calling for a White president of the Association. The resolution was defeated but it did signal a growing resentment against White leadership among the younger Black leaders of the Association. Still, the major Black opposition to Kivie as the White president of the NAACP, came primarily from outside the NAACP.

To some Whites, a White who would work for Blacks while Blacks rejected and turned their backs on Whites, was disloyal and not to be supported. To other Whites who were prejudiced against Blacks, a man who would work for Blacks was to be despised. Kivie received some hate mail and threats against his life. One man wrote:

Dear White race reject:

Your kind not wanted here. Suggest you return to North now. We do not appreciate White trash in Florida.
Ed Hall 54

He once opened an envelope with a hate sheet and razor blade inside. Over the years Kivie had several run-ins with the Nazi Party, Klu Klux Klan and the National Socialist White People's Party (NSWPP). On February 1966 at Temple B'nai Israel in Clearwater, Florida, six KKK men threw a bomb inside a room where Kivie was in the middle of a speech. No one was injured and Kivie continued with the rest of his

talk entitled "43 Churches that had been burned in Mississippi." In another instance at a Black Church a Nazi dressed as a priest approached the podium to attack Kivie, but was stopped before he reached him. The Thunderbolt, the official paper of the NSWPP often carried hate articles about Kivie.

There were also some Jews who called for Kivie to step aside as President of the Association. In 1966, a few months after Kivie's election, 3 national Jewish organizations: American Jewish Committee, Anti-Defamation League, and the National Community Relations Advisory Council came out in support of:

Negro declarations insisting on Negro leadership for Negro civil rights movements. The Jewish leadership agreed that Whites should step back from leadership positions.⁵⁵

Kaplan never commented about this particular statement. But about similar sentiments he said, "I'm not bothered because I understand and my commitment remains the same."⁵⁶ It is no coincidence that requests to remove Kaplan "the Jew" increased dramatically in 1972. In that same year Jesse Jackson had called for the first National meeting of all the Black civil rights organizations in America called the National Black Political Caucus. At this Gary Indiana

⁵⁵Jewish Post and Opinion, 29 July 1966.

⁵⁶Chicago Daily News, 2 July 1973, found in "Biographical Information on Kivie Kaplan", Nearprint Biography Files, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Convention an anti-Israel resolution was pushed through by its delegates. The resolution passed and called for

the dismantling of Israel, a country that had expansionist policies and had forcefully occupied another state.⁵⁷

Because this decision against the Jewish State was expressed publicly and on a national level Jewish resentment against Blacks, and Kivie's work for Blacks, increased across the country. This was the first time in the history of Black-Jewish relations that a group comprised of a majority of the Black civil rights organizations in America spoke out publicly against Israel and thus indirectly against Jews.⁵⁸

Similarly at the 63rd NAACP Convention a resolution was presented which condemned the Anti-Defamation League and American Jewish Congress for taking positions against affirmative action. Although the resolution was never passed, because the older leadership continually tabled it, it was the first sign of the finality of the NAACP-Jewish relationship. Most of these Blacks who were bitter against Jews and Israel also came to resent Kivie Kaplan as President of the NAACP. At the same time most Jews who were bitter against Blacks for such resolutions came similarly to resent Kivie.

⁵⁷"Biographical Information on Kivie Kaplan", Nearprint Biography Files, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

⁵⁸The NAACP publicly withdrew its support from this group. It was the only Black civil rights group to have done so.

Many Jews questioned Kivie as to why he worked for disloyal Blacks when he could be working for his own people. He deplored the number of attacks directed at him by Jews much more than those by Blacks or other Whites. To Kivie Kaplan, to work on behalf of Black causes was to be Jewish. He responded to these attacks by Jews saying that "he would match his own record of activism in Jewish circles against anyones."⁵⁹ Much of the Jewish resentment came from Southern Jews, who like their predecessors, resented Northern Jews like Kivie who came "to stir up trouble" in the South and then departed. One letter said:

We Jews in the South would appreciate it very much if you would PLEASE stay away from the South.

from a Jew that was born
in the South and has lived
in peace with his neighbors.

P.S. clean up your own backyard.

Some attempted to heal the rifts between Blacks and Jews in the late 60' and early '70s by flooding the Jewish press with articles about Kivie Kaplan doing civil rights work. These Jewish leaders used Kivie Kaplan as the model of cooperation between Blacks and Jews who hoped to decrease some of the tensions. Unfortunately, such efforts were not very successful.

⁵⁹Philadelphia Jewish Times, 1 June 1972, as found in "Biographical Information on Kivie Kaplan", Nearprint Biography Files, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Outwardly, Kivie said little about all of these attacks on his Presidency. One has to commend him for not saying "O.K. you want to run the NAACP? Fine do it." On the contrary Kivie Kaplan seems to have been strengthened by the resentment. He would send some of the hate articles and letters written to and about him to friends and associates. He loved to tell "war stories" about the threats and attacks on his life. He hung hate letters addressed to him next to his awards and plaques on the wall in his house. In a way the resentment, hatred and even anti-Semitism towards him was a form of recognition for Kivie Kaplan. If he was hated by people who did not believe in and despised civil rights, then that meant that he was being effective in his work.

But if one looks more closely one also senses Kivie's discomfort, pain, desperation, sense of isolation and rejection about the resentment. In some of his correspondence and interviews these feelings come through. In one particular interview he said:

The NAACP...should try hard not to practice what we're fighting against-racism. The NAACP must welcome and invite White members more than ever in the past. Whites should not be timid, they should not worry about not being appreciated when they join the NAACP. But they should remember the cause is more important.

The trend toward "White dropouts" from the civil rights front is being reversed. We're heading toward more racial harmony in spite of the rhetoric to the contrary. Progress is being

made, but not as fast as I'd like to see
it.⁶⁰

Being president of the NAACP was Kivie Kaplan's life. To leave that position might have been a kind of suicide for him. Therefore Kivie swallowed his pride, reinterpreted the resentment and remained the president of the Association until his death in 1975.

⁶⁰Detroit Jewish News, 7 July 1972, as found in "Biographical Information on Kivie Kaplan", Nearprint Biography Files, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

SECTION FOURKivie Kaplan as a Bridge Between Jews and Blacks

There is no doubt that Kivie Kaplan considered himself an advocate of Black and Jewish causes. His work on behalf of Reform Judaism and as a President of the largest Black civil rights organization in America attests to this fact. Most importantly, this work put him in a perfect position to possibly serve as a link between Blacks and Jews. But being in this position was difficult in light of all the problems that existed between the two groups during this period. To Kivie the rift must have been like watching an inter-family fight, like the one between his two brothers. So when Jews accused Blacks of being anti-Semitic and Blacks accused Jews of being unsympathetic and perhaps responsible for some of their problems Kivie found himself in a very uncomfortable position.

During his presidency Kaplan would receive a dozen letters a week and have numerous conversations about Black anti-Semitism. These concerns came from Jews as well as Blacks. The Jews complained about it while many Blacks denied it. It was easier for Jews to vent their frustration about Blacks to another Jew rather than to address it to Blacks directly. Some Jews would write to Kivie asking him how he could work for a group of people that appeared to be anti-Semites. The letter below was typical of those Kivie received which addressed the issue of Black anti-Semitism.

I listened to you this morning when you
were interviewed by Howard Neilsen of

WEEI and was amazed to hear that you are President of National NAACP and as such are undoubtedly sponsoring the Negro destruction of Jewish property, both personal and business, combined with the physical violence that many Jewish people of Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan have been subjected to for the last ten years.⁶¹

An ongoing debate in the Jewish community was whether mass Black anti-Semitism was real or blown out of proportion. To Kivie it was imagined and grossly blown out of proportion and he looked for Jewish leaders to justify and support his position. When Kivie would receive letters like the one above he would pass them around to many of the Jewish leaders he knew. But many of these leaders felt that a lot of the Black anti-Semitism was in fact real. About the above note one response came from Balfour Brickner who said:

the letter was typical of the sentiments of many Jews and difficult to answer. The instances and incidents she cites are factual and probably correct.⁶²

Unlike most of the Jewish leaders Kivie tended to side with the Black community concerning Black anti-Semitism. He believed that Black anti-Semitism was grossly exaggerated. He said that most Blacks were not anti-Semites and that Jews

⁶¹Letter, Mrs. Sally Michaelson, Dorchester, Mass. to KK, 12 July 1971, 3/12 KKP-AJA.

⁶²Letter, Balfour Brickner to KK, January 1973. 1/16 KKP-AJA.

were blaming all Blacks for the extremism of a few. He said

we should not withdraw support because
1% of Blacks are overtly anti-
Semitic..what about the other 99%?⁶³

However he did recognize that certain extremist Black groups, such as the Black Muslims, were anti-Semitic. But still he justified their actions by saying that:

these are things in a revolution that sometimes cannot be controlled and that no one likes. Ben Gurion and the other responsible leaders before the State of Israel was founded, certainly didn't like the groups that were hanging British officers.⁶⁴

Kaplan claimed that militants were only 10% of Blacks but the majority of the problem. He blamed the media for building up Black militants as representing the majority of Blacks.⁶⁵ Most Blacks he argued were not anti-Semitic and:

there is less anti-Semitism amongst Black Christians than White Christians, and where we have only 11% of the population Black and 89% White, it seems as though we ought to concentrate on the large cancer rather than on the small one.⁶⁶

⁶³KK Memo, 12/4 KKP-AJA.

⁶⁴Letter, KK to Mrs. Jack London, Brookline, Mass., 14 November 1969. 7/7 KKP-AJA.

⁶⁵Kivie Kaplan. Interview, 2 December 1968. Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio. Recording No. 627, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

⁶⁶Letter, KK to Mrs. Jack London, Brookline, Mass., 14 November 1969, 7/7 KKP-AJA.

Kivie believed that Blacks' attitudes toward Jews were better than Whites' attitudes towards Jews. In much of his correspondence Kivie would enclose anti-Semitic hate sheets from White groups to support his view that Whites were more anti-Semitic than Blacks. Kivie also based this belief on his interpretation of a five year ADL study by Gary T. Marx on Black anti-Semitism entitled "Protest and Prejudice." Albert Vorspan gave it to Kivie in April of 1966. The study actually said that "most Negroes's attitudes toward Jews are Comparable (meaning no worse or better) to their attitudes towards Whites in general."⁶⁷ He often responded that Black anti-Semitism was only "a pinprick" of the total amount of anti-Semitism that existed. He said that a lot of the so called Black anti-Semitism was actually:

anti-landlord, anti-storekeeper and anti-businessman who happen to be Jewish, and it really isn't anti-Semitism but it is anti-whatever category the person happens to be, and if they are Jewish, it is called anti-Semitism.⁶⁸

Kivie personally believed that many of the slumlords in cities were Jewish. He blamed some Whites, including Jews, for taking money out of the ghettos without putting anything

⁶⁷Marx, Gary T., Protest and Prejudice: A Study of Belief in The Black Community. New York: Harper & Row, 1967.

⁶⁸Letter, KK to Ruth Buchbinder, Assistant to UAHC President Eisendrath, New York, 28 October 1972, 2/4 KKP-AJA.

back into it. Kivie did not understand how Whites could "wonder why the Negroes are angry?"⁶⁹

In some of his discussions about Black anti-Semitism Kivie would try to appeal to both sides. To Jews he would say that:

As far as the Negro leaders making statements condemning Negro anti-Semitism, this has been going on for years; you just either didn't happen to see them or they escaped you-because all of our [Black] responsible leaders have been making statements along these lines continuously.⁷⁰

But he told Black leaders that:

civil rights leaders including Roy Wilkins, Whitney Young, Ralph Abernathy, Bayard Rustin and others should make more and stronger statements against the Black anti-Semitic statements...⁷¹

The bottom line was that Kaplan felt that parts of the Jewish community were simply "blowing up" incidents of Black anti-Semitism.⁷² Kivie felt that there was more anti-Black feeling among Jews than there is anti-Semitism among

⁶⁹Kivie Kaplan. Interview, 2 December 1968. Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio. Recording No. 627, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

⁷⁰Letter, KK to Mrs. Jack London, Brookline, Mass. 14 November 1969, 7/7 KKP-AJA.

⁷¹Letter, KK to Roy Wilkins, 16 March 1970. 14/8; KKP-AJA. Ossie Davis, Black Panthers to KK, 7 July 1971, 2/16, KKP-AJA.

⁷²For instance, the incident revolving around the Metropolitan Museum exhibit Harlem on My Mind.

Blacks.⁷³ He thought that some Whites, particularly Jews, used this supposed Black anti-Semitism as an excuse for withdrawing from civil rights work. In fact, Kivie felt that one of the solutions to eradicate "the pinprick" of Black anti-Semitism was for Jews to become more involved in civil rights.⁷⁴ Many Blacks and Jews disagreed with Kivie Kaplan's feelings about Black anti-Semitism. Some Jews thought there was more Black anti-Semitism than Kivie claimed. Some Blacks thought Kivie was wrong in saying that they did not speak out loudly enough against it. But these same Blacks and Jews often agreed on one thing. They both questioned why a White Jew, Kivie Kaplan, was working for Blacks and was the President of the Black NAACP.

Jews would not only write to Kivie about Black anti-Semitism but they would also ask him why he worked for Blacks rather than give all his time to Jewish causes. One letter from a Jewish woman said:

You should be exposed for what you really are-a traitor!...You are a menace worse than a Hitler."⁷⁵

The UAHC got a number of letters about Kivie which expressed similar feelings.

How dare Kivie Kaplan minimize Black anti-Semitism. Get off your backsides

⁷³Letter, KK to Mrs. Daniel Friedman, Brooklyn, N.Y. 18 January 1973, 3/16 KKP-AJA.

⁷⁴Letter, Kenyon Burke, New York to KK, 30 August 1971, 2/7 KKP-AJA.

⁷⁵Letter, Mrs. Sally Michaelson, Dorchester, Mass., 21 July 1971, 3/12 KKP-AJA.

and fight for Jewish rights, or are you too ashamed to fight for your own people...For crying out loud it's about time you awakened to the fact that you are Jews first, and that Jewish rights and needs must be foremost and upmost.⁷⁶

Statements like this came so often that Kivie printed a fact sheet on his involvement in Jewish activities entitled "Kivie, Why Don't You Help Jewish Causes and Organizations?" He sent it as a response to letters that expressed negative sentiments about his work with Blacks. All of this criticism never seemed to bother Kivie though. He was proud of the fact that some Jews saw him as a leader of the Blacks. He called the Jews who wrote him critical letters "hypocrites". Hypocrites since they were not involved in civil rights. His philosophy was that to be Jewish one had to be constantly involved in civil rights. To Kivie this was practicing Judaism in one's everyday life.

Kivie worked quite diligently for the Jewish community but most of his time was dedicated to Black causes. Why did Kivie spend more of his time working on behalf of Black causes rather than Jewish causes? Perhaps he felt that the Black cause was more important. Or perhaps it was for other reasons as well. As President of the NAACP Kivie held a higher titular leadership position than he could have had in any Jewish institution. He was more unique and special as a White person in the NAACP than he would have been as a Jew

⁷⁶Letter, Jack Freitag to UAHC, 1 February 1973.
1/6 KP-ARC.

in a Jewish institution. He was also a terrific fundraiser in an organization that did not have many people raising funds for it. This was hardly the case with the UAHC. Kivie felt more needed, more important and more successful as President of the NAACP than he would have felt working for any one Jewish cause. Besides this, part of Kivie's philosophy was to work with the underdog. This was the NAACP and the UAHC hardly fit under this category.

Kivie combined his interests in working with Blacks and Jews and became involved with Black Jews. There had always been some question in the minds of Jewish communal leaders as to the "Jewishness" of these Black Jews. Nevertheless, Kivie gave them the same benefit of the doubt that he always gave everybody. He said:

There seems to be a question in the minds of some of the White Jews as to their [Black Jews] authenticity and I do not have any religious training and I am not qualified to say who is a Jew or who isn't, but I have the feeling, as a human being... that if someone wants to be a Jew that's their privilege and I do not think I have a right to tell them what they ought to do and what they ought not to do and to tear the Black Jews apart to try to find out what their ancestry is and are they qualified to be Jews, I think this is wrong.⁷⁷

There had been a debate for some time in the Jewish community about who was going to work with these Jews. Many Jewish communal leaders were worried about how the mainline

⁷⁷Kivie Kaplan. Interview by Jacob Rader Marcus, 28 June 1970. Biographies File. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio. p. 15.

Jewish community would react to the Black Jews. Therefore these leaders unwilling to incorporate Black Jews into their institutions helped support several separate Black Jewish organizations. Kivie was involved with several of these organizations including Hatzāad Harishon, Council of Black and White Rabbis and Association of Black and White Jews. He wrote letters, made donations and spoke out on their behalf wherever he could.

Kivie was involved with the New York based Hatzaad Harishon and its Director Yaacov Gladstone for four years. Kivie corresponded with Gladstone quite regularly, financed some of his projects and sat on the National Board of Directors. The organization fell apart when internal problems plagued the organization and the Jewish Federation refused to continue to fund it.

Kivie also carried on a lengthy correspondence with Steve Jacobs, a White Rabbi from Philadelphia, Director of the Council of Black and White Rabbis and Coordinator of the Association of Black and White Jews. Kivie heard about Jacobs' work with Black Jews and initiated a correspondence with him in January of 1971. Kivie continued to write to Jacobs and support his organizations during the next three years. In 1972 Jacobs' rabbinic group had 26 members and the Association about 100 members. In 1973 Kivie became a little suspicious of Jacobs' motives and the internal operation of his organizations. It appeared that Jacobs had been only using Kivie to further his own personal interests.

He wanted Whites to serve in his organizations and buyers for the materials he had written on the ancestry of the Black Jew. It was Kivie who got him a November 14th, 1972 meeting with Vorspan and Schindler to discuss his "14 point plan of outreach" for the UAHC. Even here Jacobs' ulterior motive was to get himself hired in a leadership position in the Union to head up their Religious Action Center in Washington. Kivie broke all ties with Jacobs in 1974.

Kivie not only worked to get Black Jews recognition in the Jewish community but he also helped to get Black leaders recognition in the Jewish community and Jewish leaders recognition in the Black community. His greatest effort was in getting honorary degrees for Black leaders from Jewish educational institutions and vice versa. Roy Wilkins received his degrees from Hebrew University, Hebrew Union College and Yeshiva University because of the efforts of Kivie Kaplan. At first, Wilkins was going to refuse the degree from HUC. It was not until he found out that it was promoted by Kivie that he accepted it. Kaplan wrote to Reverend Kenneth Buford of the Tuskegee Institute to see if he could find some Black Colleges to give degrees to some of his prominent Jewish friends.⁷⁸ But nobody received more honorary degrees as a result of Kivie's work than his friend Norman Feingold. Feingold received degrees from Saints

⁷⁸Kivie wrote to the NAACP field director in Jackson, Mississippi to see if any Black Colleges would award an honorary degree to Al Vorspan. From a Letter, from Emmet Burns, Jackson, Miss. to KK, 13 June 1974, 2/8 KKP-AJA.

Junior College, Edward Walters College, Livingstone College and others. Throughout the years, Kivie received many honorary degrees himself as well. His sole Jewish honorary degree was from Hebrew Union College. His other honorary degrees were from smaller Black colleges. About the awarding of honorary degrees in general Kivie said.

I think there is nothing that could be done for the Black-Jewish relationship that would be of any better help than [the awarding of] honorary degrees.⁷⁹

The awarding of these degrees was an attempt by Kivie to mend the rift between the Black and Jewish leadership and intelligentsia. He felt that it gave the impression that Jews and Blacks were working together and proud of each other's accomplishments. For similar reasons Kivie sponsored an NAACP trip to Israel. He wanted to sensitize Black leaders to issues surrounding the Jewish State. Kivie also made sure there was a Black leader involved in major Jewish functions and Jews at Black functions. In 1972 it was Kivie who suggested to Rabbi Schindler that Roy Wilkins write a short article on Wilkins's relationship with Maurice Eisendrath for a UAHC tribute to Rabbi Eisendrath.

Without the Jewish money that Kivie collected for Black causes many would never have been possible. He represented the Black Hyde County Poor Peoples Inc.⁸⁰ in selling their

⁷⁹Letter, KK to Rabbi Robert Samuels, Haifa Israel, 12 February 1972, 11/8 KKP-AJA.

⁸⁰This was a Black workshop in the South where poor Blacks made and sold custom quilts. Kivie helped

quilts through the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods and other Jewish organizations. Kivie also solicited many wealthy Jews for other Black projects. This was no easy task as one response to Kivie's request indicates.

Some way, somehow, the Blacks have got to act the same as the Jews and show their appreciation when something is done for them and not feel that everybody has to do for them and they do not have to do anything for themselves. The situation is getting worse and worse because of their demands. I feel sorry for them and always have tried to help them not only with the NAACP, but I contribute every year to the United Negro College Fund and have hired as many Negroes as we possibly can in the hotel.

I will continue to do everything I can for them, but it is about time they awaken and have some of the rich Negroes do something themselves for their brethren who are in need.⁸¹

Kivie faced many similar attitudes as he tried to raise Jewish money to support Black causes. In many ways Kivie was quite successful given the state of Black-Jewish relations at the time. No matter how out of the ordinary the project was, as long as it would help the Blacks Kivie was willing to participate in it and raise Jewish money to support it. In 1969 when Al Vorspan and Balfour Brickner wanted to start a Black Kibbutz in Georgia Kaplan was the first one to join the effort. He actually suggested using the "Emily R. and

to finance this group and even solicited some volunteers to help them get organized.

⁸¹Letter, Benjamin Swig to KK, 1 March 1969, 13/4 KKP-AJA.

Kivie Kaplan Religious Action Fund" of the UAHC for this project. But only \$3,000 in additional funds was raised for the project and it eventually fell by the wayside.

Kivie not only networked Blacks and Jews through financial donations but in other ways as well. He strongly encouraged the NAACP to assist Jewish organizations in some of their work. It was Kivie who persuaded the NAACP leadership to officially protest President Nixon's decision not to appoint a Jewish Judge to the Supreme Court late in 1969. He was in part also responsible for the 1973 NAACP resolution calling for the immediate release of Soviet Jews.⁸² He also set up the agreement between the widow of Medger Evers and Brandeis University. The University's President writes:

Dear Mrs. Evers:

When your beloved husband Medger was assassinated the University here wanted to make some gesture of sympathy that was more than amenity. I wrote you on July 29, 1963 that when your youngsters

⁸²64th NAACP Convention, July 2-6, 1973, Indianapolis, Indiana.

were ready for college we were ready to admit them, if they qualify, with full tuition and maintenance scholarships.⁸³

Kaplan was involved in the NAACP New England Regional Convention proposal that called for educational programs about anti-Semitism for the Boston Schools⁸⁴. Kivie also sat on the NAACP committee that drafted a statement supporting Israel. About the statement a UAHC official wrote.

The NAACP releases on the Israel war effort proved useful. I spoke to a synagogue brotherhood Sunday morning against separatism in Jewish community relations. when the right-wingers began to blow off steam about how the non-Jews never come to the support of the Jewish community and its priorities, I called their attention to the NAACP statements...⁸⁵

Given all of the problems between Blacks and Jews at the time Kivie was not always successful at creating opportunities for Blacks and Jews to come together. Kivie wanted to be a part of the program of the 1969 CCAR Convention to make an appeal for NAACP Life Memberships. His request was refused but was told that he could put some literature on a table if he wanted. Kivie refused believing putting literature on a table was useless.

⁸³Abram Sachar, President of Brandeis University, 31 July 1969, 11/5 KKP-AJA.

⁸⁴NAACP Convention October 5, 1974

⁸⁵Memo, Albert Avent, Washington D.C. 30 October 1973, 1/2 KKP-AJA.

Even though Kivie faced many obstacles he did manage to keep some Blacks and Jews in contact with one another. He networked Black and Jewish organizations to work in mutual cooperative efforts. He arranged meetings between the Bnai Brith Youth Organization and the Youth Division of the NAACP. He also arranged exchanges between the National Federation of Temple Youth and the Youth Division of the NAACP. Through his influence the B'nai B'rith Career and Counseling Services worked closely with the NAACP and Urban League in several areas dealing with employment. They cooperated in the publication of materials, in sharing counselling resources and in joint research. Whenever Kivie would speak for the NAACP he would try to arrange a meeting with Jews in the same town here he would try to bring the Jews and Blacks of that town together for cooperative endeavors.

Kivie also provided Blacks with information about Jews and Jews with information about Blacks. This was his attempt to clear up misunderstandings based on ignorance. Of course he frequently relied on his Jewish and Black friends for this information. In 1975 Margaret Bush Wilson, chairwoman of the NAACP Board, was going to receive the Louise Waterman Wise Award from the American Jewish Congress. She wrote to Kivie for information on Mrs. Wise.⁸⁶ Feeling unable to fulfill the request Kivie wrote

⁸⁶Letter, Margaret Bush Wilson, St Louis, to KK 27 March 1975, 6/2 KP-ARC.

to Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus of HUC/JIR and Al Vorspan of the UAHC for the needed information. Similarly, in 1971 Kivie wrote to Andrew Young to clear up a mistake he made in a public statement.

I note your saying that the Russian people have "complete religious freedom"-this is contrary to all information that I and many others have, about the treatment of Soviet Jews and there are certainly plenty of documents about this, and I am going to have Mr. Al Vorspan, the Head of our Social Action Commission of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations send you some documents.⁸⁷

When Temple Beth Hillel of Hollywood wanted a speaker on Blacks they requested Kivie and not "one of his NAACP people."⁸⁸ In a way Kivie served as a kind of natural and neutral party between Blacks and Jews. After all he was involved with and had ties to both groups. To Jews Kivie was a less threatening spokesman for Blacks because he was obviously not a Black anti-Semite. By inviting Kivie Jews could say they were involved with Black causes without being directly involved with Blacks. In a similar way, for Blacks Kivie was an appropriate Jewish spokesman because he was willing to take a back seat to Blacks in Black organizations. By inviting Kivie, Blacks could also show

⁸⁷Letter, KK to Andrew Young, 20 October 1971, 1/1 KKP-AJA.

⁸⁸Letter, Mrs Herman Kretzer, N. Hollywood, Ca., to KK, 5 May 1974, 7/1 KKP-AJA.

they were involving Whites in their activities and that the NAACP was not an exclusively Black organization.

Kivie would try to neutralize some of the tensions that existed between Jews and Blacks. Sometimes he was successful but most often he was not successful. In March of 1972 at the National Black Political Convention when the resolution condemning Israel was brought up some of the members of the NAACP delegation walked out. They did so as a protest to the resolution as well as to the principle of "Black superiority".⁸⁹ Needless to say the Jewish community in America was outraged by the resolution. Kivie tried to diffuse the situation by pointing out that the NAACP left the meeting. He also pointed out the fact that the resolution was passed at the end of the meeting when only 200 of the 5000 delegates remained. Therefore, he claimed publicly that it was not an official statement of all of the civil rights groups involved in the meeting. Kivie would try to gather any information he could that would help reduce similar stressful situations between Blacks and Jews.

By the 70s the coalition between Blacks and Jews was just barely alive. The older Black leaders with strong Jewish ties were dying out and the younger and more radical leaders were taking charge. About the current state of Black-Jewish relations Kivie said:

we need to keep our cool and we will
attack this situation in a calm way and

⁸⁹Memo, John Morsell to NAACP Officers, March 1972. 2/15 KKP-AJA.

we can overcome the situation...with goodwill. Now the situation is the worst its been in the history of the United States.⁹⁰

Yet Kivie Kaplan dreamed of a new coalition between the two groups. Up until his death he never lost hope of this dream. Kivie did succeed in bringing some Jews, who had abandoned civil rights in the mid 60s, back to work for civil rights in the '70s. These Jews worked for the NAACP and UAHC Social Action Commission. From his Presidency onward he took it upon himself to be the conscience of Jewish social activists. Kivie reminded them what the Black-Jewish coalition used to be like and how it could be restored in the future. Kivie not only reminded Jews and Jewish leaders what they had done for Blacks in the past but he also reminded them that they weren't doing enough now.

If we're not aware of the need for open housing, and equal education for all, then we're not Jews, we're hypocrites. We've got to practice Judaism in our everyday life.⁹¹

I am extremely worried that social Action is being sold down the river...I might change that to say that Reform Judaism is being sold down the river.⁹²

⁹⁰Kivie Kaplan. Interview, 2 December 1968. Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Ohio. Recording No. 627, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

⁹¹Birchfield Eagle, 12 November 1972, as found in "Biographical Information on Kivie Kaplan", Nearprint Biography Files, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

⁹²Letter, KK to Al Vorspan and Matt Ross, 16 June 1974, 10/16 KKP-AJA.

He also suggested to Jews that Blacks were proportionately under represented in some areas of American life, including employment, housing and education. He added that not too long ago Jews found themselves in a similar situation to Blacks and so they should have empathy for Blacks. Kivie believed that Jews had to make sure Blacks were fairly represented because it was fair to Blacks. More importantly he also believed that when any Jew participated in discrimination against Blacks, or tolerated it, it made all Jews look bad. On one occasion Kivie wrote to a friend in Florida.

I am going to write you about a very, very touchy subject. I think the correct spelling is BERN'S STEAK HOUSE which is right near-not too far-from your Temple...I was extremely upset when going through the kitchen that all I saw were two Black employees in the entire restaurant, which covers a lot of territory, no Black waiters, and I don't remember whether they have waitresses or not, but this for a Jewish owner, doesn't look too good, and I am wondering whether you have an active Social action Committee that might get into something like this, and no doubt you will talk to the two Rabbis about this.⁹³

He believed that Blacks and Whites were complete equals and that there should be no difference between how they are treated. Kivie spoke out when ever he saw that Jews themselves were participating in discrimination. He protested against the UAHC Jacobs Camp when they refused to

⁹³Letter, KK to Vicki Brunhild, Tampa Florida, March 1971, 1/14 KKP-AJA.

let the Black staff use the recreational facilities. He wrote to William Morris, Director of NAACP Housing Programs, to find out how many public housing projects in New York were owned by Jews. Kivie wanted to know which projects were bad and which were good in order to make sure that "no Jewish hands were dirty."⁹⁴

Kivie also reminded Jews that part of the problems between the two was that they did not know each other.

Jew don't know Negroes. All they know are maids and the guys who clean their cars. Read Ebony and you'll learn a lot more that you don't see in the White press.

You know I often meet women who tell me about the trouble they're having with the maid, and it all gets mixed up with their feelings about Negroes. I tell them they're letting a personal employment problem get confused with the issue of human dignity.⁹⁵

He knew that he was an idealist and that some Jews did not want to hear his message. He said:

very seldom do I get invited to Jewish groups because I am much too liberal for them. Once in a while I do get invited but I am never invited back and the reception is not too warm.⁹⁶

⁹⁴Letter, KK to William Morris, New York, 1 August 1972, 8/10 KKP-AJA.

⁹⁵Detroit Jewish News, 7 July 1972, as found in "Biographical Information on Kivie Kaplan", Nearprint Biography Files, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

⁹⁶Letter, KK to Jacob R. Marcus, 18 April 1969, 6/9 KKP-AJA.

Still, Kivie did help to promote better relations between Blacks and Jews during his presidency. In a small way he did serve as a bridge between some Blacks and Jews. He brought them together and supported projects where Blacks and Jews could meet. But the historical realities of the time were working against Kivie's efforts. As the Association's president he was swimming up stream against a rather strong current. In some ways it is amazing that Kivie never drowned. Despite this Kivie Kaplan lived his whole life based upon the notion that a new Black-Jewish alliance was possible.

CONCLUSIONS AND FACT SHEET

Kivie Kaplan always said that he wanted to "die with his boots on". And so it happened as he died at LaGuardia Airport on his way to a meeting of the Israel Commission of the UAHC in May of 1975. By 1970 Kivie had developed very serious health problems. Despite this, during the last five years of his life he never slowed his pace in working for the various Black and Jewish causes he was involved in. His work for these causes was Kivie Kaplan's whole life. As long as they needed him his life was complete and satisfying. It is interesting that he died at a time when their need for him was at its lowest and their rejection of him was at its highest.

Kivie Kaplan gave a large percentge of his income to the UAHC and it's projects. There was virtually no limit to what Kivie Kaplan would do for the leaders of the Union. Whether it was to raise or donate money or to use his influence or name, Kivie was always ready to help the UAHC and its leaders. He was actively involved in many UAHC committees and hardly ever missed a meeting.

Kivie Kaplan was a loyal friend to those who were drawn to him and his cause. He was a man who was candid and honest in all of his relationships and dealings. On the surface, Kivie came across as naive and somewhat plain. But deep down these qualities were unimportant to his personality compared to his strong idealism and his

fundamental belief in the equality and goodness of all people. His idealism and constant belief in people is what drew most people to Kivie Kaplan.

At times Kaplan served as a kind of conscience to the Jewish community. Throughout his life he repeatedly reminded the Jewish community and its leadership about its responsibilities toward the principles of equality and civil rights. When he wrote to and spoke to Jews who were discriminating against Blacks themselves he reminded them how Jews had been treated unfairly not so long ago. He showed many Jews how to rise above all the politics involved in large Jewish organizations and concentrate on the important issues, like creating a better quality of life and world for Jews. He reminded Northern Jews what they had failed to do and Southern Jews what they had yet to do as far as civil rights was concerned. Like the Jewish philanthropists of the early 1900s he reminded all Jews that their fate was bound up with the fate of all minorities, particularly with Blacks. He also reminded Jews about how closely Blacks and Jews had worked together in the past. He dreamed about and believed in a new coalition between Blacks and Jews. This is what Kivie dedicated his life's work to.

Kivie Kaplan also served as a middleman between the Jewish community and other communities, particularly the Black community. Kivie would let the Jewish community know as much as he could about what was going on inside the Black community. He frequently sent Jewish leaders the letters,

policy statements and memos of Black leaders. As tensions between the Black and Jewish communities rose it became more difficult for Jewish and Black leaders to talk to each other even if they wanted to. But Kivie was a good middleman because of his strong involvement with both groups. Perhaps the ideal was for Jews to talk to Blacks directly and vice versa. But since this was not possible, given the tensions, Kivie Kaplan served as the best alternative. Kivie was not an intellectual nor an excellent politician. But somehow, through his simple-hearted honesty he made himself understood and captured people. Very few of Kivie's requests of people were ever denied.

Kivie also contributed to the Jewish community by helping its rabbis. There were many instances where Kivie helped rabbis financially, emotionally and in gaining employment. He helped fund many of the projects they were involved in, particularly civil rights projects. If a rabbi lost his job there were no questions asked as Kivie would go to bat for him in helping him to find another job. Some rabbis even confided in Kivie when they were dealing with their own personal family and marital problems. He was a loyal friend, good listener and would help rabbis whenever he could.

Kivie Kaplan contributions to Civil Rights in America were not primarily as a front line Social activist. He was not a policy maker nor a protesting activist. But this should not lessen the major contributions he made as a

behind the scenes civil rights worker. He spoke frequently all over the country and successfully kept the subject of civil rights alive. People might not have agreed with his position but he did succeed in getting people to think about the issues surrounding civil rights. He saw his correspondence, relationships, interviews and gift giving as opportunities to promote his civil rights work. Through his activities, Kivie tried to re-involve Americans in civil rights, an activity that had taken a back seat to the Vietnam war. He tried to re-involve Jews in civil rights, an activity that had taken a back seat to work for Israel.

Kivie often gave the money, encouragement and the impetus to discouraged civil rights workers to continue with their work. His own zeal, personal commitment and idealism about civil rights served as a model for others who needed someone to re-energize them. Kivie sometimes personally took upon himself some of the financial and bureaucratic burdens of civil rights leaders so that they could attend to other more important matters. Kivie Kaplan was a team player and expected others to be so also.

But his greatest contribution to civil rights was his philanthropic efforts on behalf of the NAACP. There is no doubt that without the large sums of money that he raised by selling Life Memberships some of the Association's programs would have suffered and thus civil rights in America would have suffered. Kivie Kaplan kept the NAACP Life Membership program alive. Even as the national president he focused

primarily on the selling of Life Memberships. The money he raised was used in important civil rights litigation, to fund educational and economic programs for minorities, to organize the civil rights marches. There is no doubt that without this funding these programs would have suffered significantly.

Kivie Kaplan served as the NAACP's president at a time when the Black-Jewish relationship was at a low point. As a Jewish President of the NAACP he found himself standing on the top of a fence with Blacks on one side and Jews on the other side. Some Blacks wanted him out of the NAACP and some Jews wanted him to leave Black organizations and work only for Jewish causes. It was to his credit that he maintained a balance and remained the middleman despite the pressures for him to fall. His belief in the cause of civil rights was so strong that nothing could force him to give up his presidency or his work on behalf of Blacks. He also knew that to give up the presidency was to give up everything that made him somebody. Whether it was threats on his own life, threats on his Presidency or threats to his fellow Jews or Blacks he never abandoned his fundamental belief in what he was doing nor in the goodness and equality of all people.

He used his titular position as president of the NAACP to: bring together Blacks and Jews, have each recognize the accomplishments of the other, clear up misunderstandings between Blacks and Jews, to show that Whites still had a

stake in the activities of Blacks. Kivie Kaplan made his peace with the manifestations of anti-Semitism on the part of some Blacks. He did not cave into pressure to abandon Black causes because of this anti-Semitism. This may have made some Jewish leaders think twice about how wide spread Black anti-Semitism really was. His ability to remain working on behalf of Black causes while some Blacks attacked his White presidency indicated to some that not all Blacks were anti-White. It also showed that there might be places for Whites in Black causes.

Historically, Jews had held major leadership positions in Black organizations since the founding of the NAACP in 1909. Kivie Kaplan was the last in a long line of Jews to hold such a position. As the president of the NAACP he kept what was left of the Black-Jewish alliance alive during his lifetime. His contact with Black and Jews brought both groups in constant contact with one another.

In a very real sense the death of Kivie Kaplan can be seen as signalling the end of the official Black-Jewish coalition. After Kivie's death Jews and Blacks were no longer seen standing side by side. Black organizations became exclusively Black and worked for only Black causes. The same thing happened in the Jewish community with Jews and Jewish causes. At the time of the death of Kivie there were few visible signs that Jews were interested in Black causes. This is not to say that Kivie Kaplan's death brought this change, for these trends had been developing

for some time. But in a way Kivie's death did destroy a small light of hope that had existed in the bleak relationship between Blacks and Jews at the time.

FACT SHEET ON KIVIE KAPLAN

Residence: 70 Hammond Street Chestnut Hill, Mass.	Born April 1, 1904 Died May 5, 1975
Education: English High School Boston, Mass.	Married: Emily Rogers June 3, 1925
Occupation: President/General Manager Colonial Tanning Company Boston, Mass. Retired 1961	Children: Sylvia Kivie Grossman Jean Kivie Green Edward Kivie Kaplan

AFFILIATIONSNAACP

Member, 1933
 Became a Life Member, 1946
 National Chairman, Life Membership Committee, 1954-66
 Founder, Boston Branch NAACP, 1963
 Member, Executive Committee, NAACP Legal Defense and
 Education Fund, 1956
 Treasurer, Board of Directors of The Crisis, 1950
 Member, Budget Committee, Board of Directors, 1960
 President of the NAACP 1966-75

JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

Vice Chairman, Union of American Hebrew Congregations,
 1971-75
 Member, UAHC Israel Commission, 1972-75
 Member, UAHC Social Action Commission, 1958-75
 Member, UAHC Board of Trustees, 67-75
 Board of Trustees, Temple Emanuel, Newtown, Massachusetts
 Board of Trustees, Temple Israel, Boston, Massachusetts
 Member, North American Board WUPJ
 Member, New England Board, Anti Defamation League
 Treasurer, B'nai Brith Vocational Commission, 1970-75
 Board of Directors, Hebrew Free Loan Society
 Member, Executive Committee and Board of Trustees of
 Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Boston
 Treasurer, Combined Jewish Appeal
 Treasurer, Jewish Memorial Hospital
 Chairman, Endowment Fund, Jewish Memorial Hospital
 Member, Association of Black and White Rabbis
 Board, Hatzaad HaRishon (Black Jews Org.)
 Vice Chairman, Reform Jewish Appeal

BLACK ORGANIZATIONS

Executive Board, A Philip Randolph Institute
 Board of Trustees, Lincoln University, Lincoln Pennsylvania
 Board of Trustees, Tougaloo College, Tougaloo Mississppi
 Board Member, National Center for Afro American Artists
 Board Member, Mutual Real Estate Investment Trust
 (Integrated Housing Trust)

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Board of Trustees, Finance Committee, Newtown-Wellesley
 Hospital
 Member, National Panel of Arbitrators, American Arbitration
 Association
 Board Member, Newtown Community Chest
 Treasurer, Roxbury Cemetery Association
 President, 210 Associates
 Past Treasurer, Shawmut A.F. & A.M.
 Board Member and Fellow, Brandeis University Associates
 Member, President's Council, Boston College
 Board of Directors, Promoting Enduring Peace Inc.

AWARDS

Men of Vision Award, Bonds for Israel Committee
 Public Service Medallion, Jewish Chattagua Society
 Human Rights Award, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
 T. Kenyon Holly Award for Outstanding Humanitarian Service
 in Civic, Cultural and Philanthropic Fields
 Amistad Award, New Orleans, Louisiana
 Wilfred S. Stachenfield Award of National Commission of
 B'nai Brith Career and Counseling Services

HONORARY DEGREES

Degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, Portia Law School
 Doctor of Laws, Wilberforce University, Wilberforce, Ohio
 Doctorate, Edward Waters College
 Doctor of Humanities, Lincoln University, Lincoln,
 Pennsylvania
 Doctor Humane Letters, Central State University, Wilberforce
 Ohio
 Doctor of Humane Letters, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati,
 Ohio
 Doctorate, Saints College, Lexington, Massachusetts

FACILITIES BEARING HIS NAME

Admissions Office, Newtown-Wellesley Hospital
Emily R. and Kivie Kaplan Building of the Jewish Memorial
Hospital
Emily R. and Kivie Kaplan Lincoln Hall at Brandeis
University
Emily R. and Kivie Kaplan Wing of The Jewish Memorial
Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts
Reception Hall, Boston Dispensary
Kaplan Lobby, Combined Jewish Philanthropies Building
Rehabilitation Institute of Boston
Emily R. and Kivie Kaplan Religious Action Center of the
UAHC, Washington, D.C.
Emily R. and Kivie Kaplan Bimah, Temple Israel of Boston
Emily R. and Kivie Kaplan Pulpit in the Synagogue in Ben
Shemen Israel

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