DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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How I Wrote My Prospectus

The process of conceptualizing and writing my prospectus grew out of my comprehensive exams, which I took in the previous semester (Fall 2021). Although the months of studying for comprehensive exams can be long and arduous, the process ultimately led me to recognize what direction my own scholarly interests were heading in, and what arguments and oversights I saw as crucial to posit into my subject fields. During my comprehensive exams I frequently met with my advisors to discuss books, which was a practice I ultimately found very useful for conceptualizing my dissertation project. Whether they meant to or not, my advisors made clear what trends (and issues) they saw within certain types of books and subfields in their disciplines. By reading closely and then discussing these historiographic problems, I ultimately came to understand what ideas I wanted my project to accomplish, as well as what ones I wanted to stay away from.

For my own project, I came to realize that the "state" was almost entirely absent in American Jewish historiography. Scholars of other American groups have proven the state to be critical to understanding their population's American experiences, as have scholars of Jewry elsewhere in the diaspora. However, my orals reading revealed to me that the state has been written off completely in the scholarship on American Jews. Using this realization, I decided to write about how different groups of Jews viewed government and the American state during a critical era seven-decade era in American political history. (My first title made this historiographic lacuna patently clear: It was called "State Matters: American Jewish Politics in the Age of Government Transformation, 1876-1919.") In reading American political economy more broadly, I also recognized what I was actually interested in was a question of citizenship—how did these groups conceive of citizenship? How did that change as the state changed, and as the American Jewish population evolved? What can Jews tell us more broadly about American citizenship? This is how I ultimately came to my own prospectus idea. Closer reading of the scholarship and of the limited archival research I had already performed then allowed me to sketch out a chapter outline.

In full transparency, I found writing my prospectus to be the most difficult semester of graduate school. No longer was a piece of writing confined to a course—it was, for the first time, an attempt at shaping a yearslong, original research project. I found the pressure of that to be daunting. Ultimately, however, the process was fruitful. What I found most useful was situating my project idea within the existent scholarship. By figuring out what books I wanted my project to be in conversation with, I was able to shape core themes of the project itself. I was also guided by many informal conversations with friends who were also working on their prospectuses, and was further able to workshop a draft with a helpful department working group. These settings offered me both the encouragement I desperately needed, as well as helpful feedback on the project idea itself. When it came time to defend, my committee treated the event as more of a colloquium than a

structured defense. They offered feedback for how to improve the project, and ultimately left me in a good place as I began my first summer of ABD research.

Advice for Prospectus Writers

My biggest piece of advice may also be the most difficult to follow: take some pressure off. The prospectus is not the dissertation, and the dissertation is not the book. You are at the very beginning of shaping a years-long project, and aspects—maybe even main arguments—will change and develop over time. One of the gifts of the humanities (and particularly the field of History) is that you cannot have all the answers and ideas worked out before you actually get to the archive and do the research. Unlike many science disciplines, you are not bound to anything you write in the prospectus. Even if the broad contours of your prospectus remain in place, the smaller subarguments and teleology of the project can (and likely will!) transform over time. My chapter overview, for example, has changed substantially—a result of both committee feedback and archival discovery. Thus, the best advice I can offer is to just put your ideas in conversation with the secondary source literature that is already out there. The angle of your project will then formalize as you spend time with primary source material. There should be solace in knowing that the prospectus is not final, and that it will go nowhere beyond your own committee. Workshop some ideas, layout some methods and historiography, but ultimately know, it can change.

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Useful Citizenship:
Jewish Politics in the Age of American State Transformation, 1865-1933

Part I: Dissertation Overview

Sitting in the Cincinnati office of his popular newspaper, American Jewry's most prominent nineteenth century leader penned his outrage with the expanding size of the United States government. "Ever since the outbreak of the civil war," the Bohemian-born Isaac Mayer Wise wrote in 1876, "the centralization of power…has been the avowed policy of the ruling party, who wanted a strong government. The established principles of State, municipal and personal rights, the fundamental ideas of the American republic, have been seriously disregarded."[1] To Rabbi Wise, whose Reform movement had swept across America and redefined the politics and practice of American Judaism, the state's extending reach—including its welfare to poor Jews in cities like New York, its support of Black officeholders across the American South, and its meddling in free-market trade—was a pressing crisis for the future of Jewish citizenship. Not only was the growing government an attack on the

[1] Isaac Mayer Wise, *The American Israelite* [Cincinnati, OH] August 4, 1876.

founding principles of American liberalism, but to Wise it represented a "fatal blow at the integrity of Jewish practices" altogether.

Wise expressed these political anxieties at a critical juncture in American history. As the highly lauded rabbi spoke to eager Jewish audiences across the nation in the mid-1870s, the American government had started to abandon its decade-long experiment to impose new citizenship rights for the recently emancipated Black population in the South. After the landmark events of the Civil War, many Jews like Wise debated how the American state should treat its Jewish population moving forward. Some, like Wise, believed the state had grown too large and powerful; its attempt to impose a post-Civil War political order had failed, and it was on the cusp of forever violating the fundamental rights of American Jewish citizens. Other Jewish leaders, however, began to see a massive potential in the novel powers of the state to adjudicate Jewish needs, such as offering welfare for the millions of impoverished eastern European immigrants that would arrive on American shores in the coming years. If the government could abolish slavery—the largest single private asset in the American economy—and create citizens out of the formerly enslaved, what could its newfound power mean for Jews?

* * *

Modern Jewish history abounds with the notion of citizenship. Scholars of the Jewish diaspora and Israel routinely ask how citizenship was given to Jews, how it was taken by states and empires, and how Jews organized on behalf of advancing their own citizenship rights. Yet this course of gaining and losing citizenship—often deemed the process of "Jewish emancipation"—remains conspicuously absent from the history of American Jewry. Presupposing that Jews were immutably emancipated from the founding of the United States, historians have largely written off Jewish politics in America and ignored the process in which each generation of Jews fought to shape their relationship with a dynamic American state apparatus.

My dissertation, titled "Useful Citizenship: Jewish Politics in the Age of American State Transformation, 1865-1933," turns this paradigm on its head. It studies how Jews experimented with questions of state power, government bureaucracy, and American exceptionalism in order to forge modern ideas about citizenship. Joining a chorus of other American intellectuals and reformers, and often in dialogue with their Jewish emancipationist counterparts in Europe, Jews in America consistently debated, theorized, and lobbied on behalf of competing visions of modern citizenship in America between the Civil War and the New Deal.

In this seven decade era—regarded by one recent scholar as the "second American Revolution"—Jews, like all groups in America, fundamentally changed their relationship with the American government.[2] For much of the nineteenth century, the limited American state had left nearly all aspects of Jewishness outside of its purview. Through private philanthropy and communal organization, Jews largely dictated their own welfare, their own immigration processes, and their own religious transformations.[3] Yet after abolishing slavery and winning the Civil War, the centralized state grew in radical new ways, including through regulating immigration, offering welfare, and adjudicating labor strife. As a result, in the decades after the war's end, the state's potential for aiding—or, to Wise and his followers, diminishing—citizenship rights found new meaning among American Jews.

Although Wise and a cohort of local and regional leaders rebuked the growing power of the American government in the 1870s and 1880s, by the end of the century a different set of ideologies emerged. Progressive principles, alongside the beginning of mass eastern European Jewish immigration to urban cities, had produced a new generation of Jewish political thought. Rather than

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[2] William Novak, *New Democracy: The Creation of the Modern American State* (Harvard Press, 2022), 2. Eric Foner has also recently called this period America's "second founding." See Eric Foner, *The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution* (W.W. Norton Co., 2020). Other scholars, including Rebecca Edwards, have called this period the "Long Progressive Era."

[3] Before the Civil War era, when "public needs were best met by private arrangements rather than by the actions of governments or incorporated bodies," to quote the historian David Montgomery, most Americans had little interest in securing formal state protections or relief. David Montgomery, *Citizen Worker: The Experience of Workers in the United States with Democracy and the Free Market during the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge Press, 1993), 6-7.

advocate for a small, hands-off government, a growing group of Jewish reformers dynamically balanced politics of state intervention with private communal reforms. New York-based social worker Alice Davis Menken, for example, articulated new concepts of "useful citizenship" by blending Progressive state-based criminal reform measures (such as indeterminate sentencing and parole) with private Jewish welfare institutions. Like Menken, many Jewish Progressive Era reformers engaged new mechanisms of state power to recast the very meaning of what it meant to be a Jewish citizen in a liberal state.

Over the course of the early twentieth century, Isaac Mayer Wise's small-state, private approach to Jewish life had largely become politically antiquated among most Jews. Jewish reformers—some well-known and some virtually unwritten about—reimagined and recreated the Jewish relationship with the American state. In 1915, the prominent Jewish social worker and welfare activist Lillian Wald tellingly wrote, "In the interest of the state itself the future citizens should be made to feel that protection and fair treatment are accorded *by the state*."[4] Two decades later, New Dealer Jacob Billikopf more definitively concluded, "The slogan, 'Jews Provide for Their Own' is no longer true or tenable."[5] The seven decades between the Civil War and the New Deal had seen Jewish reformers like Billikopf, Sidney Hillman, Louis Brandeis, and Rose Schneiderman articulate concepts like "industrial democracy" and "preventative welfare," all of which relied on a particular vision of a more expansive state apparatus.

By the early 1930s, a critical juncture occurred in the broader history of American state transformation. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's signature New Deal policy codified big-state liberalism as the chief paradigm of American politics. Jews overwhelmingly supported this vision of the American state and disproportionately placed themselves in new government bureaucracies. Indeed,

[4] Lillian D. Wald, *The House on Henry Street* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915), 292.
[5] Jacob Billikopf, Letter to the Chairman of the National Labor Relations Board in Philadelphia, June 26, 1935. Jacob Billikopf Papers (MC No. 13), Box 30/Folder 13, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, OH.

in 1933, some 90 percent of Jews voted in favor the New Deal, highlighting a convergence of American Jewish ideologies surrounding state power and government capabilities. In the era of American state transformation, Jewish reformers had found revolutionary ways to shape a modern liberal state and the Jewish relationship to it moving forward. In other words, Jewish political actors fundamentally reshaped what it meant to be a Jewish citizen of the United States.

1.1 Jewish Citizenship in America

My dissertation's focus on Jews and the American state is a radical departure from the current thinking surrounding Jewish "Americanization." Many scholars have previously set out to study how Jewish communities sought internal, private reform measures to acculturate into the national landscape. This private reform (including philanthropy and immigration aid societies) often meant assimilating toward the white and Protestant American hegemony. Scholars like Jonathan Sarna have shown how Jewish religious reform was made in the image of Protestant faith structures, while others like Eric Goldstein have meticulously described the process in which Jews actively shed their racial Jewishness in the goal of becoming "white."[6] Yet throughout these landmark studies, the powerful role of the state remains conspicuously absent. Adhering to tired tropes of American Jewish exceptionalism, Jewish historians have largely written off Jewish politics in America as entirely nonexistent.[7]

Certain recent studies have examined particular instances of American Jewish statecraft (detailed in full in Part III: Historiography), but none have been in conversation with the broader

[6] Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Eric Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).
[7] See Hasia R. Diner, *How America Met the Jews* (Providence: Brown University Press, 2017). For articles articulating the non-exceptional nature of American Jewry, see David Sorkin, "Is American Jewry Exceptional? Comparing Jewish Emancipation in Europe and America" *American Jewish History* 96 No. 3 (Sept. 2010): 175-200; Michels, Tony. "Is America 'Different'?: A Critique of American Jewish Exceptionalism" *American Jewish History* Vol. 96 No. 3 (Sept 2010): 201-224.

scholarship on citizenship and the state, or questioned how Jews built political ideologies surrounding their own citizenship. Lila Corwin Berman alludes to this new direction in American Jewish historiography, claiming that "To render Jewish collective life in the United States as a series of voluntary activities, indicative of tradition or self-fashioning alone, is to strip it of the governing structures and policies that shaped it and made Jews…visible subjects of the American state."[8] Although Jews engaged in public politics since America's founding (as well as in the preceding colonial era), I argue that in the first nine decades of the nation's establishment Jews enjoyed a fairly stable and uncompromised citizenship. Yet as the power and capabilities of the government transformed after the Civil War, the future of Jewish citizenship became a renewed and central issue across the nation.[9,10]

1.2 Transnational Jewish Politics

[8] Lila Corwin Berman, *The American Jewish Philanthropic Complex: The History of a Multibillion-Dollar Institution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 16.

[9] Exactly what "citizenship" means remains a topic of impassioned debate. Generations of scholars have explicated that citizenship meant something beyond its simple political rite. In his famous essay "Citizenship and Social Class," T.H. Marshall divides citizenship into three categories: social citizenship, civil citizenship, and political citizenship. See T.H. Marshall, "Citizenship and Social Class," in *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 1-85. As Meg Jacobs finds, in a burgeoning economy of mass consumption at the start of the twentieth century, "economic citizenship," or the ability to purchase at cheap costs, became a marker of full inclusion in American society. See Meg Jacobs, *Pocketbook Politics: Economic Citizenship in Twentieth Century America* (Princeton University Press, 2005). See also Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20th Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). In a recent book describing the Jewish political efforts to shape a religiously pluralistic wartime government, Jessica Cooperman described that "Religious practices or beliefs that did not conform to Protestant norms could not easily be understood as contributing to good citizenship." See Jessica Cooperman, *Making Judaism Safe for America: World War I and the Origins of Religious Pluralism* (NYU Press, 2018), 72. Other scholars have constructed the concept of "social citizenship"; as Judith Shklar has written, "citizenship in America has never been just a matter of agency and empowerment, but also of social standing as well." See Judith N. Shklar, *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 2. Political historian Eric Foner has spoken to this broad definition of citizenship, explaining that in American history, "Citizenship certainly did not imply equality." See Eric Foner, *The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2019).

[10] With the growth of the centralized interventionist state, different groups of constituents politicized to discover the limits of the burgeoning state's ability to adjudicate a broad set of new rights and protections. For the rapidly growing Jewish population, debates over the role of the state in determining issues like welfare, workplace conduct, religious pluralism, immigration control, and racial whiteness became a balancing act between how much modern Jewish life should be within view of the state, and how much should remain in the older, privately-governed model. See David Montgomery, *Citizen Worker: The Experience of Workers in the United States with Democracy and the Free Market during the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge Press, 1993), 6-7.

This dissertation further seeks to polemically situate Jewish citizenship in America within a transnational sphere of global Jewish politics. Across the Jewish diaspora, and particularly in western Europe, individuals and communities politicized to construct modern Jewish citizenship in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As David Sorkin has recently written, the process in which Jews received these rights marked the "principal event of modern Jewish history."[11] In liberal states like France and Germany, for example, Jews negotiated with state authorities to form their statuses as emancipated citizens, while still seeking to voluntarily retain their Jewish identities. By the late nineteenth century in both places, Jews were no longer proscribed as a government "corporation," but rather as private citizens who organized on their own volition. Scholars of European, Ottoman, Latin American, and other Jewish geographies likewise routinely explicate the many ways in which Jews advocated toward the state for more political rights.

Much like Jews across the global diaspora, American Jewry gradually built political organizations and ideologies that aimed to ensure their civil freedoms and future mobility in the liberal state. They debated how best to (or not to) internally regenerate their communities to make Jewishness consonant with liberal citizenship and state patriotism. In many cases, American Jews looked toward European emancipationists to explicate their own visions of American Jewish citizenship. Rather than cordon off the American Jewish experience as blanketly exceptional from that in Europe, my dissertation hopes to engage scholars beyond the field of American Jewish history to highlight a transnational Jewish continuum.

1.3 Jews, Race, and the American State

While Jewish politics in America had key parallels to emancipation politics in Europe, one facet of the American landscape was patently different. Unlike in modern Europe, where Jewish

[11] David Sorkin, *Jewish Emancipation: A History Across Five Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 354.

citizenship rights became a quasi-litmus test for the liberalism of a society, American racial dynamics placed Jews in a more complex position.[12] Culturally, the assimilation toward "whiteness" became a key tactic of American Jewish citizenship politics. For people like Isaac Mayer Wise, anti-federalist politics were necessarily linked to privately "whitening" the American Jewish population. He, like his followers, tried to separate themselves from the experiences of Black people in America. Likewise, Alice Davis Menken separated the "assimilability" of Jewish immigrants from those of Black Americans, whom her programs for criminal reform conspicuously disregarded.

Of the Jewish groups and individuals who sought to expand state programs and government relief, many sought short- or long-term coalitions with other racial or ethnic communities, or helped to define an expansive racial liberalism that would, in theory, elevate the citizenship status of all Americans. Even when liberal in name, however, these politics did not always create equal citizenship rights for everyone.[13] Black citizenship did not find equal footing with that of Jews in the eyes of the state until the 1960s, for example.[14] Likewise, as David Koffman has recently found, Jewish leadership in the Indian New Deal of the 1930s was reflective of liberal Jewish needs, but ultimately failed to incorporate the distinct ideology of Indigenous people.[15] Politicization on behalf of Jewish citizenship meant crafting a liberal state that historians have shown was advantageous for many Jews—or what Beth Wenger has called a "realization of Jewish ideals"[16]—but one that did not secure equality for

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[12] This argument is taken from Carol Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878–1938* (Cambridge Press, 2006).

[13] Eric Goldstein posits that even the term "alliance" is somewhat faulty, as it "suggests mutual cooperation toward a common goal, yet the social positions of African Americans and Jews were very different." Eric Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton University Press, 2006), 217.

[14] In the somewhat facetious words of the historian Jeffrey Melnick, in the early twentieth century "American Jews decided that they were in a special relationship with African Americans." Jeffrey Melnick, *A Right to Sing the Blues*, 16.

[15] David Koffman, "Jewish Advocacy for Native Americans on and off Capitol Hill" in *The Jews' Indian: Colonialism, Pluralism, and Belonging in America* (Rutgers Press, 2019). Koffman shows that Jews were integral in forming the "Indian New Deal," or a set of 1930s policies that aimed to re-adjudicate the relationship between Native Americans and the American state. Koffman posits that Jewish bureaucrats like Felix Cohen shaped these government programs in the image of their own ideal citizenship type–a "statist liberalism." They ultimately failed on behalf of Native Americans, because they did not meet the group's specific needs or demands (decolonized sovereignty).

[16] Beth Wenger, *New York Jews and the Great Depression,* 203. Marc Dollinger and Cheryl Greenberg have also shown that 1930s liberalism was more beneficial for American Jews than other groups (particularly Black Americans). See Marc

Black, Brown, or Indigenous communities. A closer study of Jewish politicization thus offers an analytic beyond the cliché social "special relationships" between Jews and other minority groups. Instead, it provides a way to understand those relationships as structurally rooted within the American political landscape.

1.4 The "Jewish Analytic": Tracing Citizenship in America

Finally, scholars are yet to trace a specific immigrant group through the era of American state transformation. As the historian William Novak has recently written, the era between the Civil War and the New Deal centered "the all-important issue of determining who was and who was not a member, a participant, and ultimately a citizen in that newly created conception of an American demos."[17] Heeding to Novak's call, by placing one group at the center of my study, my dissertation offers all scholars of American history a key window into the creation of the modern American citizen. Rather than study Jewish citizenship efforts within a communal silo, my dissertation situates Jews within the longer durée of American political change. In doing so, it asks who the birth of the interventionist liberal state aimed to service, and who it ultimately left behind.

Part II: Historical Background

At the inception of the liberal nation-state at the end of the eighteenth century, the politics of securing Jewish citizenship fundamentally changed. After living for centuries in Europe as corporate bodies subject to the will of autocratic rulers (often monarchs in the West or tsars in the East) Jews redirected their emancipatory political efforts toward the developing state regime. Under

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Dollinger, *Quest for Inclusion: Jews and Liberalism in Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) and Cheryl Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).
[17] William J. Novak, *New Democracy: The Creation of the Modern American State* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 2022), 6.

liberalism, the state theoretically promised to no longer differentiate Jews and other minorities as subject to different laws, but rather to treat all of its constituents as equal citizens, so long as they pledged allegiance to the core values of the state. Elaborating on the transition from the premodern to modern world, the Jewish historian Yosef Hayyim Yerushalmi explained that "personal allegiance to the ruler [gave] way to patriotism."[18]

But just how this "patriotism" would manifest became the "principal event of modern Jewish history," writes David Sorkin in his recent opus on Jewish emancipation.[19] Throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Jews politicized toward state regimes and found new and creative ways to balance their Jewish identities with the core requirements of national citizenship. This required a strategic balance of political lobbying and internal regeneration. In postrevolutionary France, for example, Jewish leaders were in direct conversation with commissioners of Napoleon's Sanhedrin in shaping the terms of their internal Jewish authority, but also "were united in their attempts to make Judaism and the Jews completely compatible with France and the Frenchmen."[20,21]

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[18] Yerushalmi, "Servants of Kings Not Servants of Servants," 18.

[19] Sorkin, *Jewish Emancipation,* 354.

[20] Frances Malino, "From Patriot to Israelite: Abraham Furtado in Revolutionary France," in Jehuda Reinharz and Daniel Swetchinski, eds., *Mystics, Philosophers and Politicians; Essays in Jewish Intellectual History in Honor of Alexander Altmann* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1982), 237. Napoleon sent a list of twelve questions to the Jewish Assembly of Notables in 1806, seeking to understand how Jews would self-govern themselves if given full emancipation. The Jewish rabbis and lay leaders responded that they would abide by civil liberalism, and some, like assembly leader Frances Malino, sought to encourage the "regeneration of some of our brethren" and "to completely reform habits occasioned by a long state of oppression." See Sorkin, *Jewish Emancipation,* 121. Malino briefly notes that Furtado may have been unsimilar to his French contemporaries, but "the position he achieved, articulated, and defended bears striking similarities to that advocated by Western Jewry and later by the Jews of America." Malino, "From Patriot to Israelite," 247-8.

[21] Jewish politics were less centralized in the German states than the "patriarchal family" that Napoleon aimed to achieve in France—a testament to the disunity of the emerging German political regime (Sorkin, *Jewish Emancipation,* 119-20). Some German Jews, like newspaperman Joseph Wolf, politicized on the notion that emancipation "was a pedagogical process in which the Jews were to regenerate themselves in exchange for rights." (Sorkin, "Preacher, Teacher, Publicist: Joseph Wolf," 120). In other words, Jews had to privately reform their tenants to make them consonant with the non-Jewish hegemony. Other German political figures, including the notable Jewish lawyer and forty-eighter Gabriel Riesser, argued that only the installation of a broader German liberalism would ensure the future safety of Jewish emancipation. From this position on emancipation, Riesser became one of the most outspoken supporters of German unification, aiming to form a liberalism that gave full legal equality of all citizens, regardless of their faith. (As a note, Isaac Mayer Wise found an ideological mentor in Riesser, which unmasks powerful insight about the limits of liberalism in America. Wise believed that the

Founded in colonial rebellion against a deeply interventionist monarchical state, the reach of the government into the lives of Jews in the United States had key structural differences at its inception. The framers of the American Constitution were weary of a strong central state after defeating the "absolute Tyranny" of Great Britain's regime just four years earlier, and thus strategically limited the power of the United States government.[22] Although small in number, Jews, like other non-WASP "white" minority groups, were assured of their liberal citizenship not through direct state protection, but rather through the apparatus of a small liberal state that largely provided them the right to self-government and "free association."[23] When they did encounter the state in early America, it was often to reinforce their liberal protection as free (white) American citizens.[24]

The monumental years between the start of the Civil War and the end of Reconstruction would radically change this limited scope of the American government, and significantly alter how Jews demonstrated their post-emancipation "patriotism." Whereas "before Reconstruction the federal government played almost no role in defining or protecting Americans' rights," writes the historian Eric Foner, it now displayed to Americans the powerful potential it held. Between 1861 and 1865, along with abolishing $3.5 million in human private property, the state formed wartime bureaucracies—notably agencies like the Internal Revenue Service and the Quartermaster Corp—that greatly expanded its operational power. Before the war ended, it had already begun to establish provisional governments in the seceded states, and then created temporary programs like the

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government should assume liberal equality of all its citizens, and thus the support of the recently emancipated Black population was, to Wise, dangerously illiberal.)

[22] Declaration of Independence. This came after America's first attempt at a central state, the Articles of Confederation, which failed in part due to the absolute weakness and powerlessness of the federal government.

[23] On this whiteness and the right to self-government, see Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*.

[24] Often held sacred in American Jewish lore for its declaration on Jewish religious freedom, George Washington's 1790 letter to the Newport Jews did no more than to assure the anxious community that "the Enfranchisement which is secured to… Jews by the federal Constitution" would remain upheld. See "Moses Seixas to President George Washington," Newport, Rhode Island, August 17, 1790. https://www.facinghistory.org/nobigotry/the-letters/letter-moses-seixas-george-washington. And Washington's response: "President George Washington to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport," Newport, Rhode Island, August 18, 1790. https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-06-02-0135.

Freedman's Bureau, which aimed to support emancipated Black autonomy while simultaneously reviving the southern planter economy. Once its work at rebuilding the union was complete, Reconstruction's creators envisioned it would cease to exist.

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Thus, by the waning years of the 1870s, the provisionally expanded wartime government faced a reckoning point among the American people: should it continue to permanently grow, and oversee national questions like border patrol, labor disputes, and empire-building? Or should it return—however much possible—to its prewar model of sheltering free association? With the power of the state starkly obvious and the future of American citizenship in flux, the foundation of Jewish citizenship politics commenced.

Part III: Historiography

This dissertation speaks to three primary bodies of literature.

3.1 *Diaspora Jewish Political History*

Until the 1980s, generations of scholars had left Jewish politics and political agency unstudied in the pre-Zionist age of the Jewish diaspora. Explaining this historical lacuna, the historian Ismar Schorsch wrote in his 1976 essay "On the History of the Political Judgment of the Jew" that throughout the early modern struggle for Jewish emancipation, Jewish historians "divested exilic Judaism of any trace of political history" and instead amplified its religious components. In other words, in order to break away from the illiberal mold of communal nationalism, Jewish scholars sought to highlight the religious aspects of Jewish history while erasing the political. As a purely religious community with no diasporic tradition of politics, early Jewish historiography tacitly argued that Jews could be treated as any other liberal constituent in a modern state. In seeking to rectify this erasure of

Jewish political history, Schorsch ended his canonical speech by calling upon scholars to trace the "vast repository of political experience and wisdom" that existed throughout history.[25]

Heading Schorsch's call, David Biale laid the groundwork for the global reframing of Jewish political agency a decade later. Biale's book *Power & Powerless in Jewish History* (Schocken Books, 1986) refashioned the paradigm that has since allowed the field of Jewish political history to burgeon. Responding to the accepted thesis that diaspora Jewry was universally powerless, the historian cogently argued that Jews possessed both power and political acumen throughout history, and certainly well before the advent of political Zionism.[26] Taking a "deconstructionist approach to history," Biale surveyed chapters in the Jewish past ranging from antiquity to the modern diaspora to assess the contextual frameworks of Jewish political power. In sum, he tells, Jews "have always demonstrated a shrewd understanding of the political forms of each age."[27]

In the modern period, European Jewish scholars have continued to highlight Jewish political agency.[28] Most recently and comprehensively, David Sorkin's *Jewish Emancipation: A Global History Across Five Centuries* (Princeton Press, 2019) advances our understanding of the transnational process of Jewish citizenship. Sorkin develops a global framework for emancipation, or "the Jews' inclusion, elevation, or equalization as a distinct religious group," which occurred at different times, and through different methods, across the modern globe.[29] Importantly for Sorkin's argument (and for his forthcoming book project on Jewish emancipation politics), emancipation is not something merely

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[25] Ismar Schorsch, "On the History of the Political Judgment of the Jew," in *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (1994), 119, 129. This phenomenon is still ripe in the American context, this dissertation contends.
[26] Although the influence of Zionism has taken center-state in the present memory of Jewish politics, Biale writes, Jewish nationalism is simply "no more and no less than the latest incarnation of this political tradition."
[27] Biale, *Power & Powerlessness,* 206.
[28] Examples include Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (University of California Press, 2002), Lisa Moses Leff, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Stanford Press, 2006), and Glenn Dynner, *Men of Silk: The Hasidic Conquest of Polish Jewish Society* (Oxford Press, 2006).
[29] David Sorkin's *Jewish Emancipation: A Global History Across Five Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 2.

"given" to powerless Jews, but rather a process through which Jews were active political agents. Furthermore (and importantly for my own work), Jewish emancipation was what Sorkin calls "ambiguous and interminable." By this he means that emancipation is still an ongoing process, and can be lost or gained in various political moments—a process complete with "triumphs and tragedies, progressions and retrogressions."[30] While Sorkin touches on the American landscape, his work primarily looks at emancipation as a strictly legal process, which by the late nineteenth century was largely complete in the United States. My work on American citizenship will build off Sorkin's model of Jewish emancipation, but will also incorporate other America-specific attributes of what I call "full citizenship." In doing so, I hope to provide diaspora Jewish historians with the subtleties of the "American center" of a broader Jewish political story.[31]

Sorkin is a rare case in his treatment of America. While numerous scholars have looked at the ways in which Jews mobilized on behalf of greater rights in history, most have conspicuously excluded the American case.[32] Yosef Hayyim Yerushalmi, in his landmark essay "'Servants of Kings and Not Servants of Servants': Some Aspects of the Political History of The Jews" (2005), highlights instances throughout history and across geographies where Jews formed "royal" or "vertical" alliances with the reigning sovereign power—a political strategy, he contends, that kept Jews protected from outside forces and worked to show their mutual loyalty to the state. Stopping short of reaching a universal claim, however, Yerushalmi neglected to consider the United States in his history of Jewish politicization. Despite the United States holding the plurality of the world's Jewish population at the time of his essay in 2005, Yerushalmi leaves the American case entirely uninterpreted.[33]

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[30] Sorkin, *Jewish Emancipation,* 356.

[31] Jewish "centers" is a term used by Jacob Katz in his early modern study of the Jewish diaspora. See Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages* (Syracuse Press, 1993).

[32] Other canonical categories of Jewish politicization include "intercession," "political quietism" and "*dina d'malchuta dina*" ("the law of the state is the law")).

[33] Some American Jewish scholars have noted Yerushalmi's thesis in particular instances of Jewish political reactions—most notably after General Ulysses S. Grant's expulsion of Jews from his Mississippi River department during the Civil War—but never as a universal facet of American Jewish life. For the Grant example, see Jonathan Sarna, *When General*

Another historiographic category of diaspora Jewish politicization exists in the sphere of international politics. In her book *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Stanford Press, 2006), Lisa Moses Leff describes that French Jewish emancipation was in part predicated on their international liberalism. As Leff writes, a "mutual responsibility and unity among dispersed Jews" worked to both aid Jews abroad while simultaneously to allow French Jews to emancipate into a modern French society founded on liberal ideals like international aid.[34] Through international solidarity campaigns, as well as at home through political and cultural alliances, Jews politicized to ensure their place in a more secular and liberal French society. Historian Carole Fink makes a similar claim in her book *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878–1938* (Cambridge Press, 2006) by showing that the Jewish involvement in the "minorities question" between the Congress of Berlin and the Munich Conference was important for the development of their own emancipation into the liberal "Great Powers," as well as a means to maintain order in the developing nation-states in eastern Europe. As I make my own interventions into American Jewish historiography, my dissertation will speak to these transnational categories and events, exhibiting the often-overlooked "American center" in diaspora Jewish historiography.

3.2 *American Jewish History*

It is not just European Jewish scholars who tend to disregard the "American center." Americanists distinguish American Jewry as wholly apart from European scholarship. A primary reason for this chasm is the dismissal by American Jewish scholars of the process of emancipation in the United States. Certain historians have long subscribed to the notion of a rigid American Jewish

Grant Expelled the Jews (Schocken, 2012), 9. Indeed, as we saw at the start of this prospectus with Isaac Mayer Wise, some Jews exhibited serious trepidation regarding the power of centralized state authority.

[34] Lisa Moses Leff, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Stanford Press, 2006),

exceptionalism—or, in the words of Steven Katz, that "American Jewry, almost from its inception, was…a post-emancipation Jewry."[35] Yet without using the term "emancipation," I contend that a particular body of American Jewish scholarship has traced a similar, America-specific interpretation of Jewish emancipation. "Whiteness," or the process Matthew Frye Jacobson calls the "racial odyssey of immigration and assimilation" in his book *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Harvard Press, 1998), has some extraordinary parallels to the European Jewish process of emancipation.

The process of becoming racially white had critical bearing on full citizenship, Jacobson explains. ("Completely intertwined were the prospects of becoming American and becoming Caucasian," he writes.[36]) Blending political and cultural archives, Jacobson studies the progression of whiteness among a handful of non-WASP European immigrant groups, including Italians, Slavs, Celts, and Jews. In doing so, he identifies the process in which race was "made" in America, as well as the various geographies and temporalities in which whiteness was achieved. In near identical framework to what Sorkin calls the "ambiguous and interminable" course of emancipation, Jacobson concludes that whiteness is likewise "contingent upon the circumstances of the moment."[37] Both scholars also see the role of the state as crucial in the development of modern Jewish emancipation/whiteness (albeit Jacobson sees race as also "made" through cultural impressions). Together, the progressive framework of Sorkin's "emancipation" and Jacobson's "whiteness" make up the foundations of my own thinking surrounding American Jewish citizenship.[38]

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[35] Steven T. Katz, "In Place of an Introduction: Some Thoughts on American Jewish Exceptionalism" in *Why is America Different: American Jewry on Its 350th Anniversary* (2009), 11. Hasia Diner's recent work *How America Met The Jews* (Brown Judaic Studies Press, 2017) is a book-length argument in favor of American Jewish exceptionalism.

[36] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Harvard Press, 1998), 12.

[37] Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color,* 11.

[38] A brief note on what I see as a limitation with the emancipation/whiteness model of Jewish history: while both Sorkin and Jacobson interpret how Jews became full members of a certain polity(ies), their models don't go as far as to examine the power structure of the society in which they integrated into. While striving to achieve the full opportunities of "whiteness," for example, we lose the relational interpretation of what whiteness meant to the broader, non-white

To illustrate this occurrence with one historical example, cultural historian Michael Rogin details in his book *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot* (University of California Press, 1996) that the appearance of blackface in early twentieth century motion pictures was a process in which Jews proved their Americanness. By "taking control of the Black role" and "joining structural domination to cultural desire," he writes, Jewish actors showed that in America "Jews could speak for blacks but not blacks for Jews."[39] In doing so, Jews sought to elevate their status as white (emancipated) people while simultaneously promoting a denigrating trope toward Blacks. (In the limited realm of American Jewish political history, the best recent example of creating power imbalances in the process of Jewish state building is told in David Koffman's book *The Jews' Indian*, which I will explain in more detail below.) Putting this in terms of my own project, I am interested not only in unmasking the process of Jewish citizenship politics, but also the repercussions of such actions—if and how the politics of shaping citizenship directly infringed on the citizenship rights of a different group. If the process of Jewish politicization is studied non-relationally—or merely on behalf of understanding their process of achieving social equality—it tacitly ignores the innate power hierarchy that they helped bake into the contemporary forms of American citizenship.[40]

The groundwork for this intervention has been established by a dense historiography of Jewish-minority (largely Jewish-Black) relations. In fact, David Roediger once wrote that this

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American constituency. To quote the historian Barbara Fields, without unpacking the relationship between "race" and "racism," we fall into the trap of assuming for all groups a "purportedly democratic polity…with respect to persons who were nominally citizens in that polity enjoying full political rights." In forming modern whiteness, in other words, Jews, like other European immigrants, in fact formed a deeply unequal society where citizenship was achieved in structural white *supremacy*. Barbara J. Fields, "Whiteness, Racism, and Identity" *International Labor and Working-Class History* No. 60 (Fall, 2001), 54. David Roediger discusses a similar idea in "From the Social Construction of Race to the Abolition of Whiteness" in his collection of essays *Toward the Abolition of Whiteness: Essays on Race, Politics, and Working Class History* (Verso, 1994).

[39] Michael Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot* (University of California Press, 1996), 12, 17.

[40] The idea of "relational race" is found in Natalia Molina's *How Race Is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (University of California Press, 2014).

scholarship is one in which "quantity considerably exceeds quality."[41] At the risk of engaging in academic apologetics, certain studies do standout to me as beneficial to my own project. Hasia Diner's classic book *In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915-1935* (Greenwood Press, 1977) engages with the Yiddish press' portrayal of Black people in the early twentieth century, which she shows was fairly sympathetic, but not without particular Jewish utility. Diner posits that "Jewish leaders played with the issues of racism and black status as a way of working out certain problems and tensions of American life," and in doing so, they found that championing racially liberal politics could be an entry point into their own mainstream American life.[42] Thus while building an "alliance" between themselves and Blacks, Jewish liberalism ultimately served a one-sided purpose.[43]

Cheryl Greenberg similarly uses the lens of twentieth century liberalism in her book *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton Press, 2006). She too recognizes the sentimental social connection between early- and mid-century Jewish and Black groups, as both were facing harsh prejudice and barriers to citizenship in the supposedly liberal American nation. Yet Greenberg likewise underscores the "contradictions that would continue through the century," including the "two communities' racial, religious, and (ultimately) class differences [which] prevented them from using shared grievances as the basis for political collaboration."[44] Greenberg is less interested in how the two groups *spoke* of one other (which she maintains remained largely positive through the postwar period), but rather how group interests vis-a-vis "liberal political organizations" shaped the two groups' social and economic plights as the "American century" progressed. While Black and Jewish political groups worked in tandem for fair housing, employment, and neighborhood-

[41] David Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Perseus Books, 2005), 105.
[42] Hasia Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915-1935* (Greenwood Press, 1977), xiii.
[43] For this reason of structural inequity, I prefer to use the word "coalition."
[44] Cheryl Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton Press, 2006), 47.

based anti-violence programs, Jewish class (and race) ascendency ultimately prevented a unified Black-Jewish solidarity.

With the exception of Jacobson, Greenberg, and a few other scholars listed below, however, the bulk of American Jewish historiography disregards the role of the state. In fact, if the diaspora Jewish historiography outlined in *section 4.1* closely aligns itself with state politics, but leaves out America, then most American Jewish historiography has the opposite problem: it focuses only on America and neglects the state nearly altogether. Rather, an unidentified and enigmatic "Americanization," roughly encompassing a mixture of socio-economic success, religious reform, and racial whiteness—all achieved in the private/communal sphere—has been the target of Jewish actors in much of recent American Jewish historiography. Triumphant social histories of nineteenth century economy such as Hasia Diner's *Roads Taken: The Great Jewish Migrations to the New World and the Peddlers Who Forged the Way* (NYU Press, 2015) or Adam Mendelsohn's *The Rag Race: How Jews Sewed Their Way to Success in America and the British Empire* (NYU Press, 2015) tell the "rags to riches" story, targeting the process of Jewish economic mobility as the key to their Americanization (although Mendelsohn does lay the groundwork for a Jewish state building story, which I detail below).

In the realm of religion, Jonathan Sarna's landmark volume *American Judaism: A History* (Yale Press, 2005), details the process in which Judaism was privately reformed in the United States to fit the Protestant hegemonic mold due to fear of assimilation, while Shari Rabin's *Jews on the Frontier: Religion and Mobility in Nineteenth-Century America* (NYU Press, 2019) studies religious change as flexible and created precisely in the *absence* of the state. Eric Goldstein's *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton Press, 2006) exhibits the process in which Jewish communities shed their racial Jewishness to become white, but considers the phenomenon primarily as an internal, private struggle among Jewish communities. This scholarship, in sum, has opted to see Judaism/Jewishness as an inherently voluntary association, removed from the purview of the government.

A few scholars have very recently broken ground into studying how Jewish "Americanization" may in fact have been, at least in part, a political process, and one in which Jews helped to shape the contours of the state to ensure their own lasting status and mobility in America. In her recent book on American Jewish philanthropy, Lila Corwin Berman alludes to this new direction in American Jewish historiography, claiming that "To render Jewish collective life in the United States as a series of voluntary activities, indicative of tradition or self-fashioning alone, is to strip it of the governing structures and policies that shaped it and made Jews…visible subjects of the American state."[45] Mendelsohn's *The Rag Race* recognizes the Jewish connection to the Civil War Union government, for example, but he does not go as far as to question how Jews helped *shape* the state. He details the Jewish garment producers who played critical roles in the Civil War-era state's Quartermaster Corps, an expansive Union bureaucracy that secured provisions for the war effort. With the Union army in desperate need of uniforms, the state looked toward garment manufacturing firms, many of which were owned by Jews in places like New York and Cincinnati, to shore up their supply. In winning these bids for state contracts, writes Mendelsohn, Jews "were propelled by a wartime tailwind to the forefront of the clothing trade…a development of great and lasting consequence for the future of American Jewry."[46] Yet by focusing on the development of specifically the Jewish garment industry, Mendelsohn limits his study from speaking to a wider audience interested in developments beyond communal Jewish "success."

Some five decades later, as America was back at war, the story of state intervention picks back up in American Jewish historiography. Jessica Cooperman's *Making Judaism Safe for America: World War I and the Origins of Religious Pluralism* (NYU Press, 2018) asks how Jews lobbied the American

[45] Lila Corwin Berman, *The American Jewish Philanthropic Complex: The History of a Multibillion-Dollar Institution* (Princeton Press, 2020), 16.
[46] Adam Mendelsohn, *The Rag Race: How Jews Sewed Their Way to Success in America and the British Empire* (NYU Press, 2015), 182.

government to religiously pluralize the foreign service, a process Cooperman argues had lasting effects both on the religious tolerance of the American state and on the modern values of American Judaism. Along with their Catholic counterparts, Jewish political organizations balanced their desires to put pressure on the state to become less Protestant sectarian, while it simultaneously worked to urge Jews to regenerate Jewish practice in private to be more consonant with secular Protestant state values.[47]

Beyond wartime state expansion, several scholars have pointed to the varying ways that Jews engaged in national politics as measure to ensure aspects of a stable citizenship. Naomi Cohen's *Jews in Christian America: The Pursuit of Religious Equality* (Oxford Press, 1992) studies the long history of Jewish politicization on behalf of church-state separation. Cohen recognizes that Jewish "citizenship stopped short of full equality" due to its existence in a culture "steeped in Christianity," but sees this agitation for religious freedom as isolated from other politics of full equality.[48] Maddalena Marinari's *Unwanted: Italian and Jewish Mobilization Against Restrictive Immigration Laws, 1882-1965* (UNC Press, 2020) highlights how Jews and Italians organized co-terminously to lobby the state to reverse its stance on immigration restrictions. Beth Wenger's *New York Jews and the Great Depression: Uncertain Promise* (Yale Press, 1996) foregrounds a lasting alliance between Jews and the Democratic Party that formed during the financial precarity of the 1930s. With their support of the growing welfare state, Jews no longer had to rely on communal charity for relief, Wenger argues, which allowed private Jewish organizations to instead become "vehicle[s] for strengthening ethnic culture and commitment" that "harmonized Jewish and American ideals."[49] (Here it is worth noting a striking connection between Wenger's and Yerushalmi's scholarship. As he discussed the shift in the royal alliance after the advent of state

[47] "The ideal Jewish man" in the eyes of the Jewish Welfare Board, Cooperman concludes, "should be athletic and good looking, dignified in his bearing, personable, open, liked by all, and possessed of intuitive good sense and pride in his Judaism, but not overly punctilious about religious observance." Jessica Cooperman's *Making Judaism Safe for America: World War I and the Origins of Religious Pluralism* (NYU Press, 2018), 104.
[48] Naomi Cohen, *Jews in Christian America: The Pursuit of Religious Equality* (New York: Oxford Press, 1992), 3.
[49] Beth S. Wenger, *New York Jews and the Great Depression: Uncertain Promise* (Yale Press, 1996), 204.

liberalism in the French Revolution, Yerushalmi wrote that "[Jews] wanted equality of rights without totally surrendering their Jewish identities, for they regarded the two as thoroughly compatible."[50])

The commitment to shaping the state to advance Jewish welfare plays a prominent role in David Koffman's recent book *The Jews' Indian: Colonialism, Pluralism, and Belonging in America* (Rutgers Press, 2019). He focuses on the relationship between Jews and Native Americans throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and places particular emphasis on the Jewish overrepresentation in the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the 1930s during the creation of the landmark Indian New Deal programs. While creating these programs, however, bureaucrats like Felix Cohen were warped by their Jewish commitment to an "almost sacrosanct view of statist liberalism." Cohen helped shape the Indian New Deal in the image of this ideal Jewish citizenship type, rather than the decolonized sovereignty championed by Native groups, which Koffman shows "limited these Jewish contributions to reshaping Native Americans' well-being" and ultimately led to the program's failure.[51] My own dissertation, in a sense, will be a broader examination of this process that Koffman describes, both to understand *how* Jews got to this "sacrosanct view of statist liberalism" as their ideal citizenship type, and how it may have worked at the expense of other groups.

3.3 *American Statecraft and U.S. Political History*

The final body of scholarship this dissertation seeks to influence is also the broadest. It is in this historiography that I hope to make my most widespread contribution beyond the field of Jewish Studies. As a group that was both working- and middle-class, racially othered, gendered, largely

[50] Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, "'Servants of Kings and not Servants of Servants': Some Aspects of the Political History of the Jews," Tam Institute for Jewish Studies, Emory University (2005), 18.
[51] David S. Koffman, *The Jews' Indian: Colonialism, Pluralism, and Belonging in America* (Rutgers University Press, 2019), 139. More on Jewish liberalism is found in Marc Dollinger, *Quest for Inclusion: Jews and Liberalism in Modern America* (Princeton Press, 2000). Like most studies of Jewish liberalism, Marc Dollinger does not study its "pre-history"—Jewish politics before the 1930s.

immigrant, and religiously "the quintessential outsiders" (to quote Naomi Cohen), Jewish politics of statecraft offer a critical lens for all Americanists seeking a fresh understanding of citizenship in the era of government expansion.

The role of the state in the lives of Americans has received widespread attention from scholars of political and legal history. In the pre-Civil War era, I am drawn to the work of David Montgomery in his *Citizen Worker*, as well as the more recent scholarship recharacterizing the "myth" of the weak state in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[52] Mark R. Wilson's *The Business of Civil War: Military Mobilization and the State, 1861-1865* (Johns Hopkins Press, 2006) provides the framework for state growth and centralization during the "giant economic project" of the Civil War, particularly around institutions like the Quartermaster Corps and the federal banking system.

In the decades after the war—where my project is situated—several bodies of scholarship study state expansion and centralization. From a broad, legal framework, Eric Foner's *The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution* (W.W. Norton Co., 2020) shows how the American Constitution was reshaped by the 14th Amendment and the reframing of a federal "citizenship." William Novak's very new book, *New Democracy: The Creation of the Modern American State* (Harvard Press, 2022) will likewise help situate my story of Jewish state building within his broader purview of government activism and legal change between the Civil War and the New Deal.[53]

This state bureaucratic growth went hand in hand with activism among a diverse group of reformers. Agricultural workers, for example, detailed in books like Elizabeth Sanders' *Roots of Reform:*

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[52] Thank you to Alex Zhang and Gregory Briker for alerting me to this detail. For this scholarship, I am interested in Jerry Mashaw, *Creating the Administrative Constitution: The Lost One Hundred Years of American Administrative Law* (Yale Press, 2012); William Novak, *The People's Welfare: Law and Regulation in Nineteenth-Century America* (UNC Press, 1996); William Novak, "The Myth of the Weak American State" *American Historical Review* (December 1986), 585-600; Richard R. John, "Governmental Institutions as Agents of Change: Rethinking American Political Development in the Early Republic, 1787–1835," Studies in American Political Development 11, no. 2 (Fall 1997): 347–80.

[53] While the transnational element of my dissertation is likely focused on specifically Jewish politics equality and will largely be gathered from secondary sources, it is worth noting that there is some scholarship on the transnational element of state growth during the era in question. Most prominently, see Daniel T. Rodger, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Harvard Press, 1998).

Farmers, Workers, and the American State, 1877-1917 (University of Chicago Press, 1999) and Charles Postel's *The Populist Vision* (Oxford Press, 2007), worked to shape a modern state that could protect facets of their economic and social wellbeing, including tax and banking reforms, railroad and trade oversight, and state-sponsored education and vocational schooling. Racial groups like Black Americans and Chinese migrants also sought full citizenship through state intervention, detailed in a broad historiography including Glenda Gilmore's *Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (UNC Press, 1996) and Erika Lee's *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (UNC Press, 2003).

Urban workers, laboring under an increasingly industrialized production economy, also joined the fight for an activist government. (Even from across the ocean in London, Karl Marx observed in 1867 that "The first fruit of the Civil War was an agitation for the 8-hour day – a movement which ran with express speed from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from New England to California."[54]) As Gilded Age industries grew in power, reformers lobbied for increased labor and welfare protections. Annelise Orleck's *Common Sense and a Little Fire: Women and Working-Class Politics in the United States, 1900-1965* (UNC Press, 1995) studies of four women in New York who amalgamated class and gendered politics to form an "industrial feminism." The women politicized on behalf of trade unionism, worker education, fair housing, and consumption regulation to form a politics that would empower working class women.

Katheryn Kish Sklar further identifies a "women's public culture" in her biography *Florence Kelley and the Nation's Work: The Rise of Women's Political Culture, 1830-1900* (Yale Press, 1995). Through the political relief work of Florence Kelley, Kish Sklar details the process in which women formed civil organizations to use the state for protective legislation for female laborers and for children. Kish Sklar sees Kelley as the prime example of a reformer who worked to expand the state in order to

[54] Karl Marx, *Das Capital* Vol. 1, p. 309.

reform labor injustices and negotiate a public policy to aid workers. Gaining insight from Hull House affiliates like Florence Kelley (and Jane Addams), Sidney Hillman—the longtime president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers—also devoted his career to expanding state aid on behalf of workers. Steve Fraser's biography *Labor Will Rule: Sidney Hillman and the Rise of American Labor* (Cornell Press, 1993) intricately details Hillman's role in the growth of "industrial democracy" and the rise of the scientific relationship between labor and capital that became codified in the New Deal era.

A number of historians of state-building reformers—particular in the realm of labor politics—note the conspicuous presence of Jewish actors in this process. Orleck's and Fraser's subjects are Jewish, a facet both historians largely associate with their "Old World revolutionary socialism" that morphed with New World class politics in the American public sphere. Neither historian engages seriously with Jewish historiography, but rather they associate the Jewish identity of their subjects with what I would call an "Imported Jewishness" from Old World to New. In fact, it is not uncommon for political economic historians to note the ubiquity of Jewish actors in labor politics in the early twentieth century. When discussing the myriad Jews who involved themselves in crafting the New Deal, for example, Meg Jacobs writes in *Pocketbook Politics: Economic Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton Press, 2005) that "These immigrant intellectuals had one foot in their new white-color world and one in their ethnic communities, where millions of Jews labored."[55] While Jews play prominent parts in her history of consumer politics, Jacobs, like many political economic historians, see Jewishness as nothing beyond a binding ethnic identifier.

A few studies of statecraft do stand out for their more nuanced treatment of Jewish history. Daniel Bender's *Sweated Work, Weak Bodies: Anti-Sweatshop Campaigns and Languages of Labor* (Rutgers Press, 2004) is the most notable example. In studying the fight for sanitation and sweatshop reform

[55] Meg Jacobs, *Pocketbook Politics: Economic Citizenship in Twentieth Century America* (Princeton University Press, 2005), 141-2.

on the Lower East Side, Bender engages seriously with questions of Jewish race and political Americanization. Trusting that they could Americanize through a process of sanitation and sweatshop reform—such as the elimination of "homework" and the acceptance of the gendered conception of the male breadwinner and the non-wage earning married woman—Jewish laborers teamed with Jewish factory inspectors to elevate their entire community's status. Rather than leave this process to private philanthropy, Jews opted to use the state in order to advance their welfare. Shaping public health was thus both part of a Jewish Americanization process, as well as a broader state building project.[56] Using Bender's framework as a model, my dissertation will engage the scholarship of American Jewish history across numerous aspects of the American Jewish experience. In doing so, it seeks to posit that Jewishness is a valuable category beyond the socio-economic or cultural realm, and that it has important implications for historians seeking to understand the growth and functioning of the American state, and the nature of American citizenship more broadly.

The final component of American political historiography I seek to engage with is the scholarship on the "limits" or "contradictions" of American liberal equality. As Jews politicized to provide themselves access to the liberal state, certain groups such as Black Americans, Latinx, Asians and others were not given equal access to the same state apparatus. I am deeply inspired by works like Lisa Lowe's *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Duke Press, 2015), Saidiya Hartman's *Scenes of Subject: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America* (Oxford Press, 1997), Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation* (Johns Hopkins Press, 2006), David Roediger's *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (Verso, 1991)**,** Paul A. Kramer,

[56] Another study of Jewish politicization is Tony Michels' *A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York* (Harvard Press, 2005), which bridges the historiographic gap between labor history and Jewish history more than any other work. Yet Michels engages less with questions of state building and more with the creating of a specific public labor culture rooted in a specifically Yiddish-speaking American environment. Daniel Walkowitz engages questions of the Jewish relationship to the American state—as well as to Black Americans—in his book *Working With Class: Social Workers and the Politics of Middle-Class Identity* (UNC Press, 1999), but largely studies the mid-century period.

The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, & the Philippines (UNC Press, 2006), Mae Ngai's *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton Press, 2004), and Risa L. Goluboff, *The Lost Promise of Civil Rights* (Harvard UP, 2010).[57] In widely varying methods, these studies all posit that American liberalism was not equal among races, even when its framers purportedly claimed it would advance a freer American society. In seeking to address the ramifications of Jewish statecraft as a method to further advance Jewish citizenship goals, this scholarship will become a crucial archive in my understanding of the limits of state liberalism.

Part IV: Chapter Outline and Methodology

4.1 Overview

The first part of my dissertation examines Jewish resistance to the growing American government apparatus, a movement deeply rooted in reaction to the Civil War and the state's attempts to reshape citizenship during Reconstruction. Fearing its ill-effects on Jewish emancipation in America, national Jewish figures such as Isaac Mayer Wise (chapter 1), as well as regional and local leaders across the American South and West (chapter 2), resisted the growing power of the state. Part two then moves us into the early twentieth century Progressive era, when Jewish reformers in places like New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Kansas City established a new paradigm of Jewish politics. Recognizing the power of a liberal state to advance the racial and economic mobility of American Jews, these leaders helped create new reforms in the realms of immigration (chapter 3), criminalization (chapter 4), and "good government" welfare practices (chapter 5). Ultimately, this vision of a big, liberal welfare

[57] I am also drawn to the framework of Stephanie McCurry, whose book *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Harvard Press, 2010) deals with similar questions about the state construction of the Confederacy in the 1860s. McCurry shows that the Confederate state was built for white men, leaving out women and Blacks. Because of this, the state failed on the "homefront" because it could not support all of its constituents and their particular/structural sets of needs (such as food and welfare security for soldiers' wives). McCurry also frames the transnational sphere in ways I see similar to my own dissertation.

state won out, and Jews became some of America's most prominent and visible liberal state reformers. By the 1930s, American Jews overwhelmingly supported the liberal party's New Deal, and Jewish reformers had become vastly overrepresented in state bureaucracies. Yet this outcome was far from inevitable. My dissertation's epilogue seeks to historicize these Jewish political sympathies and make the case that Jewish liberalism was—and still remains—part of a larger, historically contingent process of Jewish citizenship in America. It will turn our attention toward the largest growing group of American Jews since the midcentury—the Haredi—and argue that many in this group align with the nineteenth century model of a smaller, less activist state.

4.2 Notes on Methodology

This dissertation studies major trends, tensions, and debates of Jewish ideologies about the American state. Yet it is more than just an intellectual history of Jewish thought. It examines real political mobilizations and movements, looking at how Jewish theories about citizenship translated into political statecraft. In the Redemption-era South, for example, Jewish mayors helped bring to fruition the long sought-after goal of southern "home rule," which allowed them maximal economic mobility and the ability to culturally profit off of modern forms of white supremacy. Likewise, in Progressive Era cities, Jewish reformers helped create new systems of state-surveillance and paternalist penal authority to create "useful citizens" out of Jewish immigrants. By blending intellectual, political, and cultural histories, we are left with a fresh understanding of how ideas about citizenship evolved in America, and how one group with a protracted history of citizenship struggles helped to create a liberal state apparatus from the end of the Civil War through the New Deal.

Like any archival-based historical study, this dissertation is limited in its purview. It draws on major figures and organizations that are emblematic of broader Jewish politics across geography, class, and gender across time. It examines the archives and writings of political figures that represented

specifically Jewish communalist organizations, rather than prominent Jews who detached themselves from "Jewish causes." Furthermore, it focuses on non-radical Jewish figures (whom I refer to as Jewish state "reformers").[58] Although a strong contingency of radical Jewish communists, anarchists, and other thinkers emerged in the twentieth century, their visions called for immediate revolution, and thus transcended the boundaries of statist "reform." While many of the figures I study were influenced by these groups and ideologies—particular that of Yiddish Socialism—they ultimately believed in the power and capabilities of a non-revolutionary liberal American state.

4.3 Chapter outline

Introduction: "State Matters": Jewish Citizenship and American Exceptional Politics

My introduction will overview my argument, interventions and historiography. It seeks to place citizenship—that is, the relationship between Jews and the American state—at the center of an understanding of what scholars have called Jewish "Americanization." It will question why the state has largely been written off from American Jewish historiography, and figure American Jewish politics within a wider literature on Jewish emancipation in the diaspora. It will also discuss the literature on American citizenship more broadly, and offer that the historical development of Jewish politics in America provides a crucial window into the dynamic meanings of citizenship for all scholars of American history.

Chapter 1: That Giant, Growing Evil: Jewish Citizenship at America's "Second Founding"

[58] In the Progressive era, for example, when new radical ideologies emerged, reformers largely rebuffed these efforts and instead worked within the confines of the American system. As the historian Mary Odem writes, "Progressives aimed to reform the worst abuses of the capitalist system without, in the end, undermining that system." Mary Odem, *Delinquent Daughters,* 99-100.

Chapter One studies the politics of the late Civil War and Reconstruction periods, a time when ideas about citizenship and the power of the American state radically transformed. Largely through the lens of Isaac Mayer Wise, one of the most outspoken Jewish leaders of the nineteenth century, this chapter seeks to understand how Jews saw themselves and their practices in relationship to the new capabilities of the state. The years between 1865 and 1877 were critical reckoning points with the power of government, and a time when intellectuals around the nation began to question the limits and repercussions of these changes. Wise's novel Reform movement, which he popularized during this early moment of political transformation, was the embodiment of anti-federalist, pro-regeneration Judaism. As Jews across the nation subscribed to Wise's version of American religion, they indeed looked toward his politics as critical for the survival of American Jewry. American Reform championed assimilation toward hegemonic whiteness and private Jewish charity over state welfare support. Wise's politics of citizenship thus blended the nineteenth century model of liberal free association with modern conceptions of full rights for white people. Much of Wise's archive is digitized through the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, including his widely distributed newspaper *The American Israelite*. He also lays out some of his political thoughts, including his affinity for European emancipationists such as Germany's Gabriel Riesser, in his 1901 autobiography *Reminiscences*.

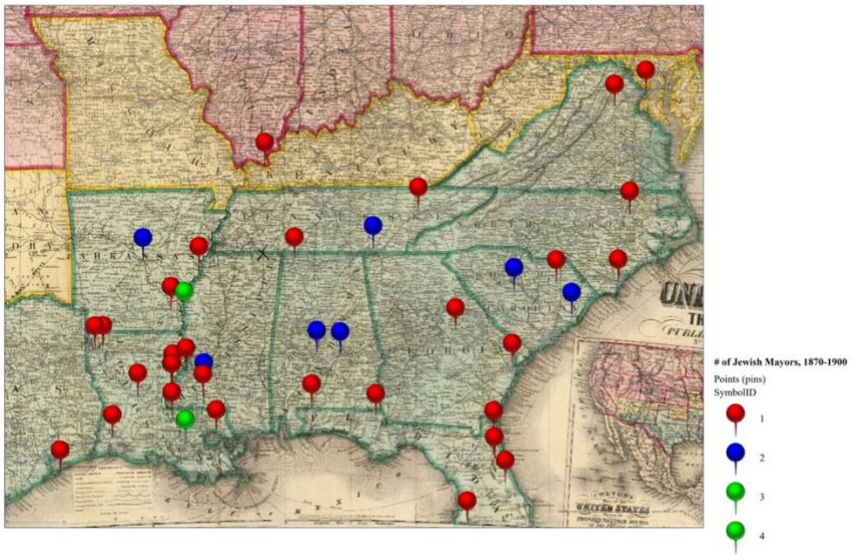
Chapter 2: Jewish Redeemers and the Coming of the New South

Some of Wise's most ardent supporters were Jews in the American South, where nineteenth century Jewish communities jumped on the opportunity to join his Reform movement and acculturate into white Protestant life. Chapter Two studies a dense grouping of Jews that were elected as southern town mayors in the decades after Reconstruction, the vast majority of whom aligned with the Democratic Party. In particular, this chapter posits that these Jewish politicians became central figures

in the local movement to regain local white control in the postwar South. As disgruntled whites looked for new ways to regain "home rule" after a decade of Reconstruction, many voters saw Jews to be a "bridge" from interracial democracy to segregated Jim Crow society. Foreign but racially white, and embedded in the emergence of postwar capitalism, southern whites believed Jews to be the perfect transitionary officeholders. In an era often deemed the "Redemption" movement, this chapter offers a new archetype of the southern "Jewish Redeemer."

After introducing the ideas and ideologies of Jewish Redeemers, this chapter will provide a microhistorical account of Isaac Lowenburg, a Jewish Redeemer who served as the mayor of Natchez, Mississippi from 1882 to 1886. Natchez was a thriving center of commerce and Jewish life in the late nineteenth century South, and Lowenburg was one of the town's most influential residents. Gathering sources form local synagogues, newspapers, and from Black onlookers—some of whom labored on plantations that Lowenburg owned—we find the complex history of Jews like Lowenburg who sought to secure citizenship through engaging with the emerging postwar structures of white supremacy.[59] Much of the research came from visiting local and state archives across the American South in the summer of 2022.

[59] Many of these sources will draw from my forthcoming article Jacob Morrow-Spitzer, "The 'Theoretical' Jew Versus the 'Southern' Jew: Black Perceptions of Jewish Whiteness in the Nineteenth-Century American South," *American Jewish History* 106, No. 1 (2022), which draws categories of comparison for this new political Jewish type.



Towns in the American South with a Jewish mayor between 1870-1900.

Chapter 3: Gatekeeping and Jewish Dependency in the Era of Migration

As the nineteenth century came to a close, Jewish politics in America began to drastically change. Not only did new ideas about state power emerge among early Progressive Era intellectuals, but mass migration from Eastern Europe completely changed how Jewish reformers saw the future of their own citizenship. Utilizing the framework of America as a "gatekeeping nation" (popularized by historian Erica Lee in her 2004 book *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943*), Chapter Three chapter explores the new ways in which Jewish reformers sought to protect their own citizenship by lobbying for or against state immigration reform. Scholars of Jewish history have long focused on the 1924 Immigration Act as the critical turning point in Jewish migration practices, overlooking that the ideological and political battles over America as a "gatekeeping nation" that began in earnest in the early 1880s. Focusing on concepts of Jewish dependency, cyclical migration, and early efforts to combat large-scale immigration restriction, this chapter articulates that the politics of immigration marked a distinct shift in the ways Jewish reformers viewed citizenship in

America. In particular, this chapter focuses on urban reformers like Philip Cowen, Isaac Hourwich, Cecilia Razovsky, Louis Marshall, and Cyrus Sulzberger. These records are largely held at the Center for Jewish History in New York and in digitized Congressional papers.

Chapter 4: Probation and Rehabilitation: Progressive State Surveillance and the Making of "Useful Citizens"

Chapter Four examines the purported "Jewish crime wave" that swept across the nation in the early decades of the twentieth century. In particular, it studies the Jewish social workers who lobbied for new institutions of state power to reform Jewish immigrant "delinquents" into what they called "useful citizens." Reformers like Alice Davis Menken (New York), Judah Magnes (New York), Jacob Billikopf (Kansas City/Philadelphia), Minnie Low (Chicago) and others drew on new Progressive Era ideas about the role of the penal system to "benevolently" shape a modern populace.

Fearing that immigrant dependency and crime might threaten Jewish citizenship, these Jewish social workers helped popularize new carceral programs like parole and probation. They harnessed the growing power of American policing and prison systems to advocate for increased surveillance of Jewish immigrants, with the hopes that Jewish "delinquents" would be arrested, arraigned, convicted, and then paroled by the courts. Once paroled, these immigrants would be released back under the "aftercare" of the Jewish social worker. Now acting with the mandate of the state, the social workers could rehabilitate Jewish lawbreakers into "useful citizens"—a blend of economic productivity, racial whiteness, and pluralist religious reformation.

This chapter traces these reformers' ideologies through the end of the "Jewish crime wave" in the 1920s, when fears over Jewish delinquency were replaced with widespread panic over the proliferation of Black criminals. Expanding upon many of the programs built with the help of Jewish reformers in the 1910s and 1920s, a new wave of activists promulgated surveillance systems in Black

neighborhoods in the 1930s, ultimately laying the groundwork for the mass incarceration that developed later in the century. By rooting this history in Jewish responses to the early twentieth century crime wave, this chapter ultimately seeks to understand the broader and lasting impacts of Progressive Era Jewish crime control on the American policing and prison state.

Chapter 5: Public Welfare, Industrial Democracy, the Creation of Modern Jewish Liberalism

As the final full chapter in this dissertation, Chapter 5 examines how Jewish reformers engaged—and disproportionately helped build—the burgeoning liberal welfare state. From the end of World War I through the New Deal, Jews became some of the most prominent reformers in state bureaucracies and the most vocal advocates for an expanded state welfare program. In the wake of the war, Jewish labor leaders like Louis Brandeis, Jacob Billikopf and Sidney Hillman had articulated the "science of the workplace," or an "industrial democracy," that would allow business and labor to work harmoniously through a relationship adjudicated by the state. The decade that followed saw an emergent liberal political coalition which supported a larger welfare government. At the same time, and particularly by the Great Depression, the families of Jewish immigrants saw the growing government bureaucracies as a secure place to hold a middle-class job. By the early 1930s, Jews of all stripes lent critical support to the New Deal state.

This chapter draws on the archives of some of the key Jewish voices in the 1920s and 1930s, including Brandeis, Hillman, Julius Rosenwald, Jacob Billikopf, Rose Schneiderman, Cyrus Adler, Felix Frankfurter, and Boris David Bogen. While scholars have long recognized the glut of Jewish reformers in the New Deal era, none have questioned *why* so many Jews got involved beyond the exceptional assumptions of Jewish "harmonization" with American statist liberalism.[60] This chapter

[60] Wenger, *New York Jews and the Great Depression,* 206.

posits that modern Jewish liberalism was in fact part of a broader history of American Jewish citizenship politics, and a form of government that offered the most attractive blend of economic mobility, state paternalism, and cultural safety during an era of fraught political change.

The end of this chapter will finally offer a glimpse into the structural repercussions of the New Deal for Jews and other minority groups. While for many Jewish reformers the New Deal represented the ideal culmination of liberal reform, other minority groups ultimately found much less to admire. Drawing on a wealth of archival sources criticizing the New Deal state, as well as scholarship in the fields of Black Studies, Latinx Studies, Indigenous History and Immigration History, I will explicate how the paradigm of the New Deal state "worked" for Jews, but ultimately left behind many other minority groups in America.[61]

Epilogue: American Jewish Citizenship: A Historical Perspective

As a fitting conclusion and grounds for future research, my dissertation's epilogue seeks to broadly reframe modern Jewish statist liberalism as part of a much larger, historically complex process of Jewish citizenship politics. Scholars of American Jewish history often assume Jewish affinity for a strong-government state to be an innate characteristic of Jewish ideology—a certain "cult of synthesis" between Jews and America.[62] I seek to denaturalize this exceptionalist paradigm between Jews and the liberal American state, and instead show that Jewish support of the New Deal and its legacy was in fact a historically nuanced and contingent process. In doing so, I offer the example of Haredi communities in New York, now the fasting growing population of American Jews (and a group that

[61] For examples of this scholarship, see Patricia Sullivan, *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1996) Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Cindy Hahamovitch, *No Man's Land: Jamaican Guestworkers in America and the Global History of Deportable Labor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Risa L. Goluboff, *The Lost Promise of Civil Rights* (Harvard University Press, 2010); Robert Korstad and Nelson Lichtenstein, "Opportunities Found and Lost: Labor, Radicals, and the Early Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of American History*, 75: 3 (December 1988): 786-811.

[62] See Jonathan Sarna, "The Cult of Synthesis in American Jewish Culture" in *Coming to Terms with America: Essays on Jewish History, Religion, and Culture* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2021): 3-27.

is too often ignored American Jewish historiography). As recent scholarship has shown, many Haredi community leaders have again complicated the role of the American welfare state in American Jewish life. Starting in the 1950s, groups such as the Satmar in Williamsburg prescribed to "a distinctly Hasidic version of citizenship," recently summarized by Nathaniel Deutsch and Michael Casper as combining "an enthusiastic embrace of American values regarding the importance of voting, civic engagement, and freedom of religion with a commitment to Hasidic values regarding self-segregation, cultural distinctiveness, and communal unity that often translated politically into bloc voting."[63] Through a brief overview of the Satmar and other Hasidic groups, this epilogue forces us to reconsider how we frame the universality of liberal American Jewish politics and points us toward the ongoing changes and challenges of Jewish citizenship in America.

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[63] Nathaniel Deutsch and Michael Casper, *A Fortress in Brooklyn: Race, Real Estate, and the Making of Hasidic Williamsburg* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021), 6; For other recent scholarship on Haredim and politics in America, see Nomi M. Stolzbenberg and David N. Myers, *American Shtetl: The Making of Kiryas Joel, a Hasidic Village in Upstate New York* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021). See also Britta Lokting and Sam Adler-Bell, "Welcome to Lammville," *Jewish Currents,* Fall 2020; "In Hasidic Enclaves, Failing Private Schools Flush With Public Money," *New York Times,* Sept 11, 2022.

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