



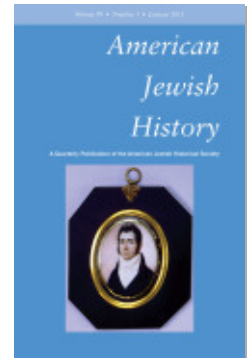
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The Student Struggle Against the Holocaust (review)

Robert H. Abzug

American Jewish History, Volume 96, Number 2, June 2010, pp. 170-172
(Review)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: 10.1353/ajh.2010.0017



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Although the author excels in providing context, James Hagy's *"This Happy Land": The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston* (1993) and Theodore Rosengarten's and Dale Rosengarten's *A Portion of a People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life* (2002) could have offered additional information. Only a small minority of Jews approached "court Jew" status as defined by Ginsberg before the Civil War, and many who did were largely assimilated. The latter raises the issue of who is a Jew. Moses's father married a Methodist and he was raised in that faith. Moses married an Episcopalian woman in her church, became a member, and ultimately a vestryman. The only way he can be perceived as a Jew and not simply a person of Jewish descent is through the eyes of gentile society. His mother-in-law never allowed him in her home; he was denounced as Franklin Moses "Jewnier"; and the press reviled him as an "Israelite" when not offering more negative sobriquets. Nothing that he did or said could erase the "racial stain" of having Jewish ancestry. But must historians accept this definition and define him as a "Jewish Scalawag"? Two of Moses' Reconstruction allies, Francis Cardozo (related to later Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Cardozo) and Robert DeLarge, had Jewish fathers and African American mothers, suggesting that relationships between Jewish men and black women may not have been unusual. The issue cries for further study. Finally, suggesting that Moses forged a black-Jewish alliance in any way paralleling that evident in mid-twentieth-century America strains credulity.

These few qualms notwithstanding, this is a well-written, analytic, and thought-provoking biography that should go far in resurrecting Moses's reputation. It adds nuance and depth to our understanding of Reconstruction, southern, and American Jewish history.

Mark K. Bauman

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The Student Struggle Against the Holocaust. By Rafael Medoff and David Golinkin. Jerusalem: The Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies, 2010. xvi + 256 pp.

Rafael Medoff, founding director of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies, has for some years specialized in authoring, co-authoring, and editing volumes that expand upon various aspects of the history of American reactions to Nazi genocide. The present volume tells the story of three students at Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS)—Noah Golinkin, Jerry Lipnick, and Buddy Sachs—as they sought

to press America's Jewish leaders and organizations (and, ultimately the American public and the government itself) into action on behalf of Europe's Jews. The seminarians each had different backgrounds, but all felt grievously wounded by the seeming indifference of the government *and* the timidity of Jewish organizations in pressing for rescue.

Golinkin, the acknowledged leader of the group, had come to America in 1938 and was most directly connected to those condemned to death by the Nazis. Golinkin and his band began agitating the issue of rescue among Jewish organizations, enlisted the aid of sympathetic faculty and students at Union Theological Seminary, the Protestant neighbor of JTS in New York's Morningside Heights, and in other ways sought to shake up the American and American Jewish establishments. Medoff's narrative weaves their efforts into the broader story of intra- and inter-organizational struggles and the reactions of such key leaders as Rabbis Louis Finkelstein and Stephen S. Wise. Medoff also places the work of Golinkin, Lipnick, and Sachs within the context of other important stories: promotion of the famous rabbis' march on Washington in 1943, the activities and vision of the Bergson group, and the chain of events that motivated the Treasury Department's Josiah DuBois to write his "Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews," which in turn led to the creation of the War Refugee Board.

The Student Struggle Against the Holocaust serves a very useful purpose in bringing this stirring, heroic story to the fore, though its structure somewhat muddles its focus. It raises and details a standard of moral and ethical behavior that resonates with the contemporary world as well as that of the 1940s. Yet Medoff's narrative accounts for at most half the book, and much of it involves the wholesale repotting of standard points of the "Wyman thesis" concerning the Allies and the American Jewish community.

The volume then reproduces the texts of a symposium, "Reflections on Three Remarkable Students," held at the national meetings of the David S. Wyman Institute in 2008. They include personal reminiscences from the sons of Golinkin and Lipnick and lessons drawn from their example by David G. Roskies, Haskel Lookstein, and David Ellenson, among others. These are moving statements, ones that underline the value, not only at the time but also as a legacy, of the efforts of these students at the darkest hour of twentieth-century Jewish existence. They constitute important primary documents for those interested in the Holocaust and memory. However, the most valuable primary sources reside in the "Appendices," where the editors have collected almost sixty pages of broadsides, journal articles, manuscript sermons, and other rarely seen

material documenting the personal contributions of Golinkin, Lipnick, and Sachs.

These documents and the primary story are the key contributions *The Student Struggle Against the Holocaust* makes to the scholarly literature. Yet the celebratory nature of the volume and its placement against the backdrop of the “Wyman thesis” blunts to some extent openings to new insight that the details of the narrative and documents might have inspired. For instance, the role of non-Jews, both in lay and religious roles, receives very interesting attention in Medoff’s recounting of the JTS students’ work with their counterparts at Union Theological Seminary and the support of various Christian religious leaders and politicians for rescue. However, Christian support is treated simply as an exception to the rule rather than something to analyze more deeply. So, too, is the implicit expectation that more agitation would have produced significantly more rescue, a central historical interpretation of the Wyman Institute that has been disputed in various ways by scholars in the field. Still, taken on its own terms, *The Student Struggle* is a very useful and touching historical collage.

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Our Exodus: Leon Uris and the Americanization of Israel’s Founding Story. By M. M. Silver. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010. 266 pp.

Matthew M. Silver’s monograph investigates Leon Uris’s bestselling novel *Exodus* and the Hollywood feature film it spawned. Surveying American popular culture in the post-World War II era, *Our Exodus* explores how and why Uris’s creation helped effect a shift in American attitudes toward Zionism and Israel. *Exodus* was “a barrier breaker and cultural trailblazer,” Silver asserts (6). With a print run of five million, the novel landed the coveted number-one spot on the *New York Times* fiction bestseller list in 1959. It was, according to Silver, “the milestone gem in the fulfillment of the paperback revolution” (155). How *Exodus* was created, produced, and marketed reveals a great deal about America’s cultural predilections, middle-class fantasies, and consumer economy in the 1950s and 1960s.

Silver’s analysis is informed by scholarship on the interrelationship of ethnic identity, nationalism, and “imagined communities” (10). Noting that *Exodus* “is filled with historical untruths,” he probes the disjunc-