Jewish Summer Camping and Civil Rights: How Summer Camps Launched a Transformation in American Jewish Culture

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Introduction

In the first years of the nineteen fifties, American Jewish families, in unprecedented numbers, experienced the magnetic pull of suburbanization and synagogue membership.[1] Synagogues were a force field particularly to attract children, who received not only a religious education to supplement public school, but also a peer culture grounded in youth groups and social activities. The denominations with which both urban and suburban synagogues affiliated sought to intensify that force field in order to attract those children and adolescents to particular visions of an American Judaism. Summer camps, especially Reform and Conservative ones, were a critical component of that field because educators and rabbis viewed them as an experiment in socializing children in an entirely Jewish environment that reflected their values and the denominations' approaches to Judaism.

Scholars of American Jewish life have produced a small, but growing literature on Jewish summer camping that documents the history of some of these camps, their cultural and aesthetic styles, and the visions of their leaders.[2] Less well documented is the socialization that their leaders envisioned. What happened at camp beyond Sabbath observance, crafts, boating, music, and peer culture? The content of the programs and classes that filled the weeks, and for some, the months at camp has not been systematically analyzed. My study of program books and counselor evaluations of two camping movements associated with the very denominations that flowered following

World War II has uncovered the summer camps' formulations of some of the interesting dilemmas of a post-war American Jewish culture. What was the relationship between being an American and a Jew? What were Jewish ethics? How should young Jews react to the political events of the time? Interviews with participants, counselors and directors of camping from that period only emphasized how vital many of these questions were.

That interest in culture, identity and politics led me to discover something unpredictable: Some Jewish summer camps, including those connected to Reform and Conservative Judaism, as well as a Zionist camp, focused on the civil rights movement's struggle for justice for African Americans in the first years of the nineteen-sixties. The Conservative Camp Ramah, for example, regularly performed musicals and plays that in a variety of ways engaged issues of racial injustice. The Reform Olin Sang Ruby Institute in Wisconsin consistently used role play as an important medium of education. In addition to staging the building of the pyramids and exiting Egypt, campers learned about racism and oppression experientially by turning the camp into a world divided between the oppressors and the oppressed in order to experience first hand the dynamics of discrimination as both victims and victimizers.

I was to learn that there was nothing isolated about these examples in both Reform and Conservative camping or other Jewish camps that were strongly committed to religious education and Zionist ideology. As one important strand of post-war Jewish summer camping was engaged in shaping a new generation of Jews, these educational camps constitute a rich vein to mine in order to understand some of the developments in the construction of a post-war American Jewish culture. These camps' deep engagement with the culture and politics of the United States of the time only intensifies their

importance as a world to explore in order to understand their self- conscious intention to socialize young Jews.

Jewish summer camps are no less worthy of analysis than synagogues, religious schools, defense organizations or philanthropies, which have received far greater attention by historians and social scientists who look to the key institutions of Jewish communal life in order to understand not only its development, but the issues that shaped American Jewish identity. Nevertheless, summer camps are critical to understanding American Jewish Life, both for those who brought visions of socializing children and for the children who were socialized. They were powerful sites of experimentation and cultural innovation. Often they provided their charges with the most important counterexample, if not an overt critique of the very world of the suburban synagogues that supported them. I propose to analyze a small subset of Jewish camping, educational camps, as settings for socialization and transformation that reveal how issues of Jewish identity were articulated and experienced in the late nineteen-fifties and early nineteen-sixties.

American Jewish Summer Camping

Jewish summer camps in the United States began in the late nineteenth century to provide opportunities for poor children to enjoy a better diet and climate. After World War I the first Jewish educational camps were established. Camp Cejwin began in New York in 1919, and Camp Modin in Maine in 1922. Camp Achva, the first Hebrew language camp, was founded in 1927, as was Camp Boberik, a Yiddish speaking camp, in 1928. The Labor Zionist youth movement in North America began Habonim camps in 1932 called Kvutza, with camp sites throughout the United States and Canada. Camp

Massad, founded in 1941, offered a "second generation" of camping devoted to Hebrew language instruction. Several other small educational camps were established in the 1930s.[3] As different as they were in orientation and ideologies, they had certain things in common and shared some qualities with all forms of summer camping.

Most Jewish children attended camps that were neither educational, religious, nor ideological. They were private camps that catered to Jewish children and emphasized recreation. Mordecai Kaplan once expressed his frustration with this form of camping when he famously asked why Jews sent their children to camps to learn how to be American Indians rather than Jews. He was aware that the norm of recreational camping was to appropriate (often imagined) Native American customs, terms, and ideas, as well as outdoor skills in an evocation of a "return" to nature.[4] Well into the 1960s the key premise of these Jewish camps was that Jews were most comfortable around other Jews, so they created a parallel structure to American summer camps. Most of the Jewish summer camps had little Jewish content. Some did serve kosher food as a way of catering to the needs of Jewish families who maintained the dietary laws even when other forms of observance seemed unimportant for their children's summer lives. These camps continued to flourish after World War II in response to the burgeoning numbers of Baby Boom children.

However, at the end of the war a new type of educational camping, denominational camps, developed that was closely linked to larger structural changes in American Jewish life. The Reform, Orthodox and Conservative movements sought to bring children into year round Jewish education and experience through their summer camps. They aimed to link the Jewish activities of the school year in religious school,

Hebrew school, or Day Schools, and youth groups to intensive summer experiences, and thus to shape, or more likely reshape, children's Jewish environments. Conservative Judaism's Camp Ramah, began in 1947. Reform Judaism developed its first summer camp (referred to as an "institute") in 1951. While the Orthodox Movement did not sponsor a specific summer camp, the Orthodox-Zionist movement, B'nai Akiba, created Camp Moshava, which drew Orthodox campers who often were part of the Orthodox Union youth movement as well. [5] Despite substantial differences among these camps, and among Zionist and denominational camps as well, Jewish camps that sought to educate and transform children shared an approach that differed from recreational camping. In the context of a mission to shape children's Jewishness, civil rights programming achieved prominence in the more liberal of the denominations.

Over the years of their development the camps attracted and reached children across a band of ages. Ramah offered camp sessions of eight weeks for children ages ten to eighteen. Olin Sang Ruby ran multiple sessions of shorter duration and, by the early 1960s, enrolled children from ages nine to eighteen. Like most camps, they encouraged children to join the ranks of assistant counselors and then to take responsibilities for campers as full-fledged counselors, specialists in music and arts, and teachers. All of the Ramah camps (with the exception of the California campus) were owned by the Jewish Theological Seminary. In addition to Wisconsin and California, Ramah camps were located throughout the Northeast in Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts, and ultimately in Canada and the South in Georgia. Reform movement camps were owned independently and similarly were located in California, New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Georgia, and Canada as well. Both camping movements were

coeducational. In the 1950s and 1960s they were, to a surprising extent, interested in developing leadership among boys and girls. All of these camps began in the period immediately prior to Second Wave feminism. However, they encouraged both boys and girls' achievements, religious knowledge, and participation. Not surprisingly, the first women ordained as rabbis in Reform and Conservative Judaism were products of these summer camps.[6]

Camps as Cultural Institutions

As educational Jewish summer camps consciously aimed to socialize young Jews, they differed markedly from other forms of Jewish education or experience in the United States. Moshe Davis, a founder of Camp Ramah and, as a young man, a counselor at Camp Massad, summarized the philosophy of many camps: "The whole day was now under our supervision. Until then you would come to a [prayer] service and you would come to [afternoon] school, but you didn't live as a Jew in a civilization."[7] Recreating what Davis and others, particularly in the Conservative movement, thought of as Jewish civilization required a world set apart and yearly participation in order to have a chance to shape children's experience.

Jewish summer camps were constituted as a quintessential "liminal" space. The concept of liminality was first used by Arnold Van Gennep, a Dutch scholar, but then was more fully developed by the anthropologist Victor W. Turner.[8] The liminal is the phase "betwixt and between" points of normal time and structure. For example, during male initiation in a variety of societies, prolonged periods were spent outside the camp or village devoted to communicating secret information available only to adult men. Elaborate rituals that celebrated the new status of adulthood for the initiated boys also

marked the end of the liminal phase. In contemporary society, risque celebrations the evening before weddings, such as a bachelor or bachelorette party, constitute a liminal space that ritualize the passage from unmarried to married. In Judaism, a classic liminal moment that accompanies the completion and beginning of the cycle of reading the Torah is the (sometimes) raucous evening of Simhat Torah when drinking, undermining authority and allowing women to touch and dance with the Torah occurs. These periods of "time out of time" that accompany a variety of transitions may last for a few hours, several months, or even a few years. They are a ubiquitous feature of human society and often provide a unique perspective on a group or society's fundamental assumptions and contradictions.

While many scholars have focused on certain key features of the liminal period, such as inversion of roles, cross dressing, and attacks on authority, Turner was also interested in the ways in which the liminal space or time was, broadly speaking, educational. Those to be initiated learned the sacred lore of their group. Paradoxes, cultural symbols and sacred objects were shown and communicated to those young people being brought into the society as adults.[9] Victor Turner demonstrated the complexity of culture and religion for people living in a preliterate society in his exploration of liminality. However, his insight is no less apt for the children of the middle class in the United States. Liminal spaces emphasize paradox because most cultures must contend with competing truths and ideas. The issues confronting the visionaries who sought to socialize young Jews into a new post-war American Judaism similarly used the liminal space of camp to address the cultural, religious and social paradoxes facing American Jews. Where did Jews belong in American society? What

did religious observance and ethical behavior require of a Jew living in America? What was the best way to learn how to be a Jew? What was the relationship between the past and the present? Questions such as these took on different meaning in the context of a summer camp than they did in a classroom because, however artificially, in the liminal space of camp, these answers were lived within a community.

Until quite recently, summer camps were classical liminal settings in most senses of the concept. They were located outside of the boundaries of school and family life and they existed temporally between the book-ends of the school year. They were created in remote places and easily cut off campers from the outside world. Traditional relations of authority were somewhat altered by a relationship between counselor and camper that was far more informal than teacher and student.

Summer camps created a holistic environment. Judaism and Jewishness were made the norm of the camp experience. In some camps, buildings and landmarks usually carried Hebrew names printed in Hebrew script. For many educators, Hebrew was central to the camp experience and the ideal language of the camp. The Jewish calendar structured each day and each week of the camp session. The Sabbath, however it was observed, was a focal point. The camps' activities emphasized Jewish music, dance, bible, and history and along with aspects of both American and Jewish life. Therefore arts, music, drama and other activities had a Jewish focus.

What Jewish movements sought to accomplish through summer camping certainly differed. Zionist camps wanted to inculcate the importance of Israel and the lifestyle of pioneers settling the land. Denominational camps planned to make children comfortable with Jewish observance, provide skills for prayer, and create a positive

experience of Judaism. Most camps, including the most popular Zionist camp Young Judaea, were interested not only in transmitting, but in some sense creating, a new American Judaism. Their leaders quite self-consciously wanted to shape a new experience of Judaism for a post-war generation of Jews. Camp leaders were decidedly critical of "suburban Judaism" that they took to be an inadequate Jewish life created by their campers' parents who, to their minds, had limited education and too little understanding of Judaism. Neither did they want to re-create the European Judaism of their camper's grandparents, which many leaders experienced as too fearful, sad, and ill suited to the promise of post-war life.[10] What was especially important to many of the camps' visionaries and leaders was to communicate the timeliness and relevance of Judaism to American life. They employed a language of relevance, of ethics, moral responsibility and choice to teach about Judaism. Campers engaged moral problems, examined issues of Jewish identity, held mock elections, and re-enacted events in Jewish history. A significant number of children and teens attended their camp throughout their young lives, often from the ages of ten or eleven to eighteen and came to see themselves and their Judaism through the prism of their camp experience. Through a combination of creating an isolated community with annual participation, these summer camps influenced children's experience.

Taken together, the questions, problems and paradoxes that Jewish educational summer camps addressed, constituted a symbolic discourse linked to the era and to the process of constructing and transmitting a vision of Judaism directed toward Jewish teens. Denominational summer camps were ascendant in the decades following World War II and their leaders were convinced that they were uniquely effective at creating a

new Judaism in summer camps. They built on the dramatic success of synagogue growth that demonstrated that American Jews were deeply concerned with the education of their children. Denominational summer camps, like other educational ones, combined medium and message in their liminal spaces. They were unique institutions that were anti-institutional, schools that undermined traditional styles of educating, religious environments that focused on questions as much as answers, and leisure environments committed to learning and leadership. Summer camps, according to their leaders, offered utopian spaces to transmit a Judaism that provided the ideal synthesis of a triumphant American Judaism. They were genuinely unique cultural institutions that aimed to create a Judaism tailored to America's first post-Holocaust generation.

Religion as Dynamic Practice

This dynamic vision of religion as a set of symbolic discourses used within particular historical moments is precisely how the anthropologist Talal Asad defines the study of religion. He argues that religion is not a series of "ideas," or simply practices, as it is often defined by scholars. Rather it is constituted as a set of symbols and discourses used by those who teach, embrace, and challenge traditions. His most potent question is what makes "religion" real and compelling to its followers? He suggests that the question is best approached by studying the dynamics of religion and power, and how symbols are actively translated by groups into the transmission of their beliefs and activities. Therefore, scholars must study the dynamics of religious life, rather than abstract principles. Scholars must unpack the inevitable dramas and conflicts that arise as religion is lived to understand how a religion is made real and compelling to its followers.

This perspective on religion offers insight into Jewish summer camping. By studying the decades of the 1950s and 1960s scholars have the opportunity to analyze how the visionaries and campers both translated the Judaism that was quite self-consciously presented into their lives. As the powerful issues of the post-war period were presented to campers in classes, in prayer, in discussions, and in relationships, how did campers develop ideas and experiences about what it meant to be an American Jew?[11] For Asad, one can only understand how religion is made powerful through the study of the social processes in which religion is embedded. It is a dynamic process and one that must be studied over time. Asad directs us to understand religion not only as a process, but one engaged with power and politics. Hence, denominational camps were engaged in the business of making Judaism by adapting a set of symbolic discourses, applying them to situations, and attempting to translate and socialize children and teens to that vision.

These contexts of liminal space and symbolic discourses help us to understand why the civil rights movement became part of Jewish summer camping experience. Camps addressed the central issues of identity, justice, and what defined being an American and a Jew through theater, role plays, and discussions that explored what constituted the connection between Jews and African Americans in the struggle for justice. In this essay I will explore the liminal world of summer camping in order to understand what engagement with civil rights revealed about the construction of a post-war American Judaism. The challenge for understanding the presence of civil rights programs in camps in the 1960s is to explain how both empathy with African Americans' experience of discrimination and grounding that empathy in Judaism became integral to

the creation of Jewish identity. To pose Talal Assad's question, how were Jewish symbols and discourses made authoritative in these acts of socializing Jews?

Beyond a discussion of that important relationship, my purpose is to focus on a dynamic understanding of American Judaism. Asad's assertion that religion is best studied through its transmission within a particular time and context is particularly apt here. The Judaism of these summer camps is not "timeless." This is revealed in the ways that counselors and teachers adapt and resist the links made between Judaism, Jewish practice, Jewish thought, and civil rights. These issues also raise questions about American Jewish identity.

Civil Rights

Within Conservative and Reform movement camps, civil rights programming had two goals: to understand justice through an ability to empathize with victims of oppression and to learn that Judaism was relevant to contemporary issues through the study of Jewish "values," texts, and history. Many of those former campers and counselors whom I have interviewed retrospectively suggest that they wanted campers to learn to "identify" or "empathize" with the "plight" of African Americans, particularly in the South. The ability to foster empathy was essential to producing Jews who understood the meaning of ethics. Camp leaders believed that Jews should respond to injustice "as Jews" and camp programming was critical to teaching that process.

Given this religious and educational approach, camps' focus on civil rights suggested a specific vision for Jewish practice and Jewish identity. It positioned American Jewish identity as one built on connections to others and valued identification as an important medium of universalism. It suggests that Judaism is vital in part because

it requires ideas and behavior that confront contemporary social injustice beyond the lives of Jews. And it links Jewish practices, Jewish texts, and Jewish values to active engagement with American civic life. This formulation eschewed tensions between "particularism" and "universalism," as well as "ethics" and Jewish practice. In contrast to other eras for both Reform and Conservative Judaism (in different ways), the organic world of camp was committed to an organic American Judaism. These avowedly liberal symbolic discourses grounded the transmission of Judaism to young Jews. The juxtaposition of Sabbath observance, Jewish arts and crafts, celebrations of Israeli music and art, addressing ethical dilemmas, Jewish history including the Holocaust, the study of classical texts and bible, and civil rights for African Americans revealed how a symbolic discourse of Jewish life was constructed. It also raises questions about how these constructions competed with or supported the Judaism of American suburban synagogues.

Several examples of how Judaism and Jewishness were transmitted through camp activities related to civil rights will serve as a background and context for this discussion. One method of Hebrew instruction at Camp Ramah was to perform a popular musical each year, which counselors and teachers translated into Hebrew. Musical directors and head counselors self-consciously chose a number of American musicals that had a theme related to racial injustice or tragedy. In the 1950s, for example, camps produced "Finian's Rainbow" and "Show Boat."[12] In 1962, senior campers in the Nayack camp performed in "Porgy and Bess." Chaim Potok, the late noted American Jewish writer, served as a head counselor at Ramah in the 1960s and looked back on that production as the event he was proudest of at camp, because he said that the "campers could get under

the skin of black men and women."[13] Potok's pride resulted from his ability to teach campers deep empathy, to transcend their own world and to inhabit the experiences of others, and hence to understand injustice. Though his language is off-putting and perhaps naïve at best, it captures the sensibility of the period that to experience the world of African Americans was to begin to address injustice.

The whole notion of identification was closely linked to a camp philosophy that Judaism engaged the pressing issues of the day; that being Jewish involved an ethical imperative that made Jews different from other Americans. Without understanding that mindset, educational philosophy, and view of American Judaism, it is impossible to grasp the rationale for civil rights programming. This world view is certainly evident in a remarkable opera written in Hebrew with original music especially for Camp Ramah by Rabbi Efry Spectre, the music director at the Poconos campus. In the early 1960s, campers at Camp Ramah performed his "Circus of Life."[14] The play was performed as a circus with a whip-cracking ringmaster at the center. Each "animal" act represented a response to racism. An African American child confronts being called "Sambo;" two Jewish women discuss Negroes moving into the neighborhood and their fears; a Southern citizens' council meeting presents a character named Dixie opposing civil rights; a Black church is the setting for opposition to discrimination through song; and an encounter between a black Muslim and advocates for non-violence were among the plays' vignettes. In the final act a number of characters, including Abraham Lincoln, appear who fight for freedom, truth, and "brotherhood." Hebrew musicals required campers to memorize all of their lines and music and they received study sheets with Hebrew and English vocabulary. Campers that year learned Hebrew terms for" the Negro Race, "

"equate us with," "to separate movie houses," "the brotherhood of man," "color-line religion," and "the real estate value of the neighborhood," among many other phrases taught about injustice and racial indignity. Rabbi Spectre's opera was unusual for civil rights camp performances because it implicated Jews as racists who supported housing discrimination.[15]

Jewish summer camps between 1961 and 1965 developed non-musical but performance-oriented engagements with civil rights as well. What drove these performances appeared to be the same educational philosophy of learning through empathy articulated in "The Circus of Life," and a view of Judaism as engaged in issues of injustice. Campers needed to experience oppression to change it, and they needed the attitudes, values and outlook of Judaism to help them respond to it. At the Reform Camp, Olin Sang Ruby Union Institute in 1961, the directors and counselors engaged in a day–long experiment devoted to understanding the mechanisms of oppression. Campers were divided into two groups, one called the Bliks and another called the Wasps. Wasps dined at tables with tablecloths and Bliks did not. Wasps had a variety of other comforts. Later in the day of the experiment roles were changed so that the former Bliks were now Wasps. Campers learned in retrospect that the terms Bliks combined "blacks" and "kikes." Wasps were a ruling elite whose name was later explained to campers as White Anglo Saxon Protestants. They experienced the arbitrary distinction between groups that resulted in one having privileges and the other not for no other reason than physical appearances.[16] One camper delivered a sermon about the experience drawing on universalist language that was critical to Reform Judaism in this period, "Dear God, give us the wisdom to know that we are all God's children and that we should all be treated

the same regardless of race, color or creed. Give us the ability to honor these differences and to respect each individual for himself."[17]

In the summer of 1962, Camp Ramah in California engaged in a related but more elaborate experiential experiment.[18] The late Walter Ackerman, the camp director, described what he did and what he wanted to achieve. He recalled spending a week preparing his "key staff people and a few selected counselors for a day devoted to teaching about prejudice."

At breakfast one morning every camper and counselor with blonde hair was ordered to leave the dining room. They had activity after activity taken away from them over the course of the day. They were separated from others, and finally they were taken out of the camp, sent down a large hill behind it, and left there. "Get Out," was repeatedly shouted at them.[19]

A counselor in camp that summer, Regina Morantz, recounted their instructions that "no one was allowed to break through the rules. " She recalled feeling that "Jews needed to learn about this. It is essential to developing a Jewish person who is ethically sensitive. Judaism was here and now; our job was to construct ethical people."[20]

Ackerman described the events:

> It took the kids four hours to figure out who was left in and who was forced out. They understood that the decision was based on arbitrariness. The impact was tremendous. The kids cried, yelled, and begged to be let back into camp. We finally did after the regular dinner. They gathered at the place in the camp where I spoke before tefillot (prayer) on Friday night. The occasion required it (a place that important).[21]

> I wanted them to understand civil rights, to know what they are talking about. This was an American issue that I turned into a Jewish issue. We have an obligation because of who we are and what we are in this struggle. We have an obligation to social justice. It was as simple as that. I feel highly identified with blacks as a Jew.[22]

Morantz recalled what Ackerman (universally called Ackie) said. "The entire camp was sitting there and Ackie explained that what we had done was an experiment. This is what is happening in the South," he said, "and we need to think about this, and this is why we should care."[23]

Other examples of civil rights programming, particularly at Camp Ramah, took place regularly between 1961 and 1963. Counselors and directors involved also talked about the specifically Jewish dimension of their engagement in civil rights. As one former staffer put it when describing the time spent teaching campers about civil rights and illustrating the mitzva requiring right conduct between people, "these things were not incidental to Jewishness, rather they were central to Jewishness."[24] If the goal of camping was to make Jews, then being Jewish was built in part on experiencing a link between self and an "other" who was not other at all.

The strategy of empathy combined a universalist impulse with a particularist one. It constructed Jews as deeply engaged with other groups and communities at the same time it embedded empathy within Judaism. These attitudes were certainly shared in some synagogues in Reform and Conservative Judaism. In summer camps, they were made a sine qua non of Judaism. When Ackerman stated that he reshaped an American issue as a Jewish one, he asserted that he defined Jewish imperatives for his campers. Judaism was

to be lived in particular ways, to guide behavior, and to carry the obligations of Jewish life. Civil rights for African Americans were woven into Judaism in a seamless garment to be experienced and lived.

While my primary focus is on denominational camping of this period, it is worth noting as a brief aside that a parallel process around civil rights occurred in Zionist youth groups and summer camping as well. Habonim, the Labor Zionist Youth movement in North America, discovered that their decision to engage in the politics of civil rights in particular, and the Student Left in general, proved to be the fulcrum which shifted the movement's center of gravity. In a retrospective reflection on the "radicalization of Habonim," Meir Ciporen wrote about the 1962 Habonim national convention where the race for *mazkir* (national secretary) of the movement caused an international debate about its direction. Max Langer, one candidate, spent the previous year urging members to understand that Habonim was a "vehicle for challenging the reality of diaspora Jewry." He argued for autonomy from Israel, focusing on older youth to promote leadership rather than education, and taking on a progressive ideology that would transform North America. Though he lost the election, his ideas won the day.[25]

These leaders opened a new Habonim camp in the summer of 1963 to develop national leadership for students about to enter their final year of high school. The camp, Machaneh Bonim, and its subsequent winter seminars around the country were devoted in large part to the civil rights struggle. Camp organizers invited leaders of the civil rights movement to teach students about their work and they insisted that American politics were central to the Habonim agenda. They redefined themselves as a movement, declaring their independence from Israeli leadership by focusing on North American

struggles, the first of which was civil rights. The Habonim leadership was no less committed to settlement in Israel. However, they took their ideological heritage of socialism and labor to be central to their Zionism and that demanded a place for civil rights in an American Zionist agenda. Educating teenagers about the importance of the struggle and encouraging their participation literally transformed their movement.

The remarkable years of the early 1960s and the nation's civil rights movement obviously had a profound impact on Judaism, American Jews, and young Zionists. While these examples are hardly exhaustive of every camp and movement, they make clear that among liberal denominations and left wing Zionism, a Jewish engagement with America required an engagement with the civil rights movement. Most of the men and women whom I have interviewed, as well as those who have written about this period, note that civil rights was far less divisive to camps and other movement institutions than subsequent struggles around the War in Viet Nam and the youth rebellion in general. This is not to say that the issues of civil rights were entirely uncontested. Clearly, Southern Jewry had a very different experience than Northern Jews of these events. However, the non-violent mode of the movement in these early years and the demands for justice not only resonated for many Jews, but became critical to Jewish education.

The linkage of Jews to the African American sojourn in the United States has a long and complex history.[26] Most recently, Eric Goldstein has argued that following World War II, Jews embraced a "racial liberalism," that was the direct result of their own final entry into the American privileged position of being defined as white and a long tradition of working-class, union, and left-wing politics among descendants of Eastern European Jewry. Having received that unambiguous racial status probably for the first

time in the twentieth century, the majority of American Jewry did support racial equality and were involved in or supported the struggle for civil rights, and many (though by no means all) subsequently were involved in the fight for fair housing and school integration, particularly in the early 1960s.[27] Summer camp civil rights then drew directly on a Jewish consensus of the period that linked the practice of Judaism and being a Jew to civil rights. Goldstein notes, however, that "racial liberalism" did not provide a strong basis for a sense of Jewish particularism or solidarity. Jewish educational camps, then, undertook to link "empathy,' or racial liberalism, to Jewish texts and ethics, to shape a liberal Judaism based on educational methods that privileged experience and reflection.

This ideal synthesis was vulnerable to all sorts of contradictions. What were the limits of liberalism, empathy and reflection in the practice of Judaism? How could traditional Judaism, the central issue for Conservative Jews, be transmitted alongside a racial and educational liberalism? These complex discursive issues collided in the summer of 1965 and revealed the complexity of constructing a post-war Jewish identity deeply committed to Judaism, but not by means of traditional authority, but through personal inquiry, reasoning, identification, and critique.

The examples I have discussed thus far, and many others that I discovered, demonstrate the triumph of synthesizing Judaism and civil rights in the early years of both the movement and the emergence of denominational summer camping. One can easily view the youth leaders of this period as remarkably successful at integrating Judaism and American liberal politics and building that Judaism on a profound sense of the power of the experiential to forge that very synthesis. For that reason, I was intrigued

to learn about a rarely discussed and barely documented case in which that synthesis was challenged and undermined. It should come as no surprise that it developed within the Conservative Movement's Camp Ramah. Because Ramah continued to hold religious law and authority as central, applying traditional religious principles to contemporary life had the potential for conflict. What was acceptable, and what was not, was amenable to a religious hierarchy. Rabbis had the power to say "yes" or "no" to what was done in a Jewish context and what could be considered "authentically" Jewish.

Given my larger concern with a dynamic study of American Judaism, the case is a critical opportunity to explore a conflict of what Asad termed "symbolic discourses." What happens when authority and racial liberalism collide, when one group of interpreters' seamless reality is another's violation of tradition? The ways in which such conflicts are handled and negotiated is critical to understanding Judaism in the United States.

Black Jews

In the summer of 1965 over a Shabbat at Camp Ramah in Nyack, New York the organic links between justice, Judaism and Jewish identity were to be challenged. That summer Camp Ramah authorized an experimental camp for 16 years olds that was called the American Seminar. Rabbi Joseph Lukinsky, a member of the Jewish Theological Seminary's education faculty, introduced a new vision of Jewish camping. He laid out three related goals to challenge campers. He built the eight-week session around traditional study, creating community, and social action. Campers were expected to learn to live together and work out differences. No counselors lived with teens in their bunks. Instead, campers had to learn to solve communal problems together. From the director's

point of view, these lessons in moral responsibility and learning to balance freedom and responsibility were central to the camp experience.

They were required to participate in "social action" by joining a project in the nearby cities for three hours a day. Many participated in voter registration with the NAACP. Some painted houses for impoverished African American residents, while others worked at Rockland State Hospital with severely mentally ill children and adults. For those who were uncomfortable with the alternative, and there were some, they could also work in the Ramah day camp. Lukinsky was supported in this experiment by a group of counselors he had worked with for many years. One of them, Robert Cover, was a man who had participated in the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee's voter registration in Georgia in 1962.[28]

In the morning, campers studied Hebrew and classical texts, including Talmud with a distinguished member of the Jewish Theological Seminary's Talmud faculty, a process one former camper likened to learning to play "Heart and Soul" on the piano with Mozart given their teacher's virtuosity and their ignorance.[29] The Talmud instructor served as the camp's Professor in Residence, as well as its religious authority. He was the Seminary's representative who assured the Jewish legitimacy or legal authority of what took place at the camp.

Many former campers and counselors recalled the 1965 American Seminar as a summer that changed their lives, moved them to professional commitments to the rabbinate, and to work with troubled children. But what many remember most vividly about the summer was a dramatic incident that occurred on a Shabbat fairly late in the season.

A group of teenage African American Jews, then called Black Jews, came to spend a Shabbat at the American Seminar. This group was called Hatzaad Harishon, or in English, First Step. A leader of the youth group of the organization contacted Camp Ramah to request the opportunity for members of a branch of the youth group to spend a Shabbat at camp.[30] The organization, Hatzaad Harishon, began in New York City in 1964. Its founder, Yaakov Gladstone, a Hebrew teacher, wanted to bridge the gap between Black Jews and white Jews in the United States.[31] The group was committed to *Klal Yisrael*, the unity of the Jewish people throughout the world. It was also committed to Israel as the spiritual and national center of the Jewish people. The group sponsored a youth and young adult organization, also called Hatzaad Harishon for ages sixteen to twenty. Several of the members of the youth group formed a dance troop that performed Israeli folk dances and attracted media attention.[32] Gladstone and the organization were especially committed to ensuring that Black Jewish children and teens received traditional Jewish educations and raised funds for those purposes. The request for an invitation to Camp Ramah was clearly in the spirit of integrating Black Jewish youth into the "mainstream" of Jewish youth culture.

One Ramah camper from that era remembered their excitement when they were informed about the visit. "Most of us came from liberal homes; we knew about Falasha, Ethiopian Jews, but Black Jews in America was something very new. The majority sense was that we were proud to do this. They were our own." However, the rabbis who ran the American Seminar faced other issues. As a result, they held many discussions over several weeks about how to bring together their campers with Black Jews. Would there be resistance, awkwardness, or difficulties? How would they best prepare campers who

had little experience with African American teens, and who might harbor prejudices and racist attitudes?

Like other American Jews, they were not entirely certain that the Black Jews were actually Jewish according to Jewish law. Some Black Jewish groups' claims to Judaism and their practices were by no means identical to those of most European or Mizrahi Jews and their descendants. If Black Jews were not "really" Jews according to Jewish law then the visit created certain problems. Could the visitors be invited to take particular honors associated with the Sabbath such as chanting the blessings at the Torah reading (*Aliyot*)? In anticipation of the visit, the camp leaders consulted the *halakhic* (legal) authority of the entire Ramah movement, the late Rabbi Moshe Zucker, a faculty member of the Jewish Theological Seminary, about offering *Aliyot* to the visitors. Rabbi Zucker's decision was calculated to be sensitive to the visitors and legally rigorous. He ruled that any male in the group (this was prior to women gaining rights to participate equally in religious life in the movement) past the age of bar mitzva who was enrolled in a yeshiva or day school could receive an *Aliyah*. He reasoned that the educational institution would vouch for the "authenticity" of the young man's Judaism. This ruling was agreed upon by the camp director, Lukinsky and the Talmud professor, who served as the scholar-in-residence and the religious authority for the camp.[33]

When the campers and guests assembled in the space where they prayed Shabbat morning, Rabbi Lukinsky faced a dilemma. He knew what he was obligated to do: to ask the young visitors whether they were enrolled in Jewish educational institutions. He discovered, he said, that he simply could not bring himself to do that. "In any other Jewish setting," he asserted," if a person presented himself as a Jew the inquiry would

stop there. There was only one reason I asked the young men on a Shabbat morning if they attended a yeshiva and it was because they were Black." [34] He decided then and there simply to assign *Aliyot* to the guest campers. However, what followed was anything but the norm for the day. One former camper recalled that after the service all of the participants went to lunch together. However, during the meal a murmur raced up and down the tables. The campers learned that following the service, their Talmud instructor in his role as *halakhic* authority of the camp, had asked several young male Ramah campers to remain behind because they needed to repeat the entire Torah service. The Talmud professor explained that the *Aliyot* taken by the Black Jews rendered it illegitimate.

This version of the day's events was one of four variations I recorded from participants. The most dramatic account described a rupture in the Torah service when the Talmud instructor declared it illegitimate and marched out with some campers. Many of the people there that day recalled the order of events differently, but not what happened: that the Torah service was repeated as a result of the *Aliyot* taken by the guests from Hatzaad Harishon. Most of those young men who had been asked to stay behind were outraged. The campers were embarrassed for their guests, though they would never challenge their Talmud teacher by refusing to participate in the second service.

Still, the campers were sufficiently agitated that they turned to their two rabbis, their director and Talmud professor, and demanded a meeting to discuss what had happened. That demand was consistent with their experience of the American Seminar. All summer, the camp leadership had emphasized the importance of personal responsibility, of learning how to balance freedom and responsibility. Camp meetings

were the medium for settling disputes and airing conflicts. Rabbi Lukinsky's educational philosophy stressed that meetings provided the occasion to articulate Jewish values, to turn to texts, and to establish the links between tradition and daily life in order to create moral thinkers and to demonstrate the "relevance" of tradition.

Ann Mintz, one of those campers who demanded a meeting, vividly recalled the scene that afternoon. Almost all of the campers and many of their visitors were seated in a grassy area of the camp outside of the chapel in the warm, late afternoon sun. The opposing rabbis were respectful, even "deferential" to one another, but each staked out a different position. Ann described what happened that day as "an honest to God difference, the only *mahlokot* (rabbinical debate) I have witnessed in my life."[35]

She recalled their Talmud instructor explaining repeatedly that he did not doubt the Jewishness of their guests, but only that he did not know whether or not they were Jewish. In an interview that I conducted with him in 2004 he recalled those difficult events. He explained that walking around camp that Shabbat he had heard their guests talking about their churches. "Fine," he said, "they can say that they are Jews, but does that make them Jews?" More importantly, he saw the decision taken by the camp director as a betrayal of a promise. "We agreed; we all agreed that this is what we would do and he didn't do it." Indeed the Talmud professor and Joseph Lukinsky both reported to me that, two decades later, Lukinsky did apologize for that breach of promise.

That afternoon, however, Lukinsky explained his reasoning to the campers. "If there were a group of poor Jews from the Bronx who were white, would we have questioned them? No. It was only because of their skin color that I was expected to ask that question." He explained that he could not reject the principles of justice and the

commitments to civil rights that had been made all summer when it counted most, with black guests who were Jews.

Ann Mintz reflected on that time thirty-five years later and said, "I know now that our teacher followed his teacher Zucker, and that is what the *halakhic* system required. But we heard the rabbi say 'I was just following orders.' We had all seen (the film) *Judgment at Nuremberg* that year and here he was saying that he should have followed orders. He heard it too and tried to explain ten to fifteen more times that this was a *halakhic* requirement."[36]

This association of *halakhic* obligations with Nazi-like authority was surely not uncomplicated. Each day when their teacher taught Talmud in short sleeves in the summer heat of New York, the Ramah campers looked at the blue number tattooed on his arm at Auschwitz. He came to the Jewish Theological Seminary directly from Europe following a war that had killed his whole family. Nevertheless, their great and revered Talmud professor had in some sense betrayed them, according to some former campers, by demanding an accounting from Black Jews.

Ann recalled Ernestine, a nineteen-year old visitor, who spoke up at the meeting, and in Caribbean-accented Hebrew said, "am I not flesh and blood, *basar v'dam*?" evoking Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* in the process. And Ann wondered how anyone could doubt Ernestine's Jewishness. Danny Margolis, a staff member that summer, remembered "Kids saying, 'how can he prove he's Jewish, that I'm Jewish?' why aren't these kids as Jewish as anyone else?"[37] Teenage campers pushed the issue to its extreme by questioning the basis of Jewish identity. How, they asked, does anyone know who is really Jewish?

Ann remembered that day because she said "none of us had experienced a conflict in rabbinic authority before. The head of a Ramah Camp," she said, "Joe Lukinsky stood up to Moshe Zucker, the legal authority for the entire system. He stood up to the weight of *halakha* in favor of social justice. It was as though we had our own conflict between the prophetic and the legal." Ann sighed and concluded, "I can pinpoint that day coming to a decision to take the road less traveled. I followed Joe to pursue social justice over *halakha*." The visitors left the next day, and life at camp proceeded successfully and respectfully. But something had changed, at least for some campers. One camper called it "a subversive summer," adding, "Thank God."

Driving this conflict at least in one dimension was a conflict over authority. The *halakhic* authority ruled that there was one appropriate way to determine the legal Jewish standing of the visitors. He viewed it as the least embarrassing alternative available to the camp staff to determine who was a Jew. These rabbis saw themselves as flexible while being true to the spirit of Jewish tradition, hence embodying the fundamental principles of Conservative Judaism.

The Talmud professor, however, described himself as uncomfortable with the principles of the American Seminar. He rejected the ways in which Judaism was, to his mind, made of less importance and having weaker authority than the ideas and political activism of African American leaders. He felt that parents had been "cheated" because their children were not experiencing Judaism, but something quite different at camp. For example, he complained that camp counselors affirmed the radicalism of the Black Panther party. Camp leaders' focus on the civil rights movement troubled him, he said, because he did not need any other group to teach him about justice.

The 1965 American Seminar occurred in the context of increasing polarization in strategies for the pursuit of civil rights and a growing militancy and frustration among African Americans. In August of 1965, the arrest of a drunk driver in the African American neighborhood of Watts, California resulted in days of rioting, or what others characterized as "uprising," that left 34 people dead and destroyed most businesses. A subsequent commission blamed the events on unemployment, poverty, poor educational opportunities and other factors that resulted from racial discrimination. "Race riots" erupted for the next several summers in New York, New Jersey, and other racially divided cities. These events were viewed by some as urban disorder and chaos, and by others as increasing militancy in the civil rights movement.

In fact, the radical Black Panther Party, which began in Oakland, California in 1966 with the first meetings of its earliest leaders, did not exist during the 1965 American Seminar. Nevertheless, some members of the staff clearly felt that others were deeply concerned with issues of justice for African Americans as a central focus of the summer to the exclusion of Judaism.

The Talmud professor explained his understanding of how Judaism should be transmitted to campers. He asserted that, "I learned about justice from my grandmother. Every Friday she gave money to the poor. I went with her as she delivered food and money to those in need. I did not need someone to tell me what was justice. Jews don't need a camp with ideas from others to learn that." "Why, he asked," did they run to paint the houses of Negroes in town when there was a Jewish old age home a short distance away? Why didn't their needs matter? What was wrong with caring for Jews?"[38]

He offered a rather different understanding of Jewish ideas of justice, rejecting the principle that empathy for others was one of the most significant ways to socialize young American Jews to Judaism. The professor claimed that Jews first had a responsibility to one another. Jewish values were those that taught youngsters to care for the elderly and to address the needs of other Jews. His evocation of his grandmother who taught by the example of helping others in the community was the most eloquent for him and he believed was not being taught at a Jewish camp. Universalism and particularism were not identical for him.

Joseph Lukinsky, cast by a former camper, as challenging "traditional" ideas about justice, offered an alternative symbolic discourse build on theories of education. He articulated his vision for the American Seminar in a dissertation about the 1966 camp session (which occurred the year following) that he subsequently wrote for the Harvard School of Education. He explained that what he considered the weakness of the 1965 session was his failure to make explicit the links between communal service outside of the camp and study of classical Jewish texts. Ultimately he worked to develop a view of tradition that recorded "how past generations oriented themselves to the world."[39] Campers, he believed, "could develop a critical approach to tradition and free inquiry into it." Their Jewishness would be better secured by understanding that "growth and change take place in the context of a tradition which is responsive to the real problems of the community and the individual."[40] Therefore, the American Seminar's focus from his perspective was about the integration of traditional texts and ideas with the compelling issues of the contemporary moment.

Although a great deal of Jewish summer camping programming around civil rights focused on getting campers to identify as individuals with the plight of the oppressed and as Jews with African Americans, identification also was linked to a historical Jewish tradition. We might well see Lukinsky and his staff as latter day *maskilim*, champions of the Enlightenment, emphasizing the compatibility of tradition and contemporary life, linking universalism and particularism, and a call to do justice that linked Jews to the demands of a liberal democracy. Their interest in the civil rights movement, the importance of change, and the incompatibility of racism with both American and Jewish values were key elements of the American Seminar. Their work in the camp's local area to register voters was one important example of the centrality of American democracy to their work. The American Seminar was, therefore, only a more fully developed vision for camp then those that focused on civil rights in art, music and role plays. While Reform Jews, particularly in this period, were not interested in a symbolic discourse of Jewish law, they were very much interested in the biblical roots of Judaism, Jewish continuity, and Jewish liturgy. Civil rights was a Jewish issue for them, and Judaism was defined in terms of its texts and values even if its foundation was not Jewish law.

Certainly some of the staffers, though not Lukinsky, believed that the actions of the camp's Talmud scholar had no place at the American Seminar. They believed that there were no authentic motivations for challenging the visitors' Jewishness, only racist ones. They devoted the summer to demonstrating to campers the seamlessness of Jewish life and antiracism. They asserted that their work was "totally infused with Jewish

sources and texts that bridged the complicated legal and moral questions." They saw the Talmud scholar's insistence on the primacy of *halakha* disrupting that work.

In the context of educational Jewish summer camping, civil rights became a crucial medium through which to transmit ideas about American Judaism as well as how to be Jewish in America. These examples from the first years of the 1960s demonstrate that denominational Jewish camps were sites of experimentation in the creation of a new American Jewish culture. The civil rights movement was central to an understanding of American Judaism, not only because it articulated a liberal vision of equality of opportunity and rights, but also because it was a struggle that, as Walter Ackerman noted, was a specifically Jewish one. A profound sense of being Jewish was linked to changing the world, demanding morality, and thinking about others captivated so many participants in these summer camps.

The visit of Black Jews precipitated a crisis for this vision because it revealed that traditional Jewish authority had its limits; it could not accommodate every version of liberalism. What had appeared seamless to many teachers and counselors, Judaism and inclusivity, was a garment that frayed. Campers began to think in terms of choices, trade offs, and sides. The Talmud teacher attacked the notion that particularism was problematic. The camp's director clearly could not reconcile for himself how to integrate Jewish authority on which the texts and traditions were based and racial liberalism, which is why he could not bring himself to question the authenticity of Black Jews' claims to Judaism. That fundamental conflict challenged the key lessons of the summer for campers. They were forced to question the Judaism of the visitors whose presence affirmed that Judaism transcended race and other differences. They were pulled between

the very principles that they believed were unified, justice and Jewish law. Above all, the Shabbat crisis revealed that the core principles of the American Seminar were contested. The focus on the experiential as a medium to bridge past and present, Judaism and American liberalism failed. What felt intuitively correct was ruled as outside the bounds of Jewish authority and who was "really" a Jew emerged as a disturbing question as did the potential incompatibility between Judaism and liberalism.

The 1960s were hardly the only era in which American Jews faced issues about the compatibility of Judaism and American left wing politics. However, what was different about this period was that a Jewish secular left had largely disappeared. Jewish life tended to be played on the stage of religious affiliation and synagogue membership, even if participation was nominal. Racial liberalism nicely meshed with an overall liberal Jewish consensus that linked Judaism to America's liberal values. The challenge to the Jewishness of the visiting Black Jewish group brought all of these issues onto a collision course.

If tempers flared and memory exaggerated personal confrontation, it was because in 1965 the Shabbat that members of Hatzaad Harishon visited became a testing ground for competing visions of American Conservative Judaism. While no one advocated for the politics of the Black Panthers since they did not exist, the importance of social transformation as fundamentally Jewish was key to many participants on the staff and among the campers. Counselor Danny Margolis recalled that the American Seminar was committed to insisting that "Judaism had to be real." They did not manipulate campers or engage them in educational experiments as other Ramah camps did, according to him. Instead, "we were committed to changing the world and doing it through Jewish values

and texts. And we really felt the outside world had to be part of how kids learned to negotiate life as a Jew. You could be a good, moral, sensitive human being and live an intensely Jewish, rich life."[41]

By affirming the primacy of Jewish law, the Talmud instructor and other Seminary faculty members who were called upon to decide on the question of *Aliyot* rejected the universalist demands of the American Seminar, which was committed to a vision of two worlds (Jewish and secular) unified by Jewish "values." For these men, the demands of *halakha* were not ultimately elastic. They were not about racial insensitivity or a lack of concern for justice. They provided a discursive system of laws to be applied and followed.

The multiple versions of this story are not solely the product of the passage of time and faulty memories. Rather, they constitute entangled narratives struggling to shape how to be a Jew in America in the mid sixties as well as in the twenty first century. Civil Rights became the medium through which to understand how to be an American Jew, the place of Jewish law or values in that, and the inevitable question about the permeability of Jewish law that brought structure into the liminal space of an idealized Jewish world for those who created the American Seminar.

Liminality and Cultural Transmission

Looking in on the liminal spaces of summer camp we are able to view the ways in which post-war Jewish cultural paradoxes were negotiated as the camps focused on Judaism and civil rights. Liberal denominations faced similar issues in grappling with the conviction that civil rights for Black Americans was not just an important cause, but a specifically Jewish one. In shaping Jewish ideas and beliefs and symbols around civil

rights, Jews aimed to integrate American liberalism and Jewish particularlism, Jewish authority and American experience, and liberal American notions of justice with Jewish concepts derived from law and sacred texts.

Each of these experiments, Reform's first camp's role plays, Camp Ramah's performances and the American Seminar, contended with notions of Jewish authority (for Conservative Jews), and bible and Jewish values (for Reform Judaism). In working out the place of Jewish authority or values, challenging them, accepting them, and modifying them, these liminal spaces revealed the emergence of a post-war Judaism. Campers, rabbis, counselors, and leaders were called upon to decide what power their vision of Judaism held, its limits, its flexibility, and its imperatives. The "crisis" created by the visit of members of Hatzaad Harishon demanded this process. What was at work was a transmission of Judaism through the dynamics of a Jewish discourse about justice, identity, and the translation of authority and texts to behavior.

Talal Asad argued that in order to understand religion, we must look at how it is embedded in social life, and how its transmission articulates its power to represent and shape lives. The efforts of so many counselors and rabbis to teach campers to experience the meaning of injustice in the context of Jewish life captures a critical, if brief moment in American Jewish experience. Judaism's compatibility with American liberalism was paramount, not simply to socialize young Jews to loyalty to America, but to teach them that Judaism had ethical imperatives that demanded action as well. Many of the former campers whom I interviewed, by no means a significant sample statistically, looked back on their camp experiences as directing them on their life path. Some who attended the American Seminar believed that their subsequent political activism in college was shaped

that summer by the models provided by their counselors and the issues that were raised by the visit of the Black Jews. Others whom I interviewed questioned why they so readily embraced universalism, why they put the political struggles of "others" before, for example, Israel. What united these retrospective reflections, however, was a shared experience of what Asad would term a "symbolic discourse," of Judaism's demand for ethical action in the world. One might also observe that forms of experiential learning consistently encouraged questioning authority and self-reflection.

Just a few years following the first American seminar the discourse shifted dramatically in the summer camp experience. Protests against all forms of authority exploded in virtually all forms of Jewish summer camps. The Six Day War coincided with the rise of Black Nationalism and a particularist turn toward Israel among American Jews in the United States. Efforts to bring civil rights to northern cities by integrating schools and housing challenged the non-violent approach to civil rights. Northern Jews experienced civil rights in their own neighborhoods and schools and many did not support it under those circumstances. Civil rights no longer served as medium for expressions of Jewish social justice. These historical shifts do not invalidate the significance of this period of time for understanding the development of the post-war American Judaism, but they underline the uniqueness of the moment.

The fight over how to authenticate and legitimate Jewishness, how to define identity and how to link identity to tradition and justice offers us an opportunity to understand the cultural dynamics of American Judaism as a discursive process unfolding within history. It urges us to look at where Judaism is made and transformed. The unlikely setting of summer camp was a key component of that process in the second half

of "the American century." These campers were to create many revolutions in American Jewish life, from the havurah movement to the emergence of Jewish studies as a scholarly field in the 1970s.[42] Summer camps of the 1950s and 1960s proved to be a powerful testing ground for experimenting with new articulations of Jewish identity. The Jewish counter culture, and the emergence of both the Holocaust and Israel as the foundations for Jewish identity in the 1970s would become the next contested chapters in the Baby Boom's development of an American Jewish culture.

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[11] Moore, Deborah Dash. 1994.*To the Golden Cities: Pursuing the American Jewish Dream in Miami and L.A*. New York: Free Press and Shapiro, Edward S. 1992. *A Time for Healing: American Jewry since World War II*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press offer histories of this period. See Riv-Ellen Prell "Community and the Discourse of Elegy: The Post War Suburban Debate," Manuscript.

[2] See Lorge, Michael M. and Gary Zola. 2006. *A Place of Our Own: The Rise of Reform Jewish Camping*. Tuscaloos: University of Alabama Pres. Schwartz, Shuly Rubin. 1987. Camp Ramah, the Early Years 1947-1952. *Conservative Judaism* 11: 13–14. Daniel Isaacman produced the most complete survey of Jewish summer camping in the 1960s, including a useful historical discussion of the various types of camps sponsored by Jewish organizations. Jewish Education im Camping. 1966. *American Jewish Yearbook* 67: 245-252. Joselit, Jenna Weissman, and Karen S. Mittleman eds. *1993. A Worthy Use of Summer: Jewish Summer Camping in America.* Philadelphia: National Museum of American Jewish History. This publication is a catalogue of an exhibition on Jewish summer camping.

[3] Jonathan Sarna provides a partial chronology of Jewish educational camps in "The Crucial Decade in Jewish Camping.". Lorge, Michael M and Gary P. Zola eds. 2006. *A Place of Our Own: The Rise of Reform Jewish Camping*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press: 27-51.

[4] Kaplan, Mordecai 1956. "Editorial." *Reconstructionist* 7: 6–7.

[5] There is no extant written source on the history of this camp according to a number of historians I have consulted who are experts on Orthodox Judaism in America. The general consensus is that the camp began after World War II during the 1940s.

[6] Other Jewish camps were sex segregated and campers recalled boys and girls having different types of activities.
[7] Interview with Moshe Davis by Pamela Jay in 1990 cited in Joselit, Jenna Weissman. 1993. "The Jewish Way of Play." *A Worthy Use of Summer.: Jewish Summer Camping in America*: Philadelphia: National Museum of American Jewish History: 18-19.
[8] The concept of liminality was developed by anthropologist Victor W. Turner. The Ritual Process: Structure and Antistructure (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977).
[9] Turner, Victor W. 1967. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
[10] Prell, Riv-Ellen. 2006. Summer Camp, Post-War American Jewish Youth and the Redemption of Judaism. Zukerman, Bruce and Jeremy Schoenberg eds. *The Jewish Role in American Life: An Annual Review* 5. Los Angeles: University of Southern California Casden Institute.
[11] Asad, Talal. 1993. Toward a Genealogy of the Concept of Ritual. In *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press: 37.
[12] Interview with Efry Spectre, October, 2000, New York City. Spectre directed music for a number of camps within the Ramah system
[13] Potok, Chaim. 1993. Introduction. Joselit, Jenna Weissman, and Karen S. Mittelman, *A worthy Use of Summer: Jewish Summer Camping in America*. Philadelphia: National Museum of American Jewish History. Chaim Potok, phone interview in Philadelphia, November 8, 2000.
[14] Given to the author by Rabbi Efry Spectre in the original Hebrew and a translation adapted by Mr. Stuart Kelman, and Rabbi Jack Bloom. Rabbi Spectre worked at Camp Ramah Pocons between 1960 and 1963. The actual year of the performance does not appear on the script. In the interview he told me that he looks back in embarrassment at the opera now because of some of the sentiments and the costumes and makeup worn by campers.
[15] In an interview Rabbi Spectre, raised in Buffalo, New York, recalled his grandfather's committed to civil rights and work on behalf of racial equality.
[16] The details of the experiment were included in the Program Book of the Union Institute, Oconomowac, Wisconsin,14 July 1961, Intermediate Session I, 11–23 July 1961. These documents were unprocessed at the American Jewish Archive at the time of my research in 2001. In 1968, following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jane Elliott, an Iowa school teacher, created an "experiment," in her classroom separating out children with blue eyes, declaring them superior, and denying other children privileges. She wanted students to "experience the emotional impact of race bias." This experiment was the subject of a documentary in 1970 and she subsequently offered workshops that recreated the experiment for adults.
[17] The sermon and the details of the experiment were included in the Program Book of the Union Institute, Oconomowac, Wisconsin,14 July 1961, Intermediate Session I, 11–23 July 1961. These documents were unprocessed at the American Jewish Archive at the time of my research in 2001.
[18] Both Walter Ackerman and Regina Morantz, the sources who described this role play were certain it was 1961, but also thought it could have been in 1962.

[19] Interview with Walter Ackerman, Jerusalem, Israel, May 18, 2001.
[20] Interview with Regina Morantz in Ann Arbor, Michigan by phone, August,,2006.
[21] Ackerman interview 2001
[22] Walter Ackerman explained that he grew up in Boston in the working-class, and was a member of a labor Zionist youth group, Hashomer Hatzair. He explained that the group put a "wall" between themselves and the rest of America. Ackerman said that they met across the street from a park where other "outsiders" congregated, women to run track, and Jamaicans to spend time together. His identification with African Americans, he reported, came from that world of his youth. He also described the depth of his commitment to civil rights which included joining the famous March 9, 1969 civil rights march in Selma Alabama. Organized as a protest against the brutal suppression of activists who protested the lack of voting rights for African Americans just two days before, the Southern Christian Leadership Council mobilized clergy of all faiths throughout the United States to bring national attention to this travesty of justice. He was one of several rabbis who went from Southern California.
[23] Morantz inteveiw, 2006
[24] Interview with Vicky Kelman by telephone in Berkeley, California, November 12, 2000.
[25] Ciporen, Meir. 1993. The Toronto Convention, 1962: The Radicalization of Habonim." In J.J. Goldberg and Elliot King eds. *Builders and Dreamers: Habonim Labor Zionist Youth in North America*. New York: Herzl Press:185-188.
[26] See Greenberg, Cheryl Lynn . 2006. *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Diner, Hasia. 1995 (originally 1977). *In the Almost Promised Land: Jews and Blacks 1915-1935.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
[27] Goldstein, Eric L. 2006. *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press: 196-19.
[28] Robert Cover was to go on to a distinguished career as a legal scholar on the faculty of Yale University and to die at a tragically young age from heart disease.
[29] Interview with Ann Mintz, February, 2000, New York City.
[30] I was told both that Ramah was contacted and that a teacher in the group from Harrison, New York contacted Joseph Lukinsky directly.
[31] There are several different groups who call themselves Black Jews. Howard Brotz's 1964 *The Black Jews of Harlem: Negro Nationalism and the Dilemma of Negro Leadership*. Glencoe: The Free Press offers both a history of the community, and a study of its leader. In this work, the Black Jews of Harlem are described as a distinct religious sect that makes no claim to practice Judaism in the same way that descendants of European Jews do.
[32] Ultimately, after years of unsuccessful requests, the group received Jewish communal funding for the support of programming from the New York Jewish Federation. Its board included virtually every prominent rabbi, scholar and communal leader in the United States during the period. Hatzaad Harishon was created during the time that civil rights captured national attention; it was no wonder that Black Jews would have been a source of so much interest. Gladstone's fundraising letters and articles emphasized not only the

importance of unity, but that in contrast to Black Muslims, that Black Jews did not believe in separatism.
What concerned Jews of European descent was a matter that has always been central to the discussion of Black Jews; were they *halakhically* Jewish? The group dissolved in the late 1970s due to conflict over the treatment of a group of Black Jews in Israel, issues of their *halakhic* standing, and how some Black Jews responded in the United States.
There are two archival collections related to Hatzaad Harishon: the American Jewish Committee in New York City in the folder on Black Jews, and the Schomburg Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books branch of the New York Library in the Hatzaad Harishon collection. A dissertation about the organization was written by Janice W. Fernheimer in 2006. The Rhetoric of Black Jewish Identity Construction in America and Israel: 1964-1972" in the Department of Rhetoric, University of Texas, Austin.
[33] All the people whom I interviewed about this incident were in agreement about Rabbi Zucker's ruling.
[34] Joseph Lukinsky, Interview in New York City, October 2000
[35] Ann Mintz interview.
[36] Ann Mintz interview.
[37] Telephone interview with Danny Margolis, November 2000, Boston, Massachusetts.
[38] Anonymous interview, June 16, 2004
[39] Lukinskyk Joseph. 1968. *Teaching Responsibility: A Case Study in Curriculum Development*. A dissertation presented to Harvard University, Graduate School of Education.
[40] Lukinskyk Joseph. 1968. *Teaching Responsibility: A Case Study in Curriculum Development*. A dissertation presented to Harvard University, Graduate School of Education: 105 .
[41] Danny Margolis interview.
[42] See Prell, Riv-Ellen. 1989. *Prayer and Community: the Havurah in American Judaism*. Detroit: Wayne State University Pres. Michael Staub, Michael. 2992. *Torn at the Roots: the Crisis of Jewish Liberalism in Postwar America*. New York: Columbia University Press.

I wish to think the funders who supported this research: College of Liberal Arts, University of Minnesota, Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania, Lucius Littauer Foundation, and Hadassah Brandeis Institute.
I appreciate several conversations with Deborah Dash Moore and her thoughtful responses to various versions of this paper.