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REPORT for FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER ANTI-SEMITISM IN DALLAS, TEXAS

Bryan Edward Stone, Ph.D. May 15, 2019

Summary

As a historian of Jewish life in Texas, I've been asked to provide context for the statements and actions of Vickers Cunningham that are described in the declarations of Amanda Tackett, Tammy McKinney, and Michael Samuels. First, I'll offer a general historical overview of anti-Semitism in Dallas, Texas, highlighting outstanding cases both of organized and personalized hostility toward the city's Jews. Second, I'll discuss the often derogatory use of the word *Jew* and the plainly derogatory expression *Jewboy*; obviously, *kike* needs no additional context. The documentation that follows is of the type regularly relied upon by historians and will support the following conclusions:

- 1. Jews have lived in Dallas since it was founded and have played an outsized role in its civic and social affairs, but they have been the victims of ongoing and overt discrimination. Anti-Semitism in Dallas has produced smaller harms than in other places, and violence against Jews has been very rare, but social discrimination has been continual from their earliest years in Dallas. Paradoxically, the relative success and general tolerance Jews have enjoyed in Dallas may have had the perverse effect of driving anti-Semitic attitudes and speech from public into private spaces.
- 2. While Jews have enjoyed tremendous public, civic, and commercial participation in Dallas, exclusive private spaces have persisted, notably elite country clubs where Jews have never been welcomed as members. This exclusion suggests a latent anti-Semitism within many of the elite members of Dallas society that requires safe spaces in which to come out. While overt public expressions of anti-Semitism have always been rare, it is impossible not to consider that such exclusive clubs have remained in place so that non-Jewish members could speak freely among themselves in terms they would prefer Jews and other minorities not overhear. Anti-Semitic rhetoric has been common enough in Dallas to be heard

occasionally in public conversation, but it is charged enough to be avoided by those who knew better.

3. Anti-Semitic tropes and expressions, as well as the derogatory use of possibly innocuous terms like *Jew* and *the Jew*, have frequently appeared in public speech in Dallas, but when they have appeared publicly they have been deployed by people and groups notorious for their prejudice—the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s, an openly anti-Semitic professor in the 1950s, violent neo-Nazis in the 1960s, "skinheads" in the 1980s. Statements that witnesses have attributed to Vickers Cunningham—notably referring to Jews as "filthy" and suggesting that Christian society needed to be "saved" from their influence—bear a conspicuous resemblance to utterances by these groups, and in particular the 1920s-era Klan. It is impossible that the use of such terms, especially in a public or professional setting, could be dismissed as ignorance or thoughtlessness. These are terms whose hurtfulness and anti-Semitic association is well-established, as many cases that occurred in Dallas can attest, and we should not suppose they might be used without a knowing intent to cause harm.

Credentials

I am a Professor of History at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi, Texas, and the author or editor of two books about Texas Jews. One of these, *The Chosen Folks: Jews on the Frontiers of Texas* (2010), is the first scholarly narrative history of the Texas-Jewish community and was awarded the Quadrennial Book Prize by the Southern Jewish Historical Society in 2011. I am also the managing editor of an annual historical journal, *Southern Jewish History*, which offers scholarly examination of the history of Jewish identity and communities in the American South. I have published numerous articles about Jewish Texans; wrote the entry on Texas for the latest version of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*; and have lectured publicly about Jewish history in Texas to groups across Texas and other states. I hold degrees in English from the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Virginia and a Ph.D. in American Studies and Civilization from the University of Texas at Austin.

My full curriculum vita is available at https://BryanEdwardStone.wordpress.com/.

PART I. ANTI-SEMITISM IN DALLAS

Historical overview

Jews were among the first settlers in Dallas, present in small numbers before the Civil War and growing in number as the city emerged as the crossroads of North Texas. A population of only 60 to 70 Jews in 1872 swelled to about 500 by 1880, nearly 5,000 by 1910, 10,000 by the start of World War II; 20,000 by 1980; and approximately 50,000 today. The rise of the Jewish community, and its intense involvement in Dallas civic affairs cannot be separated from its role in the city's prosperous commercial development: Jews were at the forefront of the retail industry in a city built on retail. Due to their pivotal role in the city's economy, Jewish merchants like the Sanger Brothers and siblings Herbert and Carrie Marcus (founders of Neiman-Marcus) had an outsized impact in both the commercial and civic life of Dallas. Although Dallas Jews have never constituted more than 3 percent of the city's population and have rarely been elected to public office—the city's three Jewish mayors and a single long-time member of the U.S. House of Representatives are exceptions—they have provided forceful leadership behind the scenes throughout the city's history.

The significant role that Jews have played in Dallas's institutional and civic affairs reflects the general atmosphere of tolerance they have experienced there. Writing in 1959, Irving Goldberg, a lawyer and judge who later held a seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals in Dallas, observed that "cordial and understanding relationships between Jews and non-Jews are considerably above the average in Dallas." Much of this cordiality, to be sure, was only possible because most Dallasites perceived Jews as white, and they therefore enjoyed nearly unimpeded access to power and opportunity even during the worst years of racial segregation. In a region (and nation) so notoriously hostile to African Americans, Latinos, and other ethnic minorities, it is important not to exaggerate the relatively mild bigotry Jews experienced in contrast to these

¹ "Dallas, Texas," Institute of Southern Jewish Life, *Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities*, accessed May 1, 2019, https://www.isjl.org/texas-dallas-encyclopedia.html. Other narrative histories of Dallas Jewry include Marilynn Wood Hill, "A History of the Jewish Involvement in the Dallas Community" (master's thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1967); Rose G. Biderman, *They Came to Stay: The Story of the Jews of Dallas* (Austin, 2002), and Gerry Cristol, *A Light in the Prairie: Temple Emanu-El of Dallas*, 1872-1997 (Fort Worth, 1998).

² Ginger Chesnick Jacobs, "A Comparison of the Dallas Jewish Population of 1953–1954 with that of 1939–1940" (master's thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1954), 10; *American Jewish Year Book*; Bryan Edward Stone, *The Chosen Folks: Jews on the Frontiers of Texas* (Austin, 2010), 194–95.

³ Irving L. Goldberg, "The Changing Jewish Community of Dallas," *American Jewish Archives* 11 (April 1959): 90.

other groups.⁴ But Jews have experienced bigotry in Dallas, and there are countless examples of personal aggressions and institutional discrimination, even overt bigotry and violence, directed toward them. Such occurrences were apparent since Jews' arrival in the nineteenth century.

Anti-Semitism in the Early Years

An 1889 appeals case in Ellis County, just south of Dallas, offers an early example of anti-Semitism but also suggests that to a great degree it was based on ignorance of Jews and Judaism rather than willful malice. The Sanger Bros. department store, owned by Dallas's most prominent Jewish family, filed suit against A. Moss, also Jewish, to retrieve goods for which Moss owed them money. Moss's wife also filed a countersuit against the store. In his closing argument, the Sangers' lawyer called the jury's attention to the Mosses' Jewishness and accused them of fraud. "This entire business is a concocted scheme from beginning to end," he claimed, "a deliberate swindle to defraud, gotten up by a Jew, a Dutchman and a lawyer." He listed the alleged conspirators, including "B. Frieberg, the old he-Jew of all," and noted they were "all Jews." The "honest jury of Ellis County," he concluded, should not "let these people . . . whose very thought is how to cheat and swindle, perpetuate this infamous and outrageous fraud." 5

The jury found for the Sangers, but on appeal the Texas Supreme Court reversed and remanded the verdict, citing the anti-Semitic comments of the Sangers' counsel as the reason. Chief Justice J. W. Stayton stated that "no court of justice ought for a moment tolerate" comments like those the Sangers' lawyer had made, "and it certainly must be true that the judge who tried this case did not fully understand the language of counselor or he would not have permitted it—would have rebuked it and ought to have punished its author." Stayton could not allow a judgment to stand, he ruled, that "may have been obtained through such means as were used in this case." It is notable, of course, that not only was the trial judge possibly unaware of the offensiveness of such remarks, but the lawyer himself seemed not to know that *his own clients*, the Sangers, were also Jewish and would surely take offense. Indeed, according to a Dallas correspondent, the Sangers "knew nothing of the language used by their attorney until

⁴ Two classic studies of the "whiteness" of Jews are Leonard Rogoff, "Is the Jew White?: The Racial Place of the Southern Jew," *American Jewish History* 85 (1997): 195–230, and Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton, NJ, 2008). For a Texan interpretation of the question, see Stone, *Chosen Folks*, 42–44.

⁵ "A Sensible Judge," *American Israelite*, December 12, 1889.

⁶ *Ibid*.

they saw it in the morning paper, and although it sets their case back for some time and endangers their claim, they are glad that his Honor . . . took notice of the language used." They preferred to retry the case in a setting untainted by "religious intolerance."

This case and its outcome suggest both the frequency and rarity of anti-Semitic expressions in nineteenth-century North Texas. The lawyer's anti-Semitic allegations came from whatever social or cultural sources he had encountered, leading him to an argument based not on the realities of the Jewish Texans living near him but on false ancient stereotypes. The appellate court in turn rectified a ruling that may have been influenced by those myths. The incident suggests that anti-Semitic rhetoric was common and, to some, unobjectionable enough to be made in one court without drawing the judge's attention, and yet offensive enough to be avoided and challenged by those who knew better.

The 1920s: Dallas Jews and the Ku Klux Klan

A challenge of an entirely different order, however, faced Texas Jews (and other ethnic and religious minorities) in the 1920s when the Ku Klux Klan reemerged after decades of dormancy. The original Klan, founded in Tennessee in 1866, was a loosely organized band of ex-Confederates who terrorized African Americans and their white supporters. It was a notorious but short-lived phenomenon. The "Second Klan," formed in Atlanta in 1915 by traveling salesman William Simmons, was a national, hierarchical membership society modeled on middle-class fraternal groups like the Masons or Elks. Basing its appeal on "100% Americanism," the Klan gained massive popularity, reaching a peak in 1925 of at least two million members nationwide.⁸

The timing of the new organization's founding, 1915, was significant. That year saw the release of D. W. Griffith's film celebrating the Reconstruction-era Klan, *Birth of a Nation*. It was also the year of the lynching of Leo Frank, a Jewish factory manager in Atlanta whose conviction for the murder of a gentile girl who worked for him was deemed inadequate by a local mob that preferred to murder Frank themselves rather than accept the court's commuted sentence

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⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Historical surveys of the Second Klan include David M. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan* (Durham, N.C., 1987); Wyn Craig Wade, *The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America* (New York, 1987); Nancy MacLean, *Beyond the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York, 1994); and Linda Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition* (New York, 2017). A thorough examination of Klan activity in Dallas is provided by Rosalind Benjet, "The Ku Klux Klan and the Jewish Community of Dallas, 1921–1923," *Southern Jewish History* 6 (2003): 133–62.

of life imprisonment. When Simmons formed the Second Klan in Atlanta, members of Frank's lynch mob were undoubtedly original members of the new organization.⁹

Whereas the Reconstruction-era organization focused its wrath almost entirely on freed African Americans, the Second Klan was more purposeful in its effort to build a dues-paying membership, and it played to the nation's broadest and deepest prejudices against blacks, Catholics, immigrants, socialists, and Jews. ¹⁰ "[Simmons] would warn that 'degenerative' forces were destroying the American way of life," explains historian Linda Gordon. "These were not only black people but also Jews, Catholics, and immigrants. Only a fusion of racial purity and evangelical Christian morality could save the country." Although many decades have passed, the resemblance between the views of the Second Klan and nearly identical statements that witnesses have attributed to Vickers Cunningham is plain. That similarity suggests that ideas and rhetoric the Klan injected into public discourse in Dallas have never been fully eradicated, that the Klan was itself an expression of an underlying ideology that persists to this day and is shared by Vickers and others like him.

Indeed, the Second Klan enjoyed particular success in Texas, where about 200,000 Texans were members in 1924.¹² Dallas—which was described in 1923 by its local Klan leader as "a Klan town"—was home to one of the nation's largest and most active Klan chapters.¹³ As many as 13,000 of its citizens were members, possibly the highest per capita participation of any city in the country.¹⁴ A Dallas dentist, Hiram W. Evans, rose to the national leadership of the organization, becoming "Imperial Wizard" in 1922 and remaining in that post until 1939. A Klan newspaper, the weekly *Texas* (100 Percent) American, operated in the city. And in a stunning illustration of the group's apparent respectability, the Texas State Fair, which occurs annually in

⁹ Stone, Chosen Folks, 125.

¹⁰ As I have noted elsewhere, "When Klan commentators . . . spoke of Catholics, they generally meant white, rather than Hispanic, Catholics. Klansmen rarely acknowledged the state's Mexican-American population. Even their comments about the dangers of immigration tended to focus on European immigration and took little notice of migration across the southern border." Stone, *Chosen Folks*, 252n.16.

¹¹ Gordon, The Second Coming of the KKK, 14–15.

¹² Max Bentley, "The Ku Klux Klan in Texas," McClure's Magazine 57 (May 1924): 16.

¹³ J. D. Van Winkle, quoted in "Hope Cottage Is Dedicated By Klan," *Dallas Morning News*, October 25, 1923.

¹⁴ Stone, *Chosen Folks*, 122. See also, Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City*, 1915–1930 (New York, 1967), 79, 265–266n.12.

Dallas, hosted a "Klan Day" on October 24, 1923, which was attended by more than 75,000 members, many appearing in full regalia.¹⁵

Evans addressed the Klan Day crowd, giving voice to his organization's animosity toward all non-white, non-Protestant groups and including special mention of Jews, who he said represented an "absolutely unblendable element" in American society. "Throughout the centuries," he declared, "there has been no country [the Jew] would or could call his home. . . . To him patriotism, as the Anglo-Saxon feels it, is impossible." In addition to providing a forum for such rhetorical attacks on Jews, Klan Day offered a visible, disconcerting symbol of the political power the Klan had obtained in Dallas. The city's local Klan leader was joined on a stage by a host of city and county officials including Mayor Louis Blaylock, who praised the Klan "in its present period of greatness" and Judge Felix Robertson, who would soon make a strong showing as a pro-Klan candidate for governor. 17

This public show of strength was a reminder that there were many Klansmen among local officeholders: residents of Dallas County suspected that both their sheriff and district attorney were active members. Local historian Rosalind Benjet, furthermore, underscores the degree to which the Klan had infiltrated Dallas law enforcement: "Especially well represented was the Dallas Police Department," she writes, whose Klan members included the police commissioner, chief, and assistant chief, three captains, ten sergeants, and ninety-one officers, "or about two-thirds of the force." With so large a share of the city's law enforcement willing to look the other way (and with similar circumstances in many other counties) Klan violence occurred constantly throughout the city and state, most viciously directed against African Americans but targeting anyone whom the Klan felt violated their sense of moral order. "One unfriendly tabulation of affairs in Texas," writes historian David Chalmers, "credited the Klan with over five hundred tar-and-feather parties and whipping bees, plus other threats, assaults, and homicides."

¹⁵ Detailed coverage of Klan Day was provided in the *Dallas Morning News* on October 25, 1923. See also Stone, *Chosen Folks*, 121–24; Cristol, *A Light in the Prairie*, 99; and Darwin Payne, "When Dallas Was the Most Racist City in America," *D Magazine* (June 2017), accessed May 2, 2019, https://www.dmagazine.com/publications/d-magazine/2017/june/when-dallas-was-the-most-racist-city-in-america.

¹⁶ "Imperial Wizard of Klan Says Immigration America's Big Problem," *Dallas Morning News*, October 25, 1923. ¹⁷ Stone, *Chosen Folks*, 122.

¹⁸ Stone, Chosen Folks, 129; Chalmers, Hooded Americanism, 41.

¹⁹ Benjet, "The Ku Klux Klan," 137–38, citing Darwin Payne, *Big D: Triumphs and Troubles of an American Supercity in the 20th Century* (Dallas, 2000), 87.

²⁰ Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism*, 41–42.

Anti-Semitism was central to the appeal of the Second Klan, and violence was central to its methods, but it does seem that Jews were not high on their list of preferred targets. Only one confirmed Klan assault on a Jewish person is known in Dallas. Philip Rothblum, a picture framer, was taken from his home in March 1922 by a group of unmasked men, blindfolded, driven to an unknown location, and beaten by hand and with a whip. He was threatened with further violence unless he left town, which he promptly did. After a second beating occurred, apparently by the same perpetrators and this time of a non-Jewish victim, an investigation led to charges against a police officer, J. J. Crawford, who was subsequently acquitted and returned to duty. Crawford's defense made no issue of Rothblum's religion, nor did Rothblum suggest in his own testimony that religious discrimination had played any role in the attack. Nevertheless, the *Texas (100 Percent) American*, the Klan newspaper in Dallas, highlighted Rothblum's Jewishness. The writer was incensed that Rothblum, "this Jew," had been permitted to appear "among decent people to TESTIFY" against Crawford, "a white American." Rothblum had been, the paper further claimed, "disowned by the better element of his own race," that is, by his fellow Jews.

The Rothblum incident indeed was met with a stunning silence from the city's Jews, perhaps even confirming the Klan paper's charge that his own community had abandoned him. Benjet suggests this is because Rothblum was new to Dallas and had remained aloof, "an outsider, not affiliated with any of the Jewish movers and shakers of the city" and so he "could count on no support from them." Even Rabbi David Lefkowitz of Temple Emanu-El, an enthusiastic opponent of the Klan who usually spoke up in defense of the city's Jews, made no comment. Such reserve, however, was in keeping with Dallas Jews' response to the Klan generally, which was, to put it mildly, ambivalent. As Dallas historian Michael Phillips has noted, many local Jews were compliant, even cooperative with the Klan. "The Jewish-owned Schepps Bakery," Phillips writes, "[paid] the KKK membership dues for fifty employees [and] three Jews sat on the board of Klansman R. L. Thornton's Dallas County State Bank, a firm that advertised as a 'KKK Business Firm 100%." The Klan's rhetoric was plainly and openly anti-Semitic, but their active threat to Jews was minimal, never posing a clear enough danger to rouse

²¹ Benjet, "The Ku Klux Klan," 145–49.

²² Texas (100 Percent) American, April 7, 1922, quoted in Benjet, "The Ku Klux Klan," 149.

²³ Benjet, "The Ku Klux Klan," 152.

²⁴ Michael Phillips, White Metropolis: Race, Ethnicity, And Religion in Dallas, 1841–2001 (Austin, 2006), 96.

most local Jews to speak or act against it. Indeed, the Klan's power waned quickly, elected state officeholders worked to diminish it, and the Texas organization withered away by 1926.

The 1940s through 1960s: Anti-Semitism in the Postwar and Civil Rights Eras

The experience of World War II, the horrific news of the Holocaust, and the subsequent establishment of the Jewish state of Israel had a galvanizing effect on Dallas Jews, as indeed they did for all surviving Jews in the world. If fear of anti-Semitic backlash had kept them quiet during the Klan years, the postwar world instilled a renewed sense of self-assurance and communal pride. They continued to establish and build distinctly Jewish institutions, but they became more confident than ever that they had met with full acceptance in Dallas at large. The idea that Jews were welcome in Dallas society was comforting, and perhaps true in the experience of some Jewish Dallasites, but there are plenty of examples to show that there remained a strong undercurrent of anti-Jewish prejudice among the city's elites.

That prejudice can be seen most clearly in the continuing and rigorous exclusion of Jews from private social organizations like country clubs, even when they were otherwise eligible for membership. Unable to join the city's most elite clubs, Dallas Jews formed their own, the Columbian, in 1891, which remained in operation until 2008. Lewish business, commercial, media, and religious leaders exercised an outsized influence in every area of Dallas life, but in spite of their power and prominence, notes journalist David Ritz, "the 5:30 social curfew would continue; after work a very fine but nonetheless apparent curtain separated Jew from gentile. The social distinctions and separations were definite." And such discrimination persisted. "Even today," Ritz observed in 1975, "certain institutions of Dallas society—the Idlewild, the Dallas Country Club, Brookhollow, others—have kept their doors closed to Jews." Such exclusions continued, in fact, long even after Ritz's article appeared: in 1989 the city's arts and culture magazine observed that "it's long been common knowledge that three old-guard country clubs . . have no Jewish members. Just why this is so, in a city with so many prominent Jews, is less than clear."

²⁵ Curt Sampson, "Goodbye, Columbian," *D Magazine* (November 2008), accessed May 2, 2019, https://www.dmagazine.com/publications/d-magazine/2008/november/goodbye-columbian. See also Cristol, *A Light in the Prairie*, 39, 62–63.

²⁶ David Ritz, "Inside the Jewish Establishment," D, The Magazine of Dallas 2 (November 1975): 56.

²⁷ Philip Chalk, "Minorities Clubhouse Rules: No Jews Allowed?" *D Magazine* (February 1989), accessed May 2, 2019, https://www.dmagazine.com/publications/d-magazine/1989/february/minorities-clubhouse-rules-no-jews-allowed.

It may be "less than clear," but it is not hard to venture a guess. Wealthy and powerful Christian Dallasites wished to preserve places where they could speak and play freely without the burden of what is today known as "political correctness," that inconvenient concern for the sensibilities of others. In spite of whatever their true animosity toward Jews may have been, in the public sphere Jews were their neighbors, colleagues, friends, and business associates. In their private clubs, however, where the presence of Jews (not to mention of African Americans, Latinos, and often women) could be strictly regulated, members of the city's white, male, gentile elite could be themselves, and one must assume that conversations occurred routinely in dining rooms and locker rooms they would have preferred their Jewish associates not overhear. Because the Jewish community was so much larger and more visible than it had been in 1889, at the time of the Sanger Bros. lawsuit described earlier, members of the Dallas establishment must have known which expressions regarding Jews and other ethnic minorities were proper and which were not, in which circumstances it was appropriate to speak freely and which not, and they sought out places where they could unburden themselves of their prejudices without judgment or consequence. If true, this interpretation suggests a latent anti-Semitism buried deeply within many of the elite members of Dallas society that required safe spaces in which to come out.

In the early 1950s, as the Red Scare gripped the nation and Jews were routinely suspected of being sympathetic to communism, a close rhetorical association was formed between anticommunism and anti-Semitism. "As political liberals," writes historian Hasia Diner, "Jews articulated positions that many Americans considered suspect." Diner further observes that the 1953 execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, a New York Jewish couple convicted of espionage, "sent a shudder of fear through a community with a profound historical memory of being scapegoated." In such a climate, denouncing Jews often appeared as acceptable as denouncing communism, a fact at the heart of one of Dallas's most celebrated cases of anti-Semitism, the "Beaty Affair," which erupted precisely as the Rosenbergs' espionage trial was beginning. ²⁹

²⁸ Hasia R. Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 1654–2000 (Los Angeles, 2004), 276–77, 278.

²⁹ For detailed accounts of the Beaty Affair and the Jewish response to it, see Hill, "History of Jewish Involvement," 57–68; Hollace Ava Weiner, *Jewish Stars in Texas: Rabbis and Their Work* (College Station, Tex., 1999), 225–27; and Richard V. Pierard, "John Beaty's *The Iron Curtain Over America*: Anti-Semitism and Anti-Communism in the 1950s," in *Bearing Witness to the Holocaust*, 1939–1989, ed. Alan L. Berger (Lewiston, NY, 1991), 301–311.

In 1951, John O. Beaty, an English professor at Dallas's Southern Methodist University (SMU), privately published *The Iron Curtain Over America*, in which he claimed, among other charges, that communists were infiltrating the United States with Jewish assistance and that Jews had overrun the Democratic Party. Despite scholarly criticism, the book was enormously popular, going through nine printings and selling forty-five thousand copies.³⁰ The SMU student newspaper denounced the book, and Rabbi Levi Olan, Lefkowitz's successor at Emanu-El, expressed outrage from the pulpit, but otherwise response from the university and from the city's Jewish community was muted. Beaty responded even to such restrained opposition with a blistering circular, "How to Capture a University," "which slammed B'nai B'rith as a 'Jewish Gestapo,' attacked the SMU/Temple Emanu-El speaker series, and insinuated that Stanley Marcus," one of the city's leading Jews and an outspoken opponent of Beaty, "was a leftist."³¹ Finally the university imposed some consequences on Beaty, who was mildly chastised by the university trustees, roundly condemned by the faculty senate, and reined in by a new administration. The tepid Jewish response to Beaty's statements, however, indicated a strategic decision in the Jewish community to remain silent and wait for the storm to pass. The local office of the American Jewish Committee, a national organization that opposes anti-Semitism, "counseled caution and quiet consultation with the media," according to historian Hollace Ava Weiner. "Among both the Dallas Jewish community and the SMU faculty," Weiner writes, "the consensus was to ignore the menacing book rather than draw attention to it."32

This uncertainty about how to react to anti-Semitic rhetoric, whether to call it out or ignore it, emerged again and much more bitterly in the struggle over African American civil rights. Jews in the South were torn deeply between a general sense of empathy with African Americans as a fellow despised minority and their de facto membership in the privileged white society.³³ "Throughout the desegregation crisis" writes historian Clive Webb, "African Americans and Jews in the [South] took no united action against racial segregation. In the southern states at least, there was never any political alliance between the two peoples."³⁴

³⁰ Weiner, Jewish Stars in Texas, 226. ³¹ *Id.*, 226.

³² Id., 225.

³³ Works on southern Jews and civil rights are too numerous to list here, but two of the most authoritative are Mark K. Bauman and Berkley Kalin, eds. The Ouiet Voices: Southern Rabbis and Black Civil Rights, 1880s to 1990s (Tuscaloosa, Ala., 1997) and Clive Webb, Fight Against Fear: Southern Jews and Black Civil Rights (Athens, Ga.: 2001).

³⁴ Webb, Fight Against Fear, xiii.

Nonetheless, a perception of an alliance apparently existed among segregationists, and violent attacks on Jewish institutions were a common occurrence during the civil rights era. Synagogue bombings in Nashville, Atlanta, Charlotte, Gastonia, Jacksonville, Miami, Alexandria, and elsewhere "shook the Jews in the South causing them to feel vulnerable," writes Hasia Diner. "These bombings and the rising anti-Jewish rhetoric manifested in print and in speeches by advocates of militant segregationism made it painfully clear to southern Jews that they could no longer remain invisible." Such attacks largely silenced the southern Jewish community with the exception of many rabbis who worked mostly behind the scenes to bring about social and racial change. Rabbi Levi Olan of Temple Emanu-El contributed greatly to the cause of civil rights, and perhaps consequently, Jewish institutions in Dallas were not spared the violence that struck other southern communities.

As Marilyn Wood Hill has documented, much of the hostility toward Jews in Dallas was attributable to local members of the American Nazi Party, which was active in the city in the early 1960s and formally organized a chapter there in 1965. Such groups were suspected in the mid-1960s of a series of anti-Semitic acts in and around Dallas, starting with defacing books in public and university libraries by applying stickers bearing swastikas or slogans like "Communism is Jewish." Similar stickers were applied to the windows of twelve Jewish owned downtown stores; a bomb threat was reported at Temple Emanu-El, and although the bomb was a hoax, police arrived to find swastikas painted on walls and windows; a bullet was fired from a car through a stained-glass window at Temple Shearith Israel, followed by another fraudulent bomb threat and the consequent evacuation of the building; a cross was burned on the lawn of a German-Jewish refugee who had compared the American right with Nazism; and swastikas were painted on sculptures in front of Stanley Marcus's house. ³⁶ To be sure, such attacks caused little physical damage compared to worse incidents in other southern cities, but the frequency of Nazi activities in Dallas certainly frightened and concerned the city's Jewish community. Nonetheless, as Wood observes, "the Jewish citizens . . . attempted to avoid publicizing or responding to the events, because it is their belief that the Nazi Party and similar groups feed and grow on opposition and publicity."³⁷

³⁵ Diner, The Jews of the United States, 272.

³⁶ Hill, "History of Jewish Involvement," 55–56.

³⁷ *Id.*, 57.

Such direct acts of violent threat were rare in Dallas, but rhetorical attacks on Jews and other supporters of integration were more common, often from places of great influence. The Reverend John A. Criswell, pastor of the First Baptist Church, the city's largest Southern Baptist congregation and soon to become the largest in the nation, was one of the city's most vocal opponents of black civil rights and, indeed, of mixing between religious groups as well. As Dallas historian Michael Phillips describes, "Criswell became one of the pulpit's most visible defenders of segregation." In a speech in South Carolina, "Criswell demanded separation not just of the races, but of religions as well. Invoking images of filth and dirt frequently used in depictions of African Americans and Mexican Americans, Criswell called integration the work of 'outsiders' (by implication Jews) in 'their dirty shirts.'" If not stopped, he continued, they would "get in your family." Christians, he said, had to resist this amalgamation and "stick to their own kind." Views like Criswell's were common in Dallas, Phillips says, but "Criswell's vitriol still stood out in an age of widespread demagoguery and garnered national headlines."38 Criswell's influence, and that of the First Baptist Church, was enormous in Dallas and in the nation at large. His words carried weight with a great number of Southern Baptists, the largest Protestant denomination in Texas, and such smearing of Jews, Catholics, and Hispanics, not to mention the underlying racism against blacks, is a testament to the depth of bigotry that existed in the city's white Protestant majority.

Recent Cases of Anti-Semitism in Dallas

In the decades since the civil rights movement, incidents of overt anti-Semitism have remained rare, but one incident stands out as particularly troubling and visible. In October 1988, a group of young men described as "skinheads"—members of an organization called the Confederate Hammer Skins—vandalized three religious facilities in North Dallas overnight: the Jewish Community Center (JCC), Temple Shalom, and the Islamic Association of North Texas mosque in suburban Richardson. The attackers "spray-painted Nazi symbols and white supremacist slogans and shot out windows and doors" at all three buildings. Attackers "broke down the front door of the mosque [and] smashed windows and spray-painted red swastikas, Ku Klux Klan symbols and slogans," and at Temple Shalom "a front door to the temple and a classroom window were shot out by a .25-caliber automatic pistol." At the JCC, vandals "shot

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³⁸ Michael Phillips, White Metropolis, 133–34.

out a window, broke the front glass doors and painted anti-Semitic slogans across the front of the building in red." Those slogans reportedly included the statements "6 million more" and "This time we'll do it right." These incidents followed a string of similar recent activities: two young men had burst into Temple Shalom and interrupted worship services; graffiti had been found at Temple Shalom and on nearby Jewish-owned businesses; and an Israeli flag had been burned in the parking lot of the JCC.³⁹

The Dallas Police Department formed a task force to investigate the incidents, and by the end of the month they had arrested and charged a nineteen-year-old man for the latest attack at Temple Shalom. During his trial, a former member of the same hate group testified that the defendant "confided that he wanted to run lethal gas through the air conditioning ducts" at Temple Shalom. The witness informed the court that the defendant "told him once that 'he'd like to kill them all." The defendant was subsequently sentenced to ten years in prison and \$5,000 damages. 40 Further investigation in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Justice resulted in charges against seven more "skinheads," who were subsequently convicted of "firearms violations and conspiracy to violate the civil rights of blacks, Jews and Hispanics."41 The charges stemmed not only from the attacks on Temple Shalom, the mosque, and the JCC, but on prior incidents in which they had "assaulted and chased minorities in Robert E. Lee Park," near downtown Dallas, "which they contended was reserved for whites." U.S. District Judge Barefoot Sanders (who in 1976 had issued the ruling that resulted in the belated desegregation of Dallas's public school system) imposed harsher penalties than sentencing guidelines recommended, observing that "there was a danger to public safety. The impact of this is far-reaching, it seems to me."42

In the current political climate, Jews everywhere are again concerned about the threat of anti-Semitic violence, and for good reason. In 2017, a wave of more than 2,000 bomb threats was made to Jewish institutions around the world, including the Jewish Community Center in Dallas,

³⁹ Stewart Weiss, "Skinheads Sentenced," *Jewish Journal of San Antonio*, April 1990; Terry Box and Tracy Everbach, "Attackers vandalize Jewish, Islamic sites," Dallas Morning News, October 9, 1988.

⁴⁰ "Ex-'skinhead' tells of poison gas idea as Dallas trial starts," *Austin American-Statesman*, February 22, 1990; "7 charged in Dallas 'skinhead' incidents," Austin American-Statesman, July 27, 1989.

⁴¹ Stewart Weiss, "Skinheads Sentenced," Jewish Journal of San Antonio, April 1990.

⁴² Tracy Everbach, "Skinheads given stiff stentences: Terms up to 9-1/2 years exceed U.S. guidelines," *Dallas* Morning News, May 3, 1990.

which was forced to evacuate on March 23, 2017.⁴³ The Dallas evacuation was hardly an isolated case, and the threats turned out to be hoaxes, but in a climate of increasing risk, no threat is too small to have an effect. Thankfully no violent attacks have happened in Dallas, but Dallas Jews will naturally be mindful of the whole long history of anti-Semitism in their community when facing and evaluating these new and emerging threats.

PART II. JEW AS PEJORATIVE

I should state at the outset that I will not be able to isolate usages of the word *Jew* to Dallas in particular, but there is no reason to believe that its use or meaning among Jews and non-Jews in Dallas is different than elsewhere in the United States. Observations about its derogatory use in general should suggest how it could be interpreted in Dallas.

There is no doubt that the English word *Jew* is often used as a pejorative, even though it has innocuous meaning as well. In contrast to familiar derogatory terms that are always profane, *Jew* bears different meanings based on tone, intent, context, and even the identity of the speaker. It is therefore an ambiguous and difficult term to define clearly. "Whether this word is derogatory or offensive, especially when used by a non-Jew, is a question that crops up regularly in language columns and usage books," according to linguist and lexicographer Sol Steinmetz. "*Jew* is no simple ethnic slur," writes religion scholar Cynthia M. Baker. "In fact, it need not, in itself, be a slur at all, despite its ready and recognizable uses as such. . . . *Jew*, for some, is a term of deep pride or desire; for others, it is a term of deep loathing."

The complex etymology of *Jew* accounts for much of this ambiguity. It has almost always been a Christian word for Jewish people, *not* a Jewish word for themselves. Thus it often carries an automatic negative meaning: it is a description applied to outsiders, those who are "not us," the "other." According to Steinmetz, its ultimate origin is the Hebrew word *yehudi*, which referred to a resident of Yehuda, the tribal land of the biblical figure Judah, the fourth of Jacob's twelve sons; this is the same region that became the Roman province of Judea by the time of

⁴³ Claire Z. Cardona, "Jewish Community Center in North Dallas confirms threat led to evacuation," *Dallas Morning News*, March 23, 2017, accessed May 3, 2019,

 $[\]underline{https://www.dallasnews.com/news/dallas/2017/03/23/dallas-jewish-community-center-evacuated-temporarily.}$

⁴⁴ Sol Steinmetz, Dictionary of Jewish Usage: A Guide to the Use of Jewish Terms (Lanham, MD, 2005), 80.

⁴⁵ Cynthia M. Baker, Jew (New Brunswick, NY, 2017), 1.

⁴⁶ Baker, *Jew*, 3, 4.

Jesus. From Hebrew the word entered Greek (*Ioudaios*), then Latin (*Judaeus*), then the multitude of European languages: *Juif* in French; *Jude* in German; *Judío* in Spanish; *Zhid* in Russian. It entered English from Old English and Old French, both deriving originally from the Latin, and so its use in English is inseparable from the Roman, and thus Christian, context in which it was first employed. ⁴⁷ From a Christian vantage, furthermore, it applies to those who rejected (and possibly crucified) Jesus, who continue in the present to reject him and his church. This context explains why its use by Christians, even if well-meaning, is so often heard by Jews as derogatory. ⁴⁸

These negative associations are further strengthened by an ancient tradition linking the people of Judea with Judas Iscariot, the only of the disciples who came from that region and who betrayed Jesus in exchange for money. "Thus the name *Jew*," Steinmetz explains, "came to be equated in popular usage with deception, rapacity, and other villainous practices, as illustrated in literature by characters like Shylock and Fagin." In the twentieth century, the yellow stars that the Nazis compelled European Jews to wear, bearing only the German word *Jude* (or in France *Juif*) and thus depriving their wearers of any semblance of individual identity or autonomy, became, as one writer says, "the most indelible image of the word 'Jew' branded in our collective memory." Given all these associations, it may not be possible for any Christian speaker, no matter how open-minded and tolerant, to fully disconnect the word from the negative connotations it inevitably evokes. ⁵¹

In the modern era, *Jew* has been largely reclaimed by Jewish users and embraced in an unambiguously positive way. Prior to the twentieth century, however, many Jews in Europe and

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⁴⁷ Steinmetz, *Dictionary of Jewish Usage*, 81.

⁴⁸ A well-known recent example occurred on December 11, 2017, when Kayla Moore, whose husband Roy was a candidate for the U.S. Senate in Alabama, tried to defend him against charges that he was anti-Semitic. "I just want to set the record straight," she said. "One of our attorneys is a Jew. We have very close friends that are Jewish and rabbis, and we also fellowship with them." The statement made Jews everywhere cringe, not only at the inevitable association of Jews and the legal profession, and at the anti-Semite's favorite defense that "some of my friends are Jewish," but at the way her Alabama accent drew the word *Jew* out into multiple syllables. Alan Blinder, "Roy Moore's Wife Says Some of the Couple's Friends Are Black or Jewish," *New York Times*, December 12, 2017, accessed May 7, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/12/us/kayla-moore-alabama.html.

⁴⁹ Steinmetz, *Dictionary of Jewish Usage*, 80.

⁵⁰ Susan Sommercamp, "'Jew.' Why does the word for a person of my religion sound like a slur?," *Washington Post*, May 3, 2016.

⁵¹ Historian Leonard Dinnerstein famously argued that it is impossible to separate anti-Semitism in general from its Christian roots, an observation that he says holds especially true in the highly Christian-identified United States. "Simply put," he writes, "Christian viewpoints underlie all American anti-Semitism. No matter what other factors or forces may have been in play at any given time the basis for prejudice toward Jews in the United States . . . must be Christian teachings." Leonard Dinnerstein, *Anti–Semitism in America* (New York, 1995), ix.

America preferred to describe themselves as *Hebrews* or *Israelites*, and many Jews even today remain uncomfortable with *Jew* and may opt to avoid it in favor of *Jewish* or some milder variant. Steinmetz observes that "some Jews are inclined to say 'We're Jewish' instead of 'We're Jews' in social situations," and he notes further that "many non-Jews are still uncomfortable using the word and prefer to say 'He's Jewish' rather than 'He's a Jew.'"⁵² Christian speakers, especially, who wish to avoid offense will often choose not to employ the word at all.⁵³ Any non-Jews, and even possibly Jews as well, who publicly use the word risk appearing impolite and insensitive, if not anti-Semitic. It is a word that well-behaved and self-disciplined speakers use cautiously and with awareness of its implications.

The ambiguities explained above pertain to *Jew* used in its simple noun form, to describe a person of the Jewish faith, whether with positive or negative intent. Additional meanings occur, however, when the word is used in other grammatical forms, and these are invariably derogatory. Its use as a verb, for example, as in *to jew, to jew down, jewed*, or *jewing*—meaning to bargain with, haggle, or cheat—derives from ancient canards about Jewish corruption and greed, almost certainly catalyzed by the depiction of Shylock in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and a long folk tradition of similar characters. ⁵⁴ Every use of such an expression is malevolent, and "most dictionaries warn readers to avoid using this verb," Steinmetz writes, although "evidence shows that even today the usage persists, if mostly in speech." It is also common for *Jew* to be deployed as an adjective, as in *Jew store* or *Jew banker*. "As an adjective," Steinmetz writes, "*Jew* is now considered derogatory. Usages like 'a Jew lawyer' or 'a Jew holiday' are offensive to Jews, and sensitive non-Jews avoid using them." ⁵⁵

Another common grammatical formulation that adds layers of meaning is the deployment of the definite article: *the Jew*. When used in reference to the Jewish people generally—"In medieval Europe the Jew made his living as a moneylender"—it has the effect of erasing differences among individuals and treating the group as an undifferentiated mass. Addressing a culturally diverse, globally dispersed people this way "becomes the facilitating device for a host of ideological projects," says Cynthia Baker.⁵⁶ That is, it is a usage with a purpose, an attempt to

⁵² Steinmetz, *Dictionary of Jewish Usage*, 80.

⁵³ Baker, *Jew*, 12.

⁵⁴ Baker, Jew, 11; Dinnerstein, Anti-Semitism in America, 22.

⁵⁵ Steinmetz, *Dictionary of Jewish Usage*, 81.

⁵⁶ Baker, *Jew*, 11.

define a diverse community of people as the speaker wishes them defined for some ideological reason. Thus *the Jew* almost always accompanies anti-Semitic stereotypes and unveiled hostility toward Jewish people. A 1938 letter to Senator William Borah of Idaho provides a succinct example: A resident of Washington, D.C., wrote to praise Borah's effort to block European Jewish refugees from entering the United States, stating that he "had twenty-five years experience with the Jew and have yet to find a good one." In contrast to German Americans, who were "clean, law-abiding, ethical in business, patriotic, and American," he claimed, "the Jew is dirty, lawless, unethical, unpatriotic and un-American." Such animus on the eve of the Holocaust is, to say the least, jarring, and this correspondent's inability (or unwillingness) to imagine the humanity and individuality of Jewish people but to see them only collectively as *the Jew* illustrates the stereotyping frame of mind that led to such a tragedy.

In such cases, *the Jew* is used collectively to describe the aggregate of the Jewish people. If applied to an individual—"Go one, and call the Jew into the court," says the duke overseeing Shylock's trial in *The Merchant of Venice*⁵⁸—it diminishes the individuality and humanity of a single person by attaching to them the perceived attributes of the group of which they are a member. It presumes the individual has no qualities other than those shared with the mass, that they are nothing more than the class they are a part of and that they represent whatever stereotypes are associated with that class. Referring to a person as *the Jew* deprives them of a name or a personality and treats them as though they are incapable of transcending their supposedly debased inherited traits. This usage is as bigoted and dehumanizing as the Nazis' yellow stars, and it serves a similar purpose.

One common anti-Semitic usage of *the Jew* remains to consider: the frequent description of Jews as "dirty" or "filthy." Although the origin of such expressions is ancient and difficult to discern, it was given a particular charge in the twentieth century: it was common for European anti-Semites, most conspicuously the Nazis, to describe Jews not only as "dirty" or "filthy" but as "parasites," "rodents," "bacteria," or "scum." All suggest a fundamental uncleanness of the Jewish body and mind, even that Jews themselves are a disease afflicting the Christian body politic. In America, furthermore, it seems likely that the attribution of uncleanness is a reference

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⁵⁷ Dinnerstein, Anti-Semitism in America, 120.

⁵⁸ William Shakespeare, "The Merchant of Venice, "accessed May 7, 2019, http://shakespeare.mit.edu/merchant/full.html, Act IV, Scene 1.

to the impoverished and crowded living conditions of the great number of Jewish immigrants who arrived in the United States beginning in the latter nineteenth century. As progressive journalist Jacob Riis reported of the New York neighborhood he dubbed "Jewtown," it was said that "nowhere in the world are so many people crowded together on a square mile as here." Overcrowding led to contagion, malnutrition, and extreme childhood mortality. "Dark hallways and filthy cellars," Riis wrote, "[are] crowded, as is every foot of the street, with dirty children."⁵⁹

Such descriptions could only have encouraged the already popular conception that Jews were themselves a dirty people. It is also possible, however, that the "dirtiness" or "filthiness" so often attributed to Jews refers less to personal hygiene or living condition than to a perceived state of the soul. As people who refused to accept the divinity of Christ—who indeed continue to deny it—Christians since the Middle Ages have imagined the Jewish soul corrupted. Thus "dirty" and "filthy" are merely amplifiers of the valence the word *Jew* already carries: a sense of otherness, imperfection, incompleteness, and a stubborn, devilish refusal to be saved.

As a similar amplifier, the term *Jewboy* may be seen at once to describe the same negative characteristics that the word *Jew* contained by itself but to add texture and nuance. As I have written elsewhere, it is "a term of belittlement that charges Jewish men with childishness, dependency, and weakness," that "evokes Jews' long history of persecution and . . . blames them for their own victimization: had they been more mature, more manly, perhaps they could have defended themselves." The Texas-Jewish country musician Kinky Friedman famously named his band the "Texas Jewboys," but he did so ironically and self-referentially as a way to reclaim and empower the word. Few users of the term are as creative and self-aware as Friedman, and it is impossible for most speakers to deploy *Jewboy* without inflicting harm.

According to Israeli journalist Chemi Shalev, who wrote about *Jewboy* for the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, the term "was imported to America at the end of the 18th century from London, where it described young Jewish boys who sold counterfeit coins." Over two centuries in America, it "joined the un-illustrious ranks" of similarly charged anti-Jewish slurs. Richard Nixon, Shalev claims, "used to summon his National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger to the

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⁵⁹ Jacob Riis, "Jewtown," in *How the Other Half Lives*, Bartleby.com, accessed May 7, 2019, https://www.bartleby.com/208/10.html.

⁶⁰ Stone, Chosen Folks, 17.

Oval Office by shouting 'Where's My Jewboy." He says, furthermore, that modern-day Israeli government officials frequently use the term (or a Hebrew translation, *yuhudon*) to describe American Jewish men who work for the American government, Jewish state department officials, for example, whom those Israelis perceive to be weak in Israel's defense. "Prime Minister Netanyahu himself used a well-known variation of 'Yehudon' when he reportedly described White House advisers David Axelrod and Rahm Emanuel as 'self-hating Jews' in 2009." It is therefore not hard to imagine, in this context, that *Jewboy* could be deployed by non-Jewish advocates of Israel, American conservatives or religious evangelicals whose alliances with Israel (and with Netanyahu) grow stronger by the day. What Netanyahu can say in Hebrew, we may expect American conservatives soon enough to say in English.

All of the usages described here—Jew as a noun, adjective or verb; the Jew; and Jewboy—are either plainly or potentially derogatory. All but Jew itself should be entirely avoided if the speaker wishes to avoid offense, and Jew should be used, especially by non-Jews, with the utmost caution and awareness of how it might be heard. Like so many derogatory terms for other cultural and ethnic groups, the offensiveness of these terms does not, of course, mean that they are not in common use: they are, in fact, heard quite often by those who are unafraid to offend, who intend to offend, or who imagine themselves to be only in the company of listeners who will not be offended. Any public, open use of such terms, therefore, such as those witnesses have attributed to Vickers Cunningham, warrants the suspicion that the speaker is unconcerned about giving offense, wishes to give offense, or is too undisciplined in their speech and thought to avoid giving offense.

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⁶¹ Chemi Shalev, "Israeli Anti-Semites and American Jewboys, from Dan Shapiro to Wyatt Earp," *Haaretz*, January 22, 2016, accessed May 6, 2019, https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-israeli-anti-semites-and-american-jewboys-1.5394076.

I hold all the views expressed here to a reasonable degree of historical certainty and would testify to each if asked to do so.

Respectfully submitted,

By a d. Star

Bryan Edward Stone, Ph.D.

May 15, 2019

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