



SEGREGATION
IS
MORALLY
WRONG

NOT TOLERATED
DESEGREGATION
SEGREGATION
IS
MORALLY
WRONG

AMERICA
IS
SHAMED
BY
MARYLAND
DISCRIMINATION

SEGREGATION
IS
MORALLY
WRONG

LET'S
END
SEGREGATION

LET'S
END
RACISM
IN
AMERICA
NOW

LET'S
END
SEGREGATION

White Sales: The Racial Politics of Baltimore's Jewish-Owned Department Stores, 1935–1965

Paul A. Kramer, Department of History, The Johns Hopkins University

MRS. ELIZABETH T. MEIJER OF NORTH AVENUE WAS OUTRAGED. One afternoon in mid-August 1948, she had met a friend, “the wife of one of our most prominent young colored professional men,” to go shopping.¹ Mrs. Meijer herself was white and apparently something of an activist, and the outing had turned into a protest for both women. Aware of the rarity of middle-class friendships between blacks and whites in Baltimore, Mrs. Meijer had carefully noted the treatment they had received at the various downtown stores they had visited. She was surprised that they had been “treated very politely” at several stores, although she suspected “this may have been due to the mistaken idea that we were mistress and maid.”² At Hochschild Kohn’s, however, they had been greeted in what she considered a “very undemocratic, discourteous way.”

Her friend, “Mrs. X,” had purchased a gold chain belt on the main floor and been told by a white saleslady that the purchase was final; when Mrs. X asked why, as it was not on special sale, the “rather embarrassed” clerk stated that this was an all-store policy.

Both Mrs. X and Mrs. Meijer knew better; the rule came down “like a slap in the face.” Together, the women planned a test: Mrs. Meijer returned with the belt the following day and asked the same woman if she could return it. She was told, “yes, certainly,” leaving “no doubt” that the “final sale” policy had been imposed for racist reasons. Angrily, she fired off a hand-written letter of protest to Walter Sondheim, Jr., the store’s manager (and, in the process, into the historical record), demanding an explanation. Among other things, she stated that the store policy was embarrassing for Baltimore. Mrs. Meijer, it seems, had carried out similar tests elsewhere. “I traveled through Virginia and Tennessee this summer,” she wrote, “but found no such discrimination there in the best stores.” At a national conference she had attended the previous year, “your undemocratic store attitude came up for discussion as people all over had heard about it.” “There are few discriminations which annoy our respectable colored citizens more than the attitude towards them in the department stores,” she wrote. “Is it necessary to hand them this insult in every over the counter sale?”

Despite Mrs. Meijer’s effort to portray Hochschild Kohn’s policy as especially offensive, both women knew that there was nothing at all exceptional about the discrimination “Mrs. X” had met

Demonstrators gathered at Cornerstone Baptist Church, 1600 Bolton Street, protesting segregation policies in Baltimore, November 11, 1961. Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

at the sales counter. Baltimore—both before the 1940s and long after—was a city split by race, in many ways the northernmost urban outpost of segregationist culture, or “Jim Crow,” as it was called. Baltimore differed somewhat from other Southern cities in its racist practices; African-Americans could vote, for example, and city public transportation was not segregated. Nonetheless, department store policies were only some of Jim Crow’s many ugly faces in Baltimore, alongside racially segregated swimming pools, tennis courts, amusement parks, hotels, and coffee shops: in a 1955 survey, 91% of 191 randomly-selected Baltimore businesses reported either the “exclusion” or “segregation” of blacks.³ Sharply segregated and unequally funded city public schools subsidized institutional racism and limited black occupational opportunities and outcomes. Race was powerfully marked in the workplace, where employers and labor unions traditionally closed black workers out of more highly skilled and better-paying jobs, including those in city government.⁴ Blacks were regularly harassed, attacked, and sometimes killed by white police officers on apparently racial grounds. Racial lines were drawn in residence patterns, with restrictive covenants and mob violence (conspiring with black poverty) confining Baltimore’s growing black population to congested, under-served, and disease-prone ghettos on the city’s West and East sides.⁵ Unwilling to take any chances with real-estate markets based solely on income, white politicians in the 1910s had even pushed through the U.S.’s first municipal ordinance licensing residential city blocks by race, although it had been quickly struck down by the U. S. Supreme Court.⁶ Baltimore’s department store discrimination, then, was only one thread in a dense fabric of racial exclusion. But department stores, as the centerpieces of Baltimore’s consumer culture, put racism on display like few other institutions. As the 1955 report stated, public accom-

modations like department stores were not only “the principal purveyors of goods and services,” but “the sensitive areas of public life around which issues of racial discrimination have long existed.”⁷ Indeed, the report claimed, “[m]ore than any other aspect of city life perhaps, these establishments provide the stage for current and daily race relationships.”⁸

In this light, the fact that four out of five of Baltimore’s major department stores were owned by Jewish families was highly significant. It makes the story of department store segregation a complex triangle of Jews, blacks, and non-Jewish whites, in which each group simultaneously defined itself and defended its perceived interests and rights. The story brings together, and into collision, many of the characteristic players and forces of 20th-century metropolitan America: African-Americans, Jewish-Americans, the rise of consumer culture, the advent of civil rights movements. It is also a story with features specific to Baltimore: a politically organized black middle class; black and white urban communities still closely tied to rural migrant cultures; racial traditions normally associated with the “Deep” South.

Blacks, Jews and non-Jewish whites approached the store segregation practices from different angles of vision. For black customers, department store segregation was merely one of many racial barriers, but one that disproportionately affected the black middle class and could be challenged on social class terms. Eager to use their class privilege to overthrow racist structures, they gathered every resource possible including, in the pre-World War II period, the Jewishness of the store’s owners. For Jewish owners, the stores were profitable business ventures that relied upon, and in turn perpetuated, a racially divided marketplace: while many Jews had absorbed anti-black racism as part of their own “assimilation” into American culture, they also lent it impetus by serving as agents of segregation, “whitening” themselves in

the process. For most non-Jewish whites, the stores were retailers of racial identity as well as consumer goods and services, places where their own racial worth was established and, when the stores were challenged by protest, where it would be defended.

Along with racial, religious and class divisions, gender divisions are central to this story. Consumer politics of the kind described here were predominantly women's politics. Middle-class women were the primary consumers of goods and services in department stores and the target audience for their advertising and promotional machinery. The stores' dining rooms were important spaces of daytime female sociability, both among housewives and among the growing ranks of female professionals. When they entered the stores to shop, middle-class women also encountered a largely female sales force which, while upper working-class or lower middle-class, was trained to reflect, cultivate, and encourage middle-class women's tastes.⁹ Class politics were always embedded in these encounters: when black customers like "Mrs. X" were refused service, they were being snubbed by women whom they often considered their inferiors.

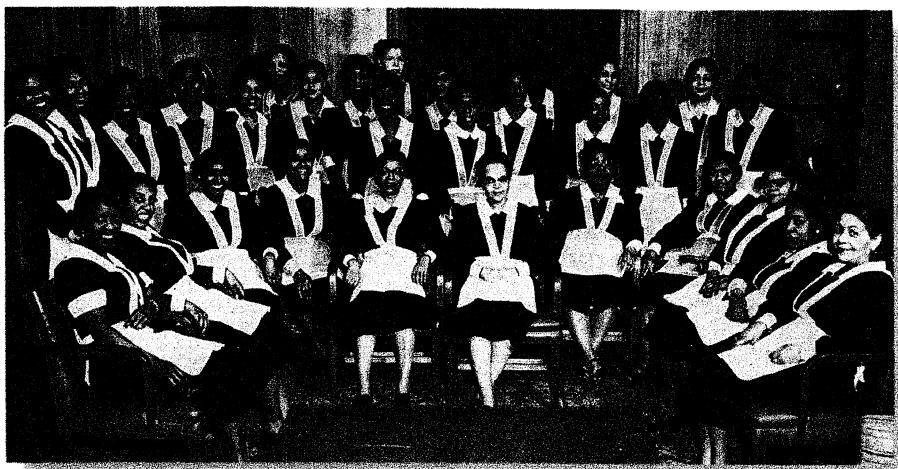
Much of the protest against department store segregation was also instigated by women. While some men undertook activist efforts, these tended to take the form of private negotiations between "gentlemen" in business and elite, male-dominated civil rights organizations. Most of the impulse for change, however, derived from women's actions. While this fact was due in large part to women's dominance over the consumer sphere in general, it was also because the peculiar slights of consumer segregation, especially where they hinged on racist questions of bodily hygiene, were a direct assault on black women's claims to respectable femininity. If segregation was enforced by female clerks, however, its defense fell to male managers and owners: when

women contested department store segregation, they were confronting some of Baltimore's most powerful men. Protest against store segregation—from the angry letters sent to the stores' male management, to personal visits by NAACP President Lillie Mae Jackson, to the eventual mass mobilization of clubs and church congregations—needs to be seen not only as part of an anti-racist struggle but as part of a mid-century culture of women's politics that included both white and African-American women.

The story here has two main acts, with a key turning point between them. The first begins in the 1930s, when Baltimore's black middle class organized the first protests against commercial segregation, through picketing for employment and a back-room lobbying campaign against store segregation in general. The fact of Jewish ownership of department stores in Baltimore was important to these pressure campaigns. Jews were especially vulnerable to accusations that racial segregation mimicked Nazi racism, and Jews came to fear that black protest against the stores would take specifically anti-Semitic forms. Despite some gains, however, the overall integration of the stores failed.

The turning point is World War II which transformed the social and political landscape of Baltimore in ways favorable to desegregation. The war mobilization triggered a large influx of black laborers into the city and its wartime industries, providing civil rights activists the opportunity to press for equal rights in government employment and to hold up blacks' sacrifices for and contributions to the war effort. Where it was achieved, black industrial employment also provided the base for an expanding black middle class in the city.

The second act covers the period from 1945 to 1960, when public protest against department store segregation resumed and, ultimately, succeeded. This was a period of rising expectations among blacks, especially for a younger gen-



Black employees at Hutzler's, as pictured in Tips and Taps, April 1954. Before 1959, Baltimore's department stores employed African-Americans as maintenance and stockroom workers, elevator operators, porters and restroom attendants, but excluded them from higher-paying jobs in sales and management. Gift of Hutzler's.



eration of college students. A growing sense of consumer entitlement coincided with, and lent momentum to, visible successes in integration, especially in public schools. Store segregation practices began to give way in the late 1950s under pressure from the Baltimore Chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) but were only ended in their entirety when Morgan State students in the Civic Interest Group (CIG) organized a sit-in campaign in March–April 1960. The protests brought the ugly logic of segregation to the surface. Hundreds of letters for and against integration,

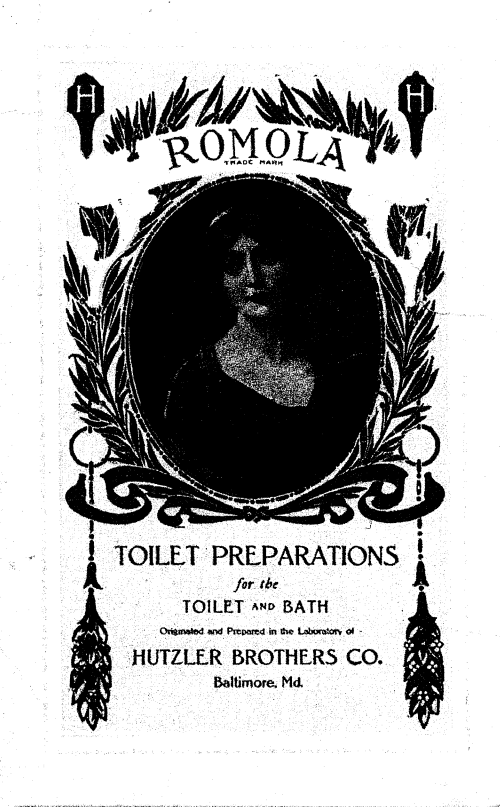
which I'll explore, illustrate how important the stores had been in marking and dispensing racial privilege all along. But interestingly, in this latter campaign the Jewish identity of the stores' owners no longer appeared to matter. This fact suggests that the war had played very different roles in the black and Jewish communities: while the war had in some ways sharpened black political identity, it may have blurred aspects of Jewish identity and encouraged Jews to see themselves as "white." The story of Jews' adoption of a "white" identity was complex and far larger than that of the department stores, but commercial segregation by Jews certainly played a part in it. By offering to sell white Baltimoreans racial privilege through exclusionary policies, Jews were able to shore up their own racial identity as "white" people, eventually able to join a "mainstream" that remained (and remains) unavailable to most blacks.

It is important to point out that while Hochschild Kohn's plays a larger role in this story than its rivals, it is not because the store was more racist than others: it is, rather, because the store's manager, Walter Sondheim, Jr., kept a file folder of correspondence and memoranda regarding the store's racial politics which have become unique primary sources and because, as the first to integrate, the store was the focus of special debate and discussion.

Race was marked in department store culture in a wide variety of ways.¹⁰ As in other workplaces, black employees, even those advanced in age, were referred to by their first names rather than as "Mr." or "Mrs." White clerks would not serve blacks at lunch-counters or the beauty shop. Some of the stores marked black credit accounts with a star in store ledgers to distinguish them from white accounts or denied blacks credit entirely. Race also animated commercial imagery in advertising and packaging. In

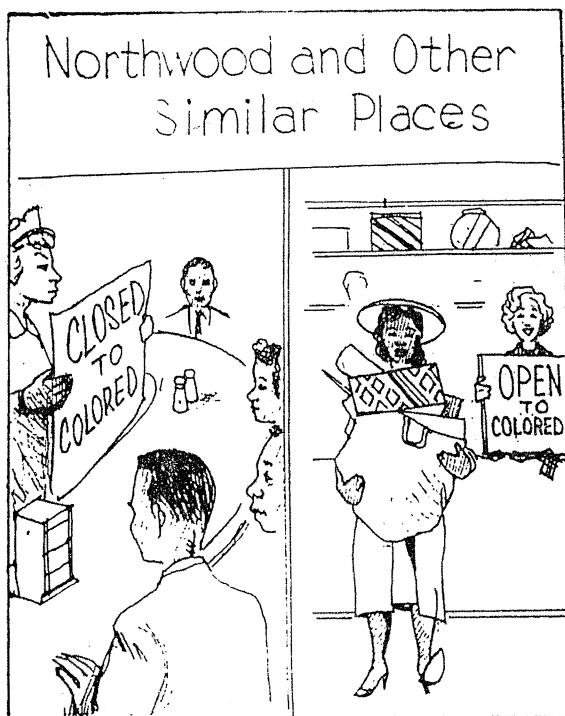
1950, Baltimore's Thanksgiving "toyland parade" featured a Hochschild Kohn's float with two blackface minstrel characters, which prompted Urban League Executive Director Furman Templeton to protest "their outlandish makeup, nondescript clothing and idiotic antics."¹¹ In the case of Hochschild-Kohn, there were three principal aspects of the store's racial practices, which appear to have been common to all of Baltimore's department stores. First was discrimination in employment: blacks were hired as maintenance and stockroom workers, elevator operators, porters, and restroom attendants but barred from high-paying and higher-status jobs in management or sales. Second was the refusal to serve black patrons at the department store's lunch counter. Third—and most inflammatory to black consumers—were policies that prohibited blacks from trying on clothing in the store and from returning clothes after purchase. Sales clerks were instructed to write "Final Sale" on the receipts of black customers.

These forms of discrimination had deep roots in Baltimore and in wider Southern sensibilities and practices. Barring blacks from "white-collar" department store jobs allowed employers to reserve jobs for other whites, especially friends and associates, in times of job scarcity, especially during the Depression. Within the context of department store managerial culture, job discrimination drew on widespread racist assumptions about black intelligence, competence, honesty and decorum. A kind of racist aesthetic also likely played a role: department stores were places where dreams of class mobility and endless material prosperity glowed from racks of elegant clothing and wafted from perfume counters. In complex ways, this particular dream-world was an exclusively white utopia, tied to notions of racial order and purity. Although in theory black salespeople would pose little threat to everyday white authority (since salespeople were all trained to be somewhat servile), managers assumed, rightly or wrongly, that white consumers would find their fantasies upset by a black sales presence.



Early advertisement depicting the target consumer, 1895. While department stores allowed African-Americans to make purchases, they sold white consumers racist notions of purity and "hygiene" that, under segregation, included restrictions on try-on and return privileges for black consumers.

Prohibitions on lunch counter service and the "Final Sale" rule had similar origins. At root they were about bodies: the segregationist world, including Baltimore's, was one that hinged on anxieties and fears about physical contact between whites and blacks. For most whites, blacks represented sources of unspecified physical and moral pollution. Whereas a wide variety of institutions worked to keep white and black people physically apart, the department store (because of growing black purchasing power) was a place that threatened to bring them together, at least within the middle class. Black and white bodies might "touch" in the exchange of forks and plates at store lunch-counters. Even more threatening to whites was the possibility that the clothes they tried on or purchased might bear an invisible taint of black physical contact. In a 1956 letter to the Vice



This drawing, printed in the *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 19, 1960, comments ironically on the contradiction between the department stores' courtship of black consumers and their simultaneous exclusion of blacks from lunch-counters. Courtesy of the *Afro-American Newspapers Archives and Research Center*.

paranoia extended even to self-conscious liberals. An officer of the Urban League, a “very active person in the integration cause,” confessed to him that when he shopped at Hamburger’s, an upper-class men’s store that did not racially discriminate, “I have a feeling when I try on clothes that I know have been tried on by a black customer.”¹² When the Baltimore NAACP fought state Jim Crow laws in early 1943, the repeal bill was sent to the State Legislature’s “Hygiene Committee” (where it not surprisingly died) rather than its Judiciary Committee.¹⁴

Where white consumers saw segregation and “purity” of purchase as a consumer right, black middle-class consumers like Murphy felt their rights violated by it. Many Deep South cities had black middle classes by the 1940s. Baltimore—which had had the largest free black community before the Civil War—had one of the best organized.

President of Hochschild Kohn’s, Mrs. Madeline W. Murphy protested the “Final Sale” policy charging that blacks, while allowed to try on dresses, coats and shoes, were not allowed to try on “intimate apparel, nor hats,” because of racist assumptions that “Negroes are not bodily clean, have some sort of disease or that their hair is objectionable to the point of being unsanitary.”¹² According to Walter Sondheim, Jr., this bodily

Baltimore was the home to doctors, lawyers, journalists, ministers, landlords, and small-businessmen, living close to working-class blacks because of racial segregation. Mrs. Meijer had noted, for example, that her friend’s husband had been “one of our most prominent young colored professional men”—“if I mentioned his name I am sure you’ll know him personally and respect him.” Baltimore blacks built a rich cultural sphere within the limits of Jim Crow, from schools like Frederick Douglass High School and Booker T. Washington Junior High School to a black YMCA, Colored Symphony Orchestra, and the Royal Theater.¹⁵

The community’s thick network of churches, the *Baltimore Afro-American* (one of the United States’ leading black newspapers), and one of the three largest chapters of the NAACP (along with Chicago and Detroit) brought together black middle-class professionals and the black working class in an infrastructure for civil rights protest.¹⁶ Anti-lynching protest challenged the infamous racist violence of Maryland’s rural Eastern Shore. In 1933–4, middle-class black youth, black churches, the *Afro-American*, and the revitalized NAACP under charismatic President Lillie Mae Jackson, had successfully protested the firing of black employees in white-owned stores by launching a “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” boycott and picketing campaign, similar to those in New York and Detroit.¹⁷

The downtown department stores, as some of Baltimore’s most prominent sites of civic culture and modernity, were a principal target for anti-racist protests by individuals and organizations from the 1930s through the early 1960s.¹⁸ Many black middle-class consumers protested individually by asserting their class status and a sense of consumer entitlement. As among whites, the black middle class defined itself by exclusive modes of dress and expensive standards of appearance and hygiene (the tools for which were sold in the department stores themselves). Affronted by racist notions of

black filth and disease, black consumers often attempted to trump them with class standards. Murphy, for example, wrote that “not only [do I] feel equal to the average Hochschild Kohn’s consumers, but I feel superior to them...”

I am sure also that you know that there are certain gentiles and Jews commonly known as trash who are infinitely dirtier, more unkempt and repulsive than those with whom you may come in contact from day to day. And yet some of these are your customers and are allowed to use every facility of your store—white skin and straight hair being their only prerequisite—even though lice are generally a malady of straight haired people and not Negroes.¹⁹

Those who could afford to do so protested by making shopping trips to Philadelphia and New York, which, while inconvenient, meant avoiding the indignities of racial segregation in Baltimore.

But the department stores’ racial policies also attracted larger organizational protests. In mid-1938, the Baltimore chapter of the Urban League and the Baltimore and national offices of the NAACP, including national President Walter White, initiated behind-the-scenes conversations and letter exchanges. For the next two years, officers of both organizations tried to meet with the store managers to discuss what they called “acute discriminatory policies.” Lillie Mae Jackson apparently made several personal visits to Walter Sondheim, Jr.’s office. “Ms. Jackson, she was tough,” recalled Mr. Sondheim, “I knew her quite well. She would come in and really give me hell.”²⁰ Responding to angry letters in the *Afro-American*, Baltimore Urban League Executive Secretary Edward Lewis wrote to various store managers and owners that “we ought to be able to do something about this situation before we have any public incidents.”²¹ He may have been thinking of Harlem where, in March



Sign at an Annapolis beach club. In ways very different from African-Americans, Jews themselves faced racial discrimination, especially in upper-class neighborhoods and elite colleges, clubs and resorts.

1935, extreme poverty had sparked rioting by African-Americans against local stores, including Jewish-owned stores; the riots were interpreted by many as anti-Semitic.

Over the next few months, Lewis himself undertook negotiations, with limited success. When, at one such meeting, he apparently pressured Stewart and Co. through the Retail Merchants Association, its President, Thomas P. Abbott, countered that the RMA had “no control over the policies of their individual store members...”²² Lewis was undaunted, writing Walter Sondheim, Jr. (who was personally sympathetic to the cause) that “the gentlemen are dodging the issue,” but that he would “find it difficult to take a complete licking on this proposition.” Among other things, he appealed to local pride, noting that it was a shame “to allow an admittedly small minority of people to give Baltimore such an *unique reputation*.”²³

By mid-1940, Lewis reported multiple meetings with Abbott, Gutman, Hutzler, and Walter Sondheim, Jr., but without “one ray of hope...”²⁴ Each owner urged the campaigners to consult with the others. Abbott had apparently suggested at one point an “educational program” designed to to “work on other forms of racial discrimination in Baltimore, and try to change the social attitudes of the whole community, before tackling the present discriminatory practices in the stores.”²⁵ By June, the back-room campaign was declared a failure. “Our negotiations have reached the point of ‘diminishing returns,’” stated an Urban League report, “and the Secretary feels that it is now time to refer this matter to other active groups which are seriously concerned with this critical issue.”²⁶ After two years of getting the run-around, Lewis’ frustration was palpable. “I am ready to wash my hands of the whole damn business...” he wrote White.²⁷

What, if anything, did Jewish ownership and racial segregation have to do with each other? The question requires a broader examination of the particular ways that blacks and Jews encountered each other in early and mid-20th century urban America, and the numerous points of confluence and conflict between them. Especially after World War I, Jews and blacks met each other in Northern industrial cities as neighbors and customers, employers and employees, landlords and tenants. Conflict was embedded in many of these relationships, but there were also structural and cultural commonalities drawing the groups together.²⁸ In structural terms, Jews and blacks were primarily recent arrivals to urban, industrial America; both faced forms of discrimination, although of widely different kinds and intensities. In response, Jewish and black leaders traded strategies of anti-racist mobilization and “assimilation” when confronted with white racism and nativism.²⁹ Both groups also developed diasporic colonization movements in the United States, with Garveyism promoting

a black return to Africa, and Zionism a Jewish return to Palestine.³⁰ In religious terms, Jews and blacks had the Old Testament in common, especially the Exodus narrative that was central to black theology. Jews and blacks also had performance traditions that would fuse richly in new urban cultures, especially in jazz.

Moreover, Jews themselves were not entirely “white” in early 20th-century America. Contrary to the way we normally think about race, being “white” was not just about perceived skin-color or other physical features. It also meant demonstrating a cluster of behaviors, attitudes, sensibilities, and tastes—many of them middle-class—and receiving in turn a whole package of social, political and economic privileges.³¹ Before World War II, Jews’ status as whites was precarious: early 20th-century American racists saw Jewish immigration (along with Italian and Eastern European) as an explicitly “racial” threat, eventually barring most Southern and Eastern European immigration on “racial” grounds. Jews in Baltimore sometimes had the dubious distinction of joining blacks on the signs posted outside of WASP clubs and swimming pools: “No Jews, blacks or dogs.” A chapter of the anti-Semitic German-American Bund set up shop in Baltimore during the 1930s, as did the populist demagogue and anti-Semite Father Coughlin, who opened a branch office on Calvert St. in 1936.³²

As elsewhere, Jews entered into commercial occupations in part because they were formally and informally shut out of other economic sectors. But because of their occupational skills, economic resources, and education levels, Jews were upwardly mobile in Baltimore.³³ According to one mid-1930s survey, 35–40% of the city’s Jewish workforce was engaged in non-manufacturing commercial occupations, a rate three times higher than that of the general population.³⁴ Especially for prosperous and assimilated German Jews, which included

the department store-owners, the frontier of anti-Semitic exclusion was high in the class scale. By both formal and informal “gentlemen’s agreements,” Jews were kept out of elite neighborhoods, schools, clubs, and resorts, as well as high-level finance and much of industry. Roland Park’s exclusion of wealthy German Jews was infamous. The Johns Hopkins University, while it allowed Jews to enter as undergraduates, set quotas for Jewish admission to its medical school.³⁵

Baltimore’s Jews were no more nor less racist than other Baltimoreans. In actuality, they played a small role in the overall structures of anti-black racism in Baltimore and elsewhere. Roughly 8.5% of Baltimore’s population in 1940, Jews controlled or participated in only a small fraction of the institutions that exercised racial discrimination against blacks.³⁶ At the same time, Jews figured prominently in a number of Baltimore philanthropies directed at African-Americans, as well as early anti-racist organizations such as the Urban League. But, as elsewhere, most blacks and Jews related through a kind of intimate antagonism. If they did not necessarily finance them, Jews owned the shops in which blacks shopped and worked; if they did not own apartment houses, Jews were often the rental agents who black tenants confronted over payments and repairs. Because of housing segregation practices, blacks and Jews also tended to be residentially closer to each other, with the aspiring black middle class moving gradually into suburban homes formerly owned by Jews who, like other whites, often retreated in their wake. The social line between the Jewish middle class and the black middle class, each excluded from above, each pushing its way out of racial and class stigmas and restrictions, was likely to be volatile. The department store, where Jewish managers and black customers faced off across counters, was located on that line. But because department stores were among the most visible sites of segregation, and because four of five

major department stores in Baltimore were owned by Jewish families, Jews ran the risk of being seen as the instigators of much broader patterns of racial segregation for which they had little if any direct responsibility. Since Jews might appear as the public face of racial discrimination against blacks, anti-racist civil rights protest might, in the context of Baltimore, turn anti-Semitic.

This fear was especially pronounced in the late-1930s given the increasing attention paid to Nazi anti-Semitism and the growth of fascist societies in the United States. Indeed, the Baltimore Urban League reported that its late-1930s campaign with the NAACP had been an effort to secure “an adjustment of this problem because of its potential danger in increasing anti-semitism among Negroes.” This was perceived as being especially important in light of the potentially destabilizing effects of the European war. “In view of the present international crisis,” the League concluded in 1940, “it seems extremely important that we work diligently to prevent any incidents which may tend to bring about an open conflict between minority groups in Baltimore.”³⁷ Often-times, concerns about black anti-Semitism were stronger than the condemnations of department store segregation itself. In these instances, fears of black anti-Semitism could easily blend with broader racist fears of black violence and national disloyalty that would become evident during World War II.³⁸ Outside the African-American community, no one appeared as concerned about Jewish racism’s threat to the social order, relative to that of black anti-Semitism.

It remains unclear to what extent fears of black anti-Semitism in Baltimore were justified, but there were at least a few frightening signs. In an anxious February 1936 letter to the NAACP journal *The Crisis*, Rabbi Edward Israel noted that the issue of Jewish discrimination had been raised in response to a recent public address he had given at a “Negro

forum” on the topic “Germany’s Treatment of the Jews: Is it Justified?” After the meeting, he recalled, a young black woman had asked him “why it was that since the Jews controlled most of the money in the United States of America, they didn’t use that financial power to better the condition of the Negro.”³⁹ No less a figure than Lillie Mae Jackson herself, in responding to Rabbi Israel, had explicitly tied racism to Jewish ownership, noting that “[w]hen the Gentiles owned most of the large stores downtown... there was no such thing as Negroes not being able to buy in any of the stores.” Furthermore, she attributed racial policies to a business conspiracy among Jews: the larger stores, by blocking black consumers, forced them into the smaller stores of “the poorer Jewish merchants... which the Negroes find selling mostly all ‘seconds’ and their goods sell higher.”⁴⁰ Jackson was not, however, able to explain why Stewart and Co., owned by non-Jews, enforced its equally segregationist policy.

The fact of Jewish store ownership meant, however, that there were unique moral levers that could be brought to bear against segregation by virtue of Jews’ own oppression throughout history. From the late-1930s through the mid-1950s, black and Jewish opponents of department store segregation held Jews to a higher moral standard because of their own oppression by the Nazis, using comparisons with Nazism as a weapon against department store segregation. Oscar Lapirow of Washington, D. C., for example, wrote to Baltimore’s B’nai Brith chapter in April 1939 complaining that back-room negotiations had still brought no improvement in “the Hitlerite attitude of certain Jewish owned Baltimore department stores.”⁴¹ Many others shared this particular line of criticism. “I suggest, Mr. Kohn,” wrote Madeline Murphy, “that you and your management, believe Adolf Hitler was right in his espousal of the Master race theory and that you believe prejudice should continue to be a

part of the American scheme of things here in Baltimore. Otherwise, you would do something to stop it.”⁴² “It is remarkable,” wrote Frederick Dedmond to the Hochschild Kohn’s credit manager in March 1950,

*that Jews, the most universally hated people on the face of the whole earth, would take the lead in persecuting Negroes [by] refusing them the same accommodations extended to other customers. It is such men as you that make it impossible to establish conditions of peace after such a great World War. It is such men as you that prevent Baltimore from becoming an American city.*⁴³

Along these lines, black civil rights leaders on more than one occasion attempted to use rabbinic leverage against Jewish segregationists. In September 1940, for example, young civil rights leader Juanita Jackson (daughter of Lillie Mae Jackson) attempted to contact a rabbi with whom Albert Hutzler was acquainted, who had apparently warned him of a threatened boycott.⁴⁴ That same year, Lillie Mae Jackson learned that a black music teacher had been prohibited from buying concert tickets for her students. “I immediately got busy,” she reported, “and called Rabbi Lazaron and Rabbi Israel acquainting them with same as it was a Mr. Myersburg, a Jew, who was in charge here in Baltimore.”⁴⁵

Others took pains to demonstrate that there was nothing especially Jewish about segregation in Jewish-owned stores: in practicing segregation, Jews were merely showing themselves to be typical white Marylanders and Americans. “Of course, I realize that these misguided people are merely following the vicious Maryland tradition of Negro discrimination,” wrote Lapirow. “[T]here are all sorts of Jews and we cannot condemn the entire Hebrew race for the intolerance of a few...”⁴⁶ Rabbi Israel had noted that while Jews discriminated against blacks in department stores “in one or two instances,” others had “no such attitude” and that “the

department stores controlled by non-Jews almost universally exclude Negroes.”⁴⁷ It was also true, he stated, that it was the “90 percent non-Jewish trade which was primarily responsible for this anti-Negro stand,” and that “the real solution of the Negro problem lay not with the Jewish minority but with the anti-Negro Gentile majority...” The Baltimore Jewish Council noted that “[t]he treatment accorded Negroes in the commercial life of the city is but one aspect of the large problem of general negro-white relationships and cannot be constructively considered independently.” It called for an “attack upon this specific problem” tied to “a larger effort—community wide in scope—whose objective will be to improve every area of negro-white relationships in the interest of a democratic society.” Importantly, the Council stated that its concern arose

*not only from our concern for the existence of anti-Jewish feeling in the negro community, but from our sincere conviction that the democratic basis of our common national life is menaced by the existence anywhere and everywhere of prejudice and discrimination.*⁴⁸

The debate raised the question of where segregationist policy originated within the hierarchy of the department stores themselves. It was hardly surprising that many of the protest letters by black consumers took the form of inquiries as to whether discriminatory policies were simply the actions of individual racist clerks or formal rules handed down by management. Eager to target specific figures, critics like Lillie Mae Jackson tied the policies to management and ownership (and, in her case, to specifically Jewish owners.) Madeline Murphy suspected it came from floor supervisors, while the “salesgirls,” “being human and unwilling to humiliate any customer, being very anxious to make a sale” might “allow a Negro to break the rule and to try on....”⁴⁹ Ms. B. M.

Phillips, assistant managing editor of the *Baltimore Afro-American*, wrote Irving Kohn in June 1947 “anxious to know” whether, in marking “Final” on her blouse receipt, a sales clerk was “expressing the policy of Hochschild-Kohn or whether it was her own idea.”⁵⁰ When Sondheim, Jr. wrote back inviting Phillips to his office to discuss the matter in person, she refused, countering that “these questions call for a direct answer.” “If this is a company policy, there is nothing you and I can say to each other personally which would alter it.” She furthermore had difficulty believing that a company that had been in business successfully fifty years “dilly dallied with important matters of this kind.”⁵¹

The most common response by the owners was an argument for racist consumer democracy: the owners simply sold consumers what they wanted, and white consumers in Baltimore wanted segregated stores. “While it is true that some of the major stores involved are owned by Jews,” stated a Jewish leader in an unsigned memo, “in this situation they are acting as merchants who base their policies upon their estimation of the consuming public’s wishes.”⁵² He went on to argue that “there was no personal prejudice on the part of the department store owners”; they were merely “concerned only in meeting the wishes of their customers and it was their definite feeling that the present practice was the one that would be insisted upon by the public.” As evidence he related a second-hand story about “a Gentile salesgirl” employed at the Gutman’s cosmetic counter, which apparently served whites and blacks equally. After switching employment to the May Co., she

...noticed as steady customers there many people who had come in only once to the Gutman counter and who, in her opinion, had evidently objected to the services of negroes and had therefore changed their patronage to the May Co.

The memo went on to suggest that it would be “helpful to test the sentiment of the consuming public so that if department store owners were misjudging the feeling, steps could be taken to change the practices in their stores.”

The unstated principle that went along with the argument for consumer democracy was that department store racism in the Baltimore context was profitable, as well as popular. Throughout the segregation period, Baltimore’s downtown department stores were highly competitive, constantly seeking small margins of business advantage in purchasing, labor costs, and marketing. Given the degree to which segregation had become embedded in the very way that whites thought about consumer privilege, especially in terms of racial “hygiene,” removal of racist policies was perceived to be a great financial risk. Any store that unilaterally moved toward equal treatment, it was believed, would court economic ruin, white boycotts, and the closing of credit accounts by white customers. It was clear to critics from early on that a joint strategy was needed to move the department stores toward integration as a bloc.

World War II dramatically changed the demographic and political landscape of Baltimore. A significant port city, Baltimore was the site of steel, shipbuilding and aircraft industries that received millions of dollars in federal defense contracts, while clothing, food, and alcohol production facilities were retooled for military uses. Wartime industrial expansion attracted tens of thousands of black and white workers to the city from the upper South, especially from rural Maryland, West Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Tennessee. At the peak of the migration, over 4,000 arrived per month; Baltimore’s total population grew 15% in four years, and its black population 25%, comprising one-

quarter of the city by war’s end.⁵³ But while disproportionate in their arrival, black migrants to Jim Crow Baltimore were unable to take equal advantage of widening employment opportunities. Most defense contractors were reluctant to hire blacks and those who did were unwilling to let them advance into higher-paying jobs. Many unions refused to organize blacks and even struck when they were given training for higher-skilled work.

The expansion of government activity, the growth of the black population and deepening racial tensions provided civil rights organizations new impetus and opportunity to mobilize. In the mid-1940s, the Baltimore chapter of the NAACP conducted active membership drives directed at the new black working class, fighting for equal access to war work with both management and unions, demanding adequate housing for black workers, intervening to prevent race riots, combating army segregation, and registering voters. Emboldened NAACP activists even pressed unsuccessfully for a wartime repeal of Jim Crow laws by the Maryland legislature, enlisting railroad executives who claimed that such regulations “made the handling of traffic during these war times much more difficult.”⁵⁴

In this climate, the question of department store segregation was once again on the table. A committee of civil rights leaders met in February 1943 with J. W. Mehling, Secretary of the Retail Merchants Association, and “placed before him a program of action which we hope will remove the unwritten policy of discrimination by some department stores in Baltimore,” although they urged “that there be no public discussion of this campaign at present.”⁵⁵ Mehling promised to present the recommendations before the RMA, but there was no apparent change. And with so much else demanding activists’ limited resources—job discrimination, police harassment, racial violence, collapsing housing and

health infrastructure—resistance to department store segregation necessarily fell into the background.

But wartime changes generated the conditions for renewed attention to commercial segregation. Most important was the expansion of black spending power in Baltimore, brought about through the general growth of the community, and black industrial employment in wartime industries. “I should think that there is high hope of capitalizing upon the increased income of the Sparrows Point workers,” NAACP worker Ella Baker had written of recruitment drives as early as 1941.⁵⁶ By the early 1950s, blacks were still confined to the lowest-paid segments of the Baltimore workforce and to the oldest and most deteriorated portions of the city, but they were nonetheless able to participate in the expansive postwar consumer economy. In lodging her protest in 1948, Madeline Murphy had argued that eventually segregation would simply be bad for business. As evidence, she cited an article in *Fortune* magazine trumpeting growing black consumer power—with black after-tax income multiplying five times in the previous 20 years—and noted that “Negro purchasing power cannot be overlooked in the economy of this or any city if downtown shopping is to be maintained.”⁵⁷ In the postwar era, many blacks came to define their politics in terms of securing access to consumer prosperity. “People are buying everything else they want—liquor, autos, cosmetics, clothes,” stated an NAACP memo on recruitment tactics, “they can also buy what they need—freedom, at the minimum price.”⁵⁸ As this quotation suggested, if the NAACP’s wartime concerns had been those of laborers—jobs, wages, housing—the postwar period saw a shift toward the concerns of consumers. Indeed, the NAACP itself came to be reimagined as just another consumer item. “The NAACP is a product which has proven its worth,” read the memo. “But like Dial Soap

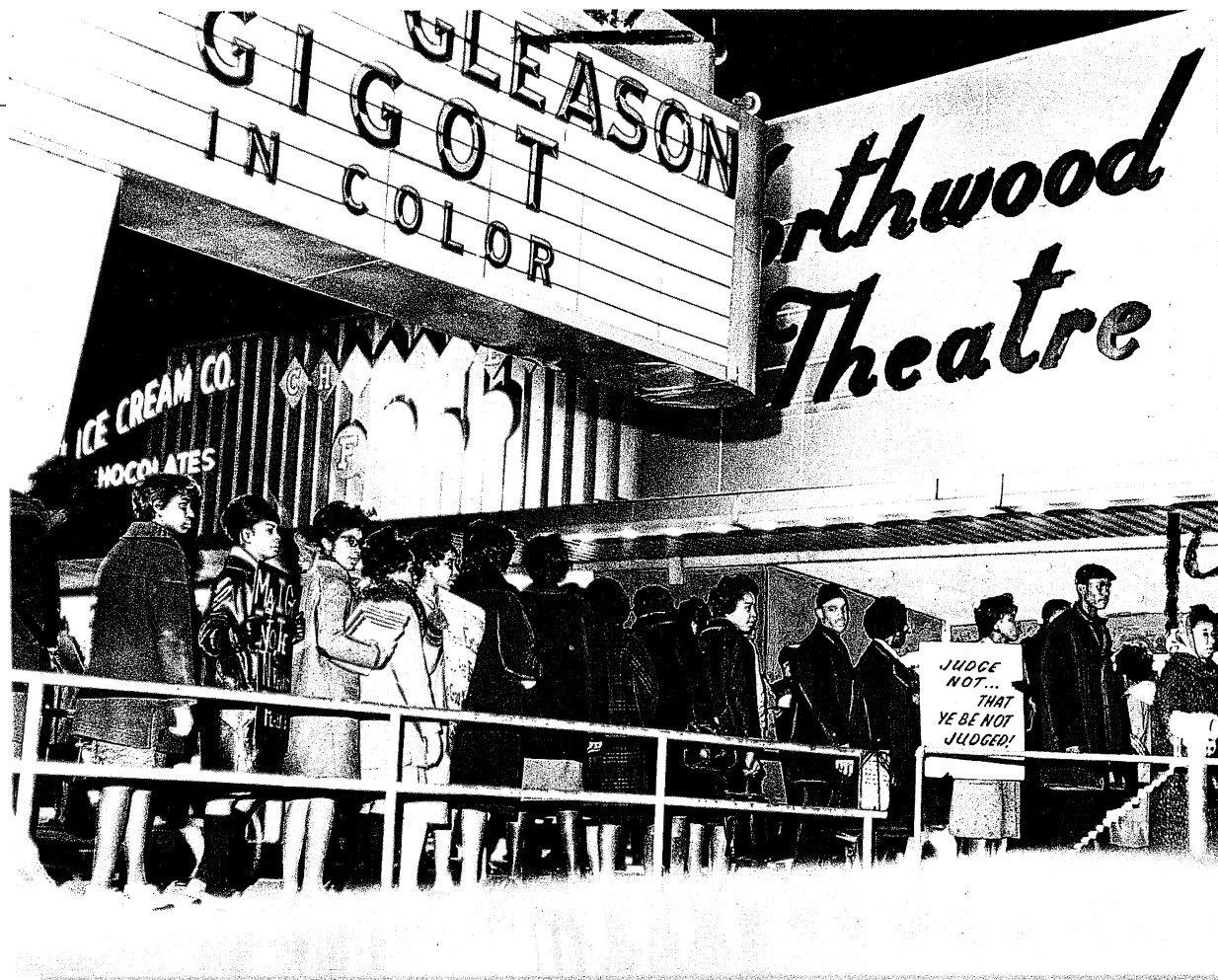
or Pepsodent tooth paste or insurance, it has to be sold. . . .”⁵⁹

This sense of consumer freedom was felt especially by those most poised to embrace it: the younger generation of Baltimore African-Americans entering college in the mid- to late-1950s. They came of age during a period of slow, incremental civil rights change in Baltimore. By the early 1950s, a combination of public protest and back-room lobbying would open positions for blacks as officers in the city police force, as doctors in local hospitals, as bureaucrats in state and city jobs, as drivers for taxi-cab and transit companies, and as users of municipal golf courses, baseball diamonds, and tennis courts. Seven years of mass protest of the segregated Ford’s Theater broke down racist barriers in 1952. The comparatively easy integration of the city’s public schools in Spring 1954, beginning just ahead of the *Brown* decision, revealed the power of civil rights groups and the eagerness of municipal elites to see the transition to public-sector integration proceed without violence or, indeed, much public debate.⁶⁰

Many of the signs of progress were registered in the 1955 “community self-survey,” conducted by the Maryland Commission on Inter-racial Problems and Relations, a two-year-long “citizen-action program” sponsored by “the leading civic, religious and fraternal organizations of Baltimore.”⁶¹ The Commission and its report, funded in part by the Baltimore and Maryland state governments, were themselves signs that the civic and political leadership were turning against segregation, however hesitantly. The survey traced the outlines of the remaining “problem,” assessed public opinion on integration, and proposed solutions. Baltimore’s department stores earned an ambiguous ranking. Representatives from 21 department stores (a category which included many smaller stores) were interviewed: according to their own statements, they were “relatively more democratic policy-wise,” compared to more restricted hotels, theaters and movies, with only 20% reporting

White Sales

Student protestors outside the Northwood Movie Theatre, Baltimore, February 19, 1961. Students in the Civic Interest Group (CIG), frustrated at segregated commercial life directly across from the Morgan State University campus, began protests at Northwood in 1955 that later spread to stores downtown. Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.



either exclusionary or segregationist rules.⁶² Six refused to provide any information about their racial policies; two reported the “Final Sale” rule; two reported that black women were not allowed to try on “foundation garments” and one that they were not allowed to try on hats.⁶³ A large number (the statistics were somewhat confused here) suggested that some store facility or other—beauty shops, restaurants, restrooms—was closed to black patrons.⁶⁴ On the “credit” side of the survey, large department stores had reportedly dropped their “racial limitations” in children’s, boy’s, and men’s wear, and had made “further concessions in gloves, suits and coats in women’s wear.”⁶⁵ On the “debit” side, however, department store practices “involving hats, under-garments, store facilities for eating and resting remain only partially modified.”⁶⁶ Much, it seemed, remained to be done.

Department store segregation finally ended in 1960, more than 20 years after protest had been initially launched, but the initiative came not from established groups like the NAACP and Urban League, but from bold and impatient Morgan State students organized into the Civic Interest Group (CIG).⁶⁷ In 1955, students had begun protests of the Northwood Movie Theatre and Read’s Drug Store, segregated facilities directly across from the Morgan State campus, years ahead of the more famous Greensboro sit-ins, although they ended in only partial success. By 1960, Baltimore sit-ins were soon to become the northernmost edge of a widening regional strategy. On March 16, students began sit-ins at the Hecht-May’s Rooftop Restaurant at Northwood. After Hecht-May filed and won a court injunction against the protestors, the students targeted the

downtown department stores, where the local chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) had begun protesting in 1953.⁶⁸ There had been encouraging signs of movement at the stores in the late 1950s. By 1960, the stores had gradually moved toward the elimination of segregated restroom and dining facilities for their employees.⁶⁹ Hochschild-Kohn had integrated its sales force in February 1959, when Walter Sondheim, Jr. had moved Mamie Collins, a stock clerk in the glove department, into the position of salesperson at the glove counter. Much to their surprise, the students were apparently served courteously upon their arrival at Hochschild Kohn's; highly organized protests over the next four weeks focused on the remaining three stores. On one day in late March, for example, students arrived in four buses and separated into three groups, one for each of the remaining segregated stores. Pickets were set up at the entrances. At Stewart's, students took seats in the dining room and were informed by a manager that the facility was closed. The Hecht-May group was "barred from the dining area by roped off doors manned by store detectives." The group of 40 that entered Hutzler's took seats in the largest dining room, the "Colonial." Store staff tried to continue to serve whites in the smaller, "Quixie" dining room, but it rapidly overflowed and many whites left. The students, dressed in their Sunday best, remained seated quietly for four hours.

Over the next four weeks of protest, a wide variety of organizations came forward with public support for the "sit-downers": church groups, women's clubs, the YMCA, labor unions, and civil rights groups such as CORE and Fellowship House.⁷⁰ The NAACP backed the students with legal assistance, transportation, press support, and over \$5,000 in bail money; an estimated 100 churches mobilized a boycott and supportive march, including a 30-minister picket line.⁷¹ African-Americans were apparently taking resources

they would have spent on consumer goods and channeling them instead toward the protestors, a decision that was especially meaningful during the high-consumption Easter season. "No new Easter hats for them," reported an *Afro* headline proudly of two leaders, "they'll give to sitdowners." By mid-April, the remaining stores began to howl. According to the *Afro-American*, sales figures for the downtown stores were 8% lower than those of the previous Spring. Hecht-May, in seeking an injunction, had complained that its restaurant business was down 49% and its department store sales down 33% from the previous year.⁷² The store owners negotiated with students and debated integration possibilities among themselves, without agreement.

But on April 17th, the remaining stores cracked and served the students, apparently simultaneously. E. L. Leavey, Vice-President of Hutzler's, emphasized that the stores had long wanted to integrate and had simply needed an excuse. "The students have been able to do what the stores themselves haven't," he told the *Afro*. "They have awakened the community's attention to a situation that needed correcting." Applauding students for "the manner in which they conducted the demonstration," and the *Afro* itself for "its fairness in reporting the situation," he claimed that "[I]t was never a question of principle. It was a matter of time. And we think this is the time."⁷³ Hecht-May Vice-President Geoffrey Swaebe stated, less enthusiastically, that "[o]ur policy has been consistent. We were ready to act whenever the community dictated it." Explaining why Hecht-May, as the first store targeted, had pursued an injunction against protestors rather than integrating, he emphasized the need for common action among the stores: "We thought it was not a one-store matter and as soon as the other stores agreed to the new policy, we were ready and did act."⁷⁴

Hochschild Kohn's unilateral lunch-counter integration

three weeks earlier had been widely reported in Baltimore newspapers, radio and television. The Baltimore *Sun*, which ran full-page advertisements for Gutman's, Hecht-May and Hochschild Kohn's daily in its front section, buried coverage of the sit-ins on page 40 (well behind its coverage of simultaneous sit-ins in Atlanta and Orangeburg, South Carolina, and anti-apartheid protests in South Africa). But in that piece, a Hochschild Kohn official had stated that the store would remain integrated "if the community allows it, and this includes our competitors."⁷⁵ This was, in effect, an invitation for groups on all sides of the issue to make their passionate opinions known. Over the following weeks, Hochschild Kohn's management received hundreds of letters, postcards, telegrams and phone-calls, an unusually rich array of sources that serve as a window onto the wide variety of reactions to and perceptions of integration.

Among these letters were dozens of angry racist declarations of boycott and cancellations of credit accounts, accompanied by white supremacist argument in varying degrees of rabidness and detail. One man condemned the store for "race-mixing," and for fueling "the forces which are whittling away at the rights of the American people at an ever faster rate."⁷⁶ The assumption here, of course, was that black people were not "Americans." One self-consciously liberal couple declared that "we are not opposed to the colored people in any way, we will employ them when there is work, and we have supported Morgan College before the state really took over..." But they feared sitting next to a black man at the counter: he might "perhaps steal your purse, he may be intoxicated..."⁷⁷

Some white racist customers praised the intransigence of the other stores, where white privilege could still be purchased. One woman urged Hochschild Kohn's to rejoin "Hutzler's, Stewart, Hecht-May, etc. who are trying to hold

the line against this latest invasion against freedom of choice for the White Race."⁷⁸ As managers and owners feared, some customers, employing the same tactics blacks had, took their business elsewhere. "[F]rom what I read in this morning's paper," wrote one "Chargaplate Customer," "I'll be dealing with Hutzler's."⁷⁹ Ironically reversing black customers' need to drive to Philadelphia, one man complained that "[I]f other leading department stores follow your example we will then drive the extra...miles to Richmond to shop."⁸⁰

Taken together, the letters reveal how deeply white Baltimoreans had come to see department stores as racial institutions, specifically white edifices to which they had contributed through decades of transactions. One woman nostalgically recalled her coming-of-age with the department store, how she had watched it "develop and remodel and grow" patronized by "good white trade." "The white people have been your patrons and have helped make the store what it is today," she wrote proudly, expressing her shock that the store would no longer "uphold the long established policies handed down to them to serve best the needs of their present customers." Anticipating later charges of "reverse discrimination," one woman wrote that she no longer wished to "be affiliated with a store that has bias policies."⁸¹

The letters also reveal to what extent whiteness itself was viewed as just another consumer item that customers felt entitled to, whose sale should not be withdrawn or outlawed. One woman noted she was "surprised and disappointed" by the integration policy, viewing it as nothing less than a denial of her rights as a consumer—segregation and integration ought to just be things one could choose from in a properly organized marketplace. "Do you realize that by so doing [integrating]," she wrote, "you are taking from the White Race any choice they had of segregation or integration when dining outside their homes?"⁸² The loss of white

consumer privilege accrued directly to blacks who, she noted with impeccable logic, now had the option to “choose” segregated or integrated restaurants (since, for reasons she did not mention, restaurants that catered to blacks ran little risk of being “integrated” by whites). “Thus they have a choice,” she railed, “which your policy is denying the White Race.”

Importantly, more than one of the racist critics wrote as self-conscious suburbanites, warning the downtown that integration would further provoke the flight of white residences and businesses. In the process, they revealed the extent to which the suburbs were imagined as racial islands still free of black “invasion”: downtown segregation was the only remaining draw that could pull whites in from their comfortable, newly-designed racial enclaves. The department stores had in some ways profited from, and encouraged, the beginnings of white flight to the suburbs: Hutzler’s, for example had opened stores in Towson (1952), Eastpoint (1956) and Westview (1958); Hochschild Kohn’s opened a branch in Edmondson Village (1947). (By sheer coincidence, the same day that student protest had resumed at Northwood Theatre, about 50 of Baltimore’s “small store owners” had gathered at Enoch Pratt Library to discuss “mutual problems in the age of the automobile and the shopping center.”⁸³) “In behalf of the hundreds of thousands of white people who still trade in the downtown area,” read one telegram, “please do not force us to stay away because of your integrated lunch counters.”⁸⁴ One woman wrote that she would close her account “[s]hould this policy spread to the suburban branches of your company, especially the Belvedere store.”⁸⁵ One “Lifelong Customer” wrote that while

[c]ertainly no one can now be proud of our once beautiful city, and with so little left of what was once our grand downtown shopping center, it will be up to you and the heads of our other

<p>CLASS OF SERVICE This is a fast message unless its deferred character is indicated by the proper symbol.</p>	<h1 style="margin: 0;">WESTERN UNION</h1> <h2 style="margin: 0;">TELEGRAM</h2> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT</p> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">The filing time shown in the date line on domestic telegrams is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination</p>	<p>SYMBOLS</p> <p>DL=Day Letter NL=Night Letter LT=International Letter Telegram</p>
<p>LDB001 PD=BALTIMORE MD 28 510PME=</p> <p>LOUIS KOHN, HOCHSCHILD KOHN AND CO= 1960 MAR 28 PM 5 43</p> <p>LEXINGTON AND HOWARD STS BALTO=</p> <p>CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RECENT DECISION TO SERVE ALL "DECENT PEOPLE" WILL OPEN ACCOUNT IMMEDIATELY= ✓</p> <p>DR AND MRS PERCIVAL C SMITH.</p> <p style="font-size: large; font-family: cursive; margin-left: 200px;">1709 Gwynn Falls 17 Phwy</p>		
<p>THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE</p>		

*long reputable stores to take a firm stand to help preserve it and give us an incentive for coming downtown to buy.*⁸⁶

While it is difficult to make sense of the proportions, approximately ten times as many letters in support of integration survive. This was likely due to the urgency with which integrationists felt the need to back the store’s tentative movement. Also, unlike the racists, who saw integration as a one-way process, permanently corrupting, civil rights supporters saw integration as frighteningly reversible. Letters congratulated Hochschild Kohn’s for its “courage” and rang with the language of “democracy,” “freedom” and the “American Way.” Many of the writers identified themselves as “white” and as “charge” customers to demonstrate the economic stakes: often these two were linked together in the same clause, as if to reinforce each other. One woman wrote that while “I am no wild-eyed fanatic championing

Telegram congratulating Hochschild Kohn’s for being the first Baltimore department store to serve African-Americans at its lunch-counter, March 28, 1960. Along with telegrams and letters of support and encouragement, the store received many from consumers who opposed integration and terminated their charge accounts in protest. Courtesy of the Maryland Historical Society.

the Cause of the Oppressed,” she applauded the store’s “courage,” and was “sympathetic to the problems posed for the business man in this racial question.”⁸⁷ One woman felt that the store’s move would bring out latent anti-racist sensibilities in individuals. “Many people need just this display of liberalism to bring forth good feelings which were hidden deeply inside them,” she wrote.⁸⁸

Many white supporters were happy to be rid of the embarrassment they had felt when, following a business, professional or social meeting with a black person, they were then unable to invite him or her to lunch. One woman, a city employee, wrote that she had sometimes had to take “educated, cultivated Negroes from other cities to lunch and I cannot tell you how embarrassing it is to go to the Greyhound Bus station and to attempt to explain...”⁸⁹ Another woman wrote that

*It has long been a matter of deep concern to me that there was no downtown restaurant where I could go with my Negro friends, or where I could eat with an easy conscience not feeling I was being given privileges because of my white skin.*⁹⁰

While most of the letter-writers either did not identify themselves racially, or identified themselves as white, a small number of supporters stepped forward as black. One man wrote that “we who are Negroes become encouraged when business people are willing to commit themselves to an advanced policy in spite of any risk that they might encounter...”⁹¹ One woman, having recently moved to Baltimore with her husband, noted that she had found the city “very much to our liking except for the fact that we, as members of a so-called minority group, have not been able to feel that we are really part of the community.” The store’s integration move had had “a profound effect upon our family.”⁹² One woman thanked the store for its “gracious hospi-

tality extended to the recent ‘Sit-In’ demonstrators.” There was almost an audible sigh of relief in her statement that “[m]y out of town shopping trips appear to be no longer necessary since this store has shown its willingness to serve all people.”⁹³

Some of the letters, however, revealed integration’s limits in the imagination of many liberal whites, who expressed enthusiasm for the fact of segregation even as they condemned the manner in which it had previously been imposed. Who needed an increasingly problematic segregation rule, they asked, when a segregated result was possible and even likely without one? One woman congratulated the store on “tentatively” opening the lunch-counter to blacks. “It is doubtful if you will be swamped after the initial victory wears off,” she wrote.⁹⁴ One woman, an educator, stated with assurance that integration would not lead the store to disaster. “My strong feeling is that it will turn out as did the admission of negroes to friends [sic] school,” she wrote. “Dire circumstances were predicted and as a matter of fact we have never had the numbers we decided to take.”⁹⁵ One man wrote with similar optimism of the desegregated Ford’s theater. “Ford’s doesn’t seem to be ‘overrun,’” he wrote. “The winning of the ‘right’ has proved more important than actual attendance.”⁹⁶

Some liberals indicated that they perceived integration as another consumer good, (just as segregationists had seen white privilege), with racial policy merely an extension of other store concerns about stock, pricing, and display. Even in their support of integration, they suggested that black customers and employees were merely part of a properly organized department store, items in a more inclusive inventory. One woman noted that lunch-counter integration illustrated “the good taste and judgement that your stores are noted for.”⁹⁷ Another wrote that she was “grateful for treat-



Sit-in demonstrators are read the trespass law by a waitress at the White Coffee Pot Restaurant at Eastern Avenue near Conkling Street, November 18, 1961. Similar protests at downtown department stores in Spring 1960 ended lunch-counter segregation there, triggering integration elsewhere in the city. Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

ment that extends Hochschild's leadership in merchandising to leadership in human relations..."⁹⁸ Walter Sondheim, Jr. had made this connection himself in his response to a supporter, noting that his letter "strengthens our resolve to uphold the standards of citizenship and fine storekeeping upon which Hochschild, Kohn & Co. was founded..."⁹⁹ "I hope I am joining my voice to many in congratulating you," wrote another woman after Hochschild Kohn's promotion of Mamie Collins to the glove counter.

With such forward looking management...I [was] disappointed that you carried no bracelet length grey kid gloves—in any size—at the beginning of a spring season.¹⁰⁰

The centrality of department stores in Baltimore commercial life can be seen in the way that their integration,

however reluctant, sent shock-waves through the rest of the city. Within days, many other restaurants had integrated, and the Restaurant Association of Baltimore was considering an integrated policy for all of its members. Interviews with individual managers by the *Afro*, however, showed hesitance. "There have been discussions here about it since the department stores have changed..." said a representative from Miller Brothers Restaurant. The owner of the White Coffee Pot, the only segregated restaurant in Mondawmin Shopping Center, made a distinction between "cafeterias," that might integrate, and "restaurants," that would not.¹⁰¹ Capitalizing on the protest momentum of March and April, students and the NAACP mobilized support behind Councilman William Dixon's "Equal Rights Bill," a city-wide public accommodations law, in May and June.¹⁰²

Rabbi Morris Lieberman. While Jewish-owned department stores contributed to Baltimore segregation, many Jewish leaders such as Lieberman actively opposed racial discrimination and worked on behalf of civil rights. Gift of Joan B. Woldman.

Between November 1960 and January 1962, a reported 106 students would be arrested in continuing protest actions.¹⁰³ Baltimore's public accommodations law went into effect June 8, 1962. While a partial public accommodations law went into effect in Maryland in June 1963—the first such statute in a state south of the Mason-Dixon line—Maryland would not pass a public accommodations law covering the entire state until 1964.¹⁰⁴

What was striking throughout these dramatic events was how little the specifically Jewish context seemed to matter. Whereas in the 1930s and 1940s, store segregation was seen as a distinctly Jewish problem, situated in the transatlantic context of Nazism and World War II, by the early 1960s Jewish ownership was almost completely absent from public debate both inside and outside the Jewish community: store segregation and integration were neither Jewish sins nor Jewish virtues. Many individual Jews supported store integration, and liberal rabbis participated actively in a number of other Baltimore civil rights efforts: the 1955 community “self-survey” had counted upon the support of 11 separate Jewish organizations, and had as its chairman Rabbi Israel Goldman, for example.¹⁰⁵ But there appears to have been little or no organizational Jewish support for the sit-ins. Rabbi Morris Lieberman did deliver an address at Fellowship House during the crisis, reported in the *Afro*, declaring Baltimore “the most segregated city in America,” in both religious and racial terms, and raising money for a “coffee fund” for student protestors.¹⁰⁶ Some individual Jewish liberals spoke out in favor of integration. Max Zervitz, a “prominent East Side pharmacist,” spoke before the group Frontiers, suggesting the need for new integrated philanthropies and stating that “just as the colored citizens underwent the dark period of slavery so did the Jews in several instances during the Biblical period,” and also, implau-



sibly, that “the Jew undergoes just as much persecution today as the colored citizen.”¹⁰⁷ It was striking that during the Passover season, when the language of freedom resonated most forcefully in Jewish culture, the Baltimore *Jewish Times* did not cover protests. A Passover editorial on “Freedom” noted that “in some parts of this great land of ours [the Negro] is free in name only . . . having few rights,” but did not suggest that one of those “parts” was Howard Street.¹⁰⁸ This was not for lack of attention to issues of discrimination: the *Jewish Times* featured detailed weekly reportage on anti-Semitism in the U. S. and abroad. On one level, the lack of press attention was obvious: the Jewish identity of owners was no doubt an embarrassment to some and advertising it seen as an invitation to anti-Semitism. It can also be argued that, by not emphasizing Jewish ownership through coverage, editors were refusing to hold Jews to a higher moral standard. But calls on the Jewish community to rally in support of the sit-ins, regardless of store ownership, were also

absent. It was not that the idea was not available: simultaneously with the Baltimore sit-ins, approximately 100 members of the American Jewish Congress in New York had picketed Fifth Avenue chain stores in solidarity with black students in the South, an effort reported in the Baltimore *Jewish Times*.¹⁰⁹ No such effort materialized in Baltimore. Indeed, by coincidence, the same day that Hochschild Kohn's integration was announced, Jewish fraternal organizations co-sponsored a "Gala Minstrel Show and Dance," with a large ad in the *Jewish Times*.¹¹⁰

It was also unclear whether the stores were seen as Jewish by the public at large. Of the hundreds of letters written by customers in March and April 1960, virtually none mention the Jewish owners and managers. Racist opponents voicing their dissent, many of them anonymously, presumably would have had little restraint in mentioning this fact in their diatribes, making its absence all the more striking. The declining public visibility of Jews in this context is part of a broader story of mid-century assimilation too complex to be told here, but whose outlines are relatively clear: the end of European immigration, including that of Eastern European Jewry, after 1924; the public prohibition on anti-Semitism as a component of discredited Nazism in the 1940s; postwar upward mobility and expanding higher educational opportunities, especially through the G. I. Bill; the second-generation thrust away from Old World identifications. The Jewish out-migration from older neighborhoods in East Baltimore to Park Heights, following those of other whites, is well-known.

There was perhaps no clearer sign of Jewish entry into a redefined "mainstream" than the furious segregationist letters directed at Hochschild Kohn's, only one of which (among more than one hundred) made mention of Jewish ownership. That one was, admittedly, venomous:

**GALA
MINSTREL SHOW
AND
DANCE**

PRESENTED BY
JEFFERSON No. 9 & DEBORAH REBEKAH No. 7-I. O. O. F.

**ALCAZAR
BALLROOM**
CATHEDRAL & MADISON STS.

**SUN. 27
MAR. 27**
SHOW 8:00 P. M. — DANCING 'TIL ??

JACK SCHERR AND HIS
ORCHESTRA

BAZAAR & REFRESHMENT ROOM
OPEN ALL EVENING

ADMISSION
\$1.50 — PRODUCED & DIRECTED BY —
Morris Stein, Chairman ★ **MILTON BRILL**
★ Melvin M. Harris, Coordinator

"Gala Minstrel Show and Dance" advertisement from the Baltimore Jewish Times, March 11, 1960. This performance, held the same day Hochschild Kohn's announced its lunch-counter integration, illustrates the role racism played in Jewish-American popular culture in Baltimore. Courtesy of the Baltimore Jewish Times.

Dear Sir: I have always heard that a Jew is no better than a negro. You are again proving it, my crowd ate at your restaurant every day but we will never be there any more. Who wants to sit in an eating place with a negro. I think you are going to feel it very much, you are showing why we need another man like Hitler.¹¹¹

But it was far more common to pass over the question of ethnic ownership entirely. Where racists sought out ethnicities to blame integration on, it was striking that on at least one occasion, they got it completely wrong, scarcely imagi-

White Sales

*Howard and Lexington
Street bustling with shoppers,
c. 1960s. Courtesy of the
Maryland Historical Society.*



nable in the 1930s. One critic wrote poisonously to Walter Sondheim, Jr. in May 1960:

What kind of money-hungry, Negro-loving Scandinavian people are you that you, of an outstanding Nordic race, should get down on your knees, as it were, before a race of African monkeys? You should be ashamed of yourself.¹¹²

Implicitly or explicitly identified as “white” (or even “Nordic”) in the letters, rather than specifically Jewish, Jewish owners and managers were being attacked as “race traitors,” but to have that status, one had to belong to the “race” in the first place. In a perverse way, the segregationist letters were a hostile welcome to the club of “whiteness”: store owners, they maintained, were guardians of white privilege and had not lived up to their responsibilities. They would, presumably, have to learn to do so better in the future.

But if Jews largely embraced the privileges of whiteness, they also came to participate disproportionately in the move-

ment for black civil rights at both the local and national level in the early 1960s. Indeed, many look in retrospect at the civil rights era as a golden age of black-Jewish cooperation and activism for progressive social change. On the national level, black civil rights leaders turned to Jewish leaders for moral, political and financial support and often received it; many individual synagogues became involved in supporting civil rights campaigns. Locally, Rabbis Morris Lieberman, Abraham Shusterman, Israel Goldman and Jacob Agus spoke out, along with Protestant ministers and Catholic priests. Some idealistic young Jews from Baltimore went South to participate in SNCC’s Freedom Rides and Freedom Schools in 1962–3. It was a point of tragic pride that the 23-year-old Jewish CORE worker Michael Henry Schwerner, on his way to martyrdom in Mississippi with Andrew Goodman and James Chaney, had protested to integrate Baltimore’s Gwynn Oak Amusement Park in August 1963.¹¹³ In the present day, some local Baltimore synagogues sponsor annual Sabbath celebrations of Martin

Luther King, Jr. Day, while the organization “BLEWS,” (a contraction of “blacks” and “Jews”) with an office at Coppin State College, encourages black-Jewish dialogue.

The story of racial segregation against African-Americans in Jewish-owned Baltimore department stores leaves us with many difficult questions. Along with every other owner, manager, and landlord in the city, and most white workers, Jews had undoubtedly profited from racial segregation against blacks: the owners’ resistance to integrate on strictly bottom-line terms made that clear enough. How much of Jewish social mobility was predicated on the sale of white privilege to Baltimoreans at Jewish-owned department stores? How much did it take for Jews to become “white” themselves? How much, in other words, did the profits of racial discrimination fuel Jewish entry into a “mainstream” to which most blacks were (and are) excluded? And, in the end, how much difference did a more racially inclusive “consumer democracy” really make? As the half-hearted integrationists had suggested, the vast majority of Baltimore’s African-American working-class community was not, even in the aftermath of formal integration, able to participate equally in consumer society on economic criteria alone. If department stores could be “democratic,” it meant, implicitly, that politics was like shopping, perhaps something like a department store: tasteful, socially exclusive, a world of limited but seemingly boundless choices, an enticing display window encased in plate-glass. But if citizenship and consumerism were extensions of each other, where were the working-class and the poor—the people who did not wear bracelet-length grey kid gloves—supposed to “purchase” and “spend” their citizenship?¹¹⁴

In the end, as racist white consumers had suggested in their threats, the micro-segregation that had governed relations in downtown department stores would be writ large

on the greater Baltimore metropolitan area, increasingly in terms of social class. With prosperous whites, including Jews, and an increasing number of middle-class blacks, exercising the option to exit from Baltimore’s inner core in the 1960s and 1970s, the economic base of the stores evaporated.¹¹⁵ Deindustrialization and the decline of the port undercut the black and white working-class employment that had helped sustain downtown consumer culture; discount retailers challenged department store dominance. The impressive department store buildings, desirable enough to inspire twenty-five years of black protest, are now wrapped in shadows, encased in boarded windows, threatened by demolition. We might ask: what kind of monuments are they to racial inclusion and consumer democracy in Baltimore in both the past and present? Like the problems of race and class that gave rise to them, these questions remain unresolved.

Notes

This essay is dedicated to the memory of Phillip Campbell, and to Jeremy Blynn and Chester Wickwire. My thanks to Dirk Bönker, Rebecca Plant, Judy Kramer, Clarence Logan, John Hillery, Jessica Elfenbein, Neil Hertz, Dorothy Ross, Carolyn Eastman, Ben Peck, Beth Wenger, Avi Decter and Melissa Martens for their support, comments, and criticisms, and to Walter Sondheim, Jr. and John Sondheim for their generosity with both their time and source materials. My thanks also to K. Meghan Gross for her work in securing the photographic images used here. Any errors in this essay are my own.

The author wishes to thank The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, for authorizing the use of this work. The author would also like to thank the Maryland Historical Society, for the use of its sources.

- ¹ Letter from Mrs. Elizabeth T. Meijer to Walter Sondheim, Jr., August 20, 1948, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers, Jewish Museum of Maryland. All quotations from Mrs. Meijer that follow are found in this letter.
- ² “Mistress and maid” sometimes cooperated in anti-segregation protest, too. In a “shoppers’ protest” conducted by the Baltimore Urban League circa 1946, Katharine Hollander, a white activist who was Jewish, acting as a by-stander, would dramatize her outrage when service would be denied Mary Nelson, her African-American housekeeper, at downtown department stores. Personal communication from Clarence Logan, August 10, 2001.
- ³ Maryland Commission on Interracial Problems and Relations, *An American City in Transition: The Baltimore Community Self-Survey of Inter-Group Relations* (Baltimore, 1955), p. 207. The survey’s “public accommodations” section included restaurants and taverns, hotels, theaters, movie houses and department stores.
- ⁴ On black workers and the CIO in Baltimore, see Roderick N. Ryon, “An Ambiguous Legacy: Baltimore Blacks and the CIO, 1936–1941,” *The Journal of Negro History* (1980), Vol. 65, No. 1, pp. 18–30.
- ⁵ Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, “Black Housing Patterns in Baltimore City, 1883–1953,” *The Maryland Historian*, Vol. 16 (Spring/Summer 1985), pp. 25–39.
- ⁶ On the effort to segregate Baltimore residentially by statute, see Garrett Power, “‘Apartheid Baltimore Style’: The Residential Segregation Ordinances of 1910–1913,” *Maryland Law Review*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (1983): pp. 289–328.
- ⁷ Maryland Commission on Interracial Problems and Relations, *An American City in Transition: The Baltimore Community Self-Survey of Inter-Group Relations*, p. 205.
- ⁸ Maryland Commission on Interracial Problems and Relations, *An American City in Transition: The Baltimore Community Self-Survey of Inter-Group Relations*, p. 205.
- ⁹ On the gender politics of department stores, see Susan Porter Benson. *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890–1940* (Urbana : University of Illinois Press, c.1986).
- ¹⁰ On segregation and consumer culture, see Grace Elizabeth Hale, “‘For Colored’ and ‘For White’: Segregating Consumption in the South,” in Jane Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, and Bryant Simon, eds., *Jumpin’ Jim Crow: Southern Politics from the Civil War to Civil Rights* (Princeton: Princeton University Press and Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 162–182.
- ¹¹ Letter from Furman L. Templeton to Walter Sondheim, Jr., November 24, 1950, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers. Walter Sondheim, Jr. wrote a letter of apology to Templeton on November 25th, noting that he himself had been “considerably upset” by the minstrel image, and explaining that the parade had been sub-contracted to an “out-of-town concern,” although he also emphasized that this was “not...an excuse because I fully realize our sponsorship places the burden of responsibility on us.” Walter Sondheim, Jr. to Furman Templeton, November 25, 1950, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ¹² Letter from Madeline W. Murphy to “Mr. Isaac Kohn” [sic], September 12, 1956, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ¹³ Interview with Walter Sondheim, Jr., February 16, 2001.
- ¹⁴ February and March, 1943 Reports of the Executive Secretary, Baltimore NAACP, Folder 1943, II: C76, NAACP Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

- ¹⁵ On black West Baltimore, see Karen Olson, "Old West Baltimore: Segregation, African-American Culture and the Struggle for Equality," in Elizabeth Fee, Linda Shopes, Linda Zeidman, eds., *The Baltimore Book: New Views of Local History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), pp. 57–80.
- ¹⁶ See Sandy M. Shoemaker, "'We Shall Overcome Someday': The Equal Rights Movement in Baltimore, 1935–1942," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, Vol. 89, No. 3 (Fall 1994), pp. 261–272; Hayward Farrar, *The Baltimore Afro-American, 1892–1950* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1998.)
- ¹⁷ On the "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaign, see Andor Skotnes, "'Buy Where You Can Work': Boycotting for Jobs in African-American Baltimore, 1933–1934," *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Summer 1994), pp. 735–762.
- ¹⁸ On black consumer activism, see Robert E. Weems, Jr., *Desegregating the Dollar: African-American Consumerism in the 20th Century* (New York: New York University Press, c.1998). On the rise of the department store culture, see William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).
- ¹⁹ Letter from Madeline W. Murphy to "Mr. Isaac Kohn," [sic] September 12, 1956, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ²⁰ Interview with Walter Sondheim, Jr., February 16, 2001.
- ²¹ Letter from Edward S. Lewis to Walter Sondheim, Jr., April 17, 1939, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ²² Letter from Thomas P. Abbott to Edward S. Lewis, June 22, 1939, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ²³ Letter from Edward S. Lewis to Walter Sondheim, June 23, 1939, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ²⁴ Letter from Edward S. Lewis to Walter White, June 27, 1940, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ²⁵ Letter from Edward S. Lewis to Walter White, June 27, 1940, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ²⁶ Executive Board Meeting of the Baltimore Urban League minutes, "Department Store Problems," June 26, 1940, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ²⁷ Letter from Edward S. Lewis to Walter White, June 27, 1940, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ²⁸ The literature on Jewish-black relations is extensive. See Maurianne Adams and John Bracey, *Strangers and Neighbors: Relations between Blacks and Jews in the United States* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, c. 1999); V. P. Franklin, ed., *African Americans and Jews in the Twentieth Century: Studies in Convergence and Conflict* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, c.1998); Paul Berman, ed., *Blacks and Jews: Alliances and Arguments* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1994); Jack Salzman with Adina Back and Gretchen Sullivan Sorin, eds., *Bridges and Boundaries: African Americans and American Jews* (New York, NY: George Braziller in association with the Jewish Museum, 1992); James Baldwin, et. al., *Black Anti-Semitism and Jewish Racism* (New York, R. W. Baron, 1969).
- ²⁹ David Levering Lewis, "Parallels and Divergences: Assimilationist Strategies of Afro-American and Jewish Elites from 1910 to the Early 1930s," in Salzman, et. al., eds.
- ³⁰ Hasia Diner, "Black Zionism: Marcus Garvey and the Jewish Question," in Franklin, ed.
- ³¹ On Jews and their problematic "whiteness" in the 20th century U. S., see Matthew Frye Jacobsen, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998); Karen Brodtkin Sacks, "How did Jews Become White Folks?" in Adams and Bracey, eds., pp. 500–519.
- ³² Philip Kahn, Jr., *Uncommon Threads: Threads that Wove the Fabric of Baltimore Jewish Life* (Baltimore: PECAN publications, 1996), p. 182.
- ³³ On the history of Baltimore's Jewish community, see Gilbert Sandler, *Jewish Baltimore: A Family Album* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, in association with the Jewish Museum of Maryland, 2000).
- ³⁴ Philip Kahn, Jr., *ibid.*, p. 191.
- ³⁵ Philip Kahn, Jr., *ibid.*, p. 196.
- ³⁶ The Jewish population of Baltimore was estimated at 73,000 by the *American Jewish Yearbook* (Philadelphia: American Jewish Committee, 1940–41), Vol. 42, p. 247. The U. S. Census for Baltimore gave the total population figure for the city in 1940 as 859,100. U. S. Department of Commerce, *Statistics of Census Tracts, Baltimore, MD, 16th Census of the United*

- States, 1940* (Washington, DC: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1942). The census identified 692,705 people in the city as “white” that year.
- ³⁷ Executive Board Meeting of the Baltimore Urban League minutes, “Department Store Problems,” June 26, 1940, Walter Sondheim Papers.
- ³⁸ On racist suspicions of black loyalty in wartime Baltimore, see Robert A. Hill, ed., *The FBI’s RACON: Racial Conditions in the United States During World War 2* (Boston: Northeastern University Press), pp. 75–86.
- ³⁹ Edward Israel, quoted in Elizabeth Fee, Linda Shopes, Linda Zeidman, eds., *The Baltimore Book: New Views of Local History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), p. 72.
- ⁴⁰ Lillie Mae Jackson, quoted in Elizabeth Fee, Linda Shopes, Linda Zeidman, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 73.
- ⁴¹ Oscar Lapirow to Marry Adelberg, April 15, 1939, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ⁴² Letter from Madeline W. Murphy to “Mr. Isaac Kohn” [sic], September 12, 1956, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ⁴³ Letter from Frederick H. Dedmond to Mr. Epstein, March 28, 1950, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ⁴⁴ Letter from Juanita Jackson to Walter White, September 19, 1940, Folder 1940, II: C76, NAACP Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
- ⁴⁵ Letter from Lillie Mae Carroll Jackson to Roy Wilkins, July 19, 1940, Folder 1940, II: C76, NAACP Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
- ⁴⁶ Oscar Lapirow to Marry Adelberg, April 15, 1939, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ⁴⁷ Israel, quoted in Fee, Shopes and Zeidman, eds., p. 72.
- ⁴⁸ Morris Lieberman to Baltimore Urban League, November 11, 1940, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ⁴⁹ Letter from Madeline W. Murphy to “Mr. Isaac Kohn” [sic], September 12, 1956, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ⁵⁰ Letter from B. M. Phillips to Irving Kohn, June 8, 1947, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ⁵¹ Letter from B. M. Phillips to Walter Sondheim, Jr., June 11, 1947, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ⁵² Unattributed memo, October 18, 1940, Walter Sondheim Papers.
- ⁵³ Amy Bentley, “Wages of War: The Shifting Landscape of Race and Gender in World War II Baltimore,” *Maryland Historical Magazine*, Vol. 88, No. 4 (Winter 1993), pp. 420–443.
- ⁵⁴ February 1943 Report of the Executive Secretary, Folder 1943, II:C76, NAACP Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
- ⁵⁵ February 1943 Report of the Executive Secretary, Folder 1943, II:C76, NAACP Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
- ⁵⁶ Letter from Ella Baker to Walter White, September 15, 1941, Folder 1941, II:C76, NAACP Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
- ⁵⁷ For the article itself, see “Negro Economic Life,” *Fortune Magazine*, September 1956.
- ⁵⁸ “Outline of Plans for Baltimore Membership Campaign,” October 1–20, 1950, Folder 1950, II: C78, NAACP Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
- ⁵⁹ “Outline of Plans for Baltimore Membership Campaign.”
- ⁶⁰ On progress toward integration in this period, see *Toward Equality: Baltimore’s Progress Report* (Baltimore: The Sidney Hollander Foundation, 1960).
- ⁶¹ Maryland Commission on Interracial Problems and Relations, *An American City in Transition: The Baltimore Community Self-Survey of Inter-Group Relations*, p. 10.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 207.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 208–9.
- ⁶⁴ One statement reads: “Of the 24 replies to a multiple choice question regarding the store facilities, 18 or about 38 percent showed that some type of store facility was excluded from use by Negroes, while 62 percent were not restrictive.” Maryland Commission on Interracial Problems and Relations, *An American City in Transition: The Baltimore Community Self-Survey of Inter-Group Relations*, pp. 209–10). This is likely a typographical error of some kind, and leaves in doubt the actual survey results.
- ⁶⁵ Maryland Commission on Interracial Problems and Relations, *op. cit.*, p. 214.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

- ⁶⁷ On CIG and Baltimore college students in desegregation campaigns, see August Meier, "The Successful Sit-Ins in a Border City: A Study in Social Causation," in *A White Scholar in the Black Community: Essays and Reflections* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), pp. 117–126. Originally published in *The Journal of Intergroup Relations*, Vol. 2 (Summer 1961), pp. 230–237 and Robert M. Palumbos, "Student Involvement in the Baltimore Civil Rights Movement, 1953–1963," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, Vol. 94, No. 4 (1999), pp. 448–492. Karen Olson suggests that prior to 1952, blacks were not permitted to buy clothing at department stores, and that after 1952, they were allowed to, but not permitted to try on clothing. My own research suggests that blacks were served in the department stores earlier than 1952 and that the try-on prohibition also pre-dated 1952; it appears that the end of this policy coincided with employment and lunch-counter integration in 1959–60.
- ⁶⁸ Meier maintains that the idea to target the stores downtown belonged to the Urban League's Executive Secretary, and that it had also been discussed with and favored by Hecht-May's executives as a way to pressure the store's competitors. Meier, p. 121.
- ⁶⁹ Meier, p. 119.
- ⁷⁰ "YMCA board writes stores about sitdowns," *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 2, 1960, p. 9; "AME churches back sitdowns," *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 2, 1960, p. 9; "Fellowship to hear students on sit ins," *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 2, 1960, p. 2; "Women adopt 7 points to support sitdowns," *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 2, 1960, p. 9; "Churches heed student plea to back sitins," *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 9, 1960, p. 8; "CORE backs sitdowners," *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 9, 1960, p. 8.
- ⁷¹ "Clerics tell why they back sit-down," *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 16, 1960, p. 17.
- ⁷² "Sitdowns at a glance," *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 16, 1960, p. 1.
- ⁷³ "Restaurants Study Policy," *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 23, 1960, p. 1.
- ⁷⁴ "Restaurants Study Policy," *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 23, 1960, p. 1.
- ⁷⁵ "Negroes Ask Jury Trial in Dining Case: Four Plead Innocent in Northwood Anti-Segregation Incident," *The Baltimore Sun*, March 27, 1960, p. 40, 35.
- ⁷⁶ Letter from Nicholas P. Brown, April 4, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Tea Room Integration (Letters Against), March–June 1960."
- ⁷⁷ Letter from Helen and Henry Thoms, March 27, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Tea Room Integration (Letters Against), March–June 1960."
- ⁷⁸ Letter from Lillian H. Taylor, March 27, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Tea Room Integration (Letters Against), March–June 1960."
- ⁷⁹ Postcard from "Chargaplate Customer," March 27, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Tea Room Integration (Letters Against), March–June 1960."
- ⁸⁰ Letter from Steuart Vaughan, April 10, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Tea Room Integration (Letters Against), March–June 1960."
- ⁸¹ Letter from Melba McNeill, April 5, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Tea Room Integration (Letters Against), March–June 1960."
- ⁸² Letter from Lillian H. Taylor, March 27, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Tea Room Integration (Letters Against), March–June 1960."
- ⁸³ "Small Store Owners Meet: Discuss Mutual Problems in Auto-Shopping Center Age," *The Baltimore Sun*, March 17, 1960, p. 11.
- ⁸⁴ Telegram from "The B and B Driving School," March 28, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Tea Room Integration (Letters Against), March–June 1960."
- ⁸⁵ Letter from Mrs. Joseph A. Raynor, March 28, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Tea Room Integration (Letters Against), March–June 1960."
- ⁸⁶ Letter from "A Lifelong Customer," March 31, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Tea Room Integration (Letters Against), March–June 1960."

- ⁸⁷ Letter from Catherine Serio, March 28, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Letters for (2)."
- ⁸⁸ Letter from Barbara Haas, March 28, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Letters for (3)"
- ⁸⁹ Letter from Margaret K. Edwards, April 1, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Letters for (4)"
- ⁹⁰ Letter from Hattie Stowe, March 27, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Letters for (1)"
- ⁹¹ Letter from Cedric Mills, March 29, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Letters for (3)"
- ⁹² Letter from Lillian C. Jones, March 28, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Letters for (2)"
- ⁹³ Letter from Mrs. Raymond T. Johnson, March 29, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Letters for (3)"
- ⁹⁴ Letter from Madeleine Stotz, March 27, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Letters for (1)"
- ⁹⁵ Letter from Martha Cornelia Parsons, March 29, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Letters for (3)"
- ⁹⁶ Letter from Henry E. Corner, March 27, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Letters for (1)"
- ⁹⁷ Letter from June Harmon, April 1, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Letters for (4)"
- ⁹⁸ Letter from Hannah Waskom, March 28, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Letters for (2)"
- ⁹⁹ Letter from Walter Sondheim, Jr. to Jack Bond, April 14, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder "Letters For (1)"
- ¹⁰⁰ Letter from Katherine Fouke to Kohn, February 11, 1959, Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers.
- ¹⁰¹ "Restaurants Study Policy," *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 23, 1960, p. 1.
- ¹⁰² "Students at City Hall," *Baltimore Afro-American*, April 30, 1960, p. 1.
- ¹⁰³ News Release by Clarence Logan, January 16, 1962, III: C57, NAACP Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
- ¹⁰⁴ The partial law exempted more than half of Maryland's counties. Both the 1963 and 1964 laws covered only restaurants, motels and hotels. Among many others, Jewish organizations—such as the Baltimore Jewish Council under Executive Director Leon Sachs—played an important role in shepherding these bills through the Maryland state legislature. Personal communication from Clarence Logan, August 11, 2001.
- ¹⁰⁵ They were: the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the Baltimore Jewish Council, the B'nai B'rith Menorah Lodge, the Women of B'nai B'rith, the Board of Jewish Education, the Federation of Jewish Women's Organizations of Maryland, the Jewish Community Center, the Jewish Religious Council, the Jewish War Veterans, and the National Council of Jewish Women. See Maryland Commission on Interracial Problems and Relations, *An American City in Transition: The Baltimore Community Self-Survey of Inter-Group Relations*, p. 259.
- ¹⁰⁶ "Balto. 'most segregated'—Rabbi Lieberman," *Baltimore Afro-American*, March 26, 1960, p. 6.
- ¹⁰⁷ "Max Zervitz talks on civil rights," *Baltimore Afro-American*, March 19, 1960, p. 8.
- ¹⁰⁸ "Passover...And Freedom," *Baltimore Jewish Times*, April 8, 1960, p. 4.
- ¹⁰⁹ "Jewish Congress Leaders Picket New York Stores in Support of Negroes," *Baltimore Jewish Times*, April 8, 1960, p. F.

- ¹¹⁰ “Gala Minstrel Show and Dance,” *Baltimore Jewish Times*, March 18, 1960, p. 11. On Jews and blackface minstrelsy, see Michael Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, c.1996).
- ¹¹¹ Letter from “A Former Customer,” March 27, 1960, Hochschild Kohn Department Store Papers, Maryland Historical Society, MS2721, Box 6, Folder “Tea Room Integration (Letters Against), March–June 1960.”
- ¹¹² Letter from Fred J. Martin to Walter Sondheim, Jr., Walter Sondheim, Jr. Papers. The name of the author of this letter has been changed upon the request of Walter Sondheim, Jr.
- ¹¹³ Linell Smith, “Justice at Gwynn Oak Park,” *The Baltimore Sun*, August 23–24, 1998.
- ¹¹⁴ On the notion of “consumer citizenship,” see Lizabeth Cohen, “Citizens and Consumers in the Century of Mass Consumption,” in Harvard Sitkoff, ed., *Perspectives on Modern America: Making Sense of the 20th Century* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 145–161; Lizabeth Cohen, “The New Deal State and the Making of Citizen Consumers,” and Charles McGovern, “Consumption and Citizenship in the United States, 1900–1940,” in Susan Strasser, Charles McGovern, and Matthias Judt, eds., *Getting and Spending: European and American Consumer Societies in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- ¹¹⁵ On the racial politics of suburbanization in Baltimore, see William Orser, *Block-busting in Baltimore: The Edmondson Village Story* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1994).