

# SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

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# Southern Jews, Woman Suffrage

by

Leonard Rogoff\*

This year marks the one-hundredth anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment granting women the right to vote. Southern Jews lived in a region that was largely hostile to that proposition. Of the ten states that failed to ratify by 1920, nine were southern. The national suffragists, as one journalist observed, “had given up entirely on much of the South.”<sup>1</sup> For a southerner to advocate for woman suffrage took courage, but southern suffragists pressed forward challenging a conservative polity that was entrenched in gender and racial prejudices. Among them were Jewish men and women, who played leading roles.

The major suffrage campaign took place during the Lost Cause and Jim Crow eras, times when the racial, civic, and social status of southern Jews was questioned. The campaign climaxed after World War I, when anti-immigrant nativism was sweeping the nation and the Ku Klux Klan expanded in prominence. Seemingly, southern Jews, especially after the Leo Frank lynching in 1915, were determined not to be conspicuous, not to make noise, to avoid anything controversial that might make them targets of discrimination.<sup>2</sup> Yet woman suffrage was a loud argument that threatened the entire social, political, and even racial order of southern society. Suffragism promised to overturn the gender hierarchy that had placed the southern lady on a pedestal, silent and immobile, too pure and elevated for dirty politics. Woman suffrage, many southerners feared, would reopen doors to black enfranchisement.

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Where Jews stood on woman suffrage had bearing on their regional and national, racial and religious identities. Jewish culture was certainly patriarchal, although the Reform movement was, in principle if not in practice, evolving toward egalitarianism. Certainly, too, southern Jews rooted themselves in their local communities as citizens and neighbors, but most were also either immigrants or the children of immigrants, with family and commercial ties beyond the region. They were mobile and well-traveled members of the global Jewish community, and their regional identity was often more geographical than cultural. Even as they integrated into their hometowns, they responded to suffrage developments nationally and abroad. This tension between localism and cosmopolitanism marked their suffrage careers as they negotiated between their ideals and political reality, between their aspiration to realize America's promise of inalienable rights and the civic, social, and political possibilities in a southern society ordered on white male privilege and conservative Christianity.

Jews lived in many Souths and claimed diverse class and ethnic roots. Southern Jewish suffragists included a Lithuanian-born, proletarian college student in Baltimore; a third-generation Sephardic woman with plantation roots in Charleston, South Carolina; and a country lawyer, the son of an Alsatian-born Confederate in Opelousas, Louisiana. Their local environments, rural or urban, isolated or communal, also varied, and what was politically possible in urban Tennessee did not play well in rural Alabama. Nor did Jews hold a consensus on the issue. A few were outspoken antisuffragists. Still others were indifferent. Southern Jewish suffragists, like those nationally, included both militants arrested in street protests and ladies who regarded such confrontations as unseemly. Some rooted their positions in a specifically Jewish sense of social justice while others asserted their Americanism. Southern Jewish suffragists, again like those nationally, brought their egalitarianism into the sanctuaries of their temples, advancing the democratic values that were a distinct feature of American Judaism.

### *Southern Suffragism*

The links between woman suffrage and abolitionism had long disqualified it in the South. In 1848, at the celebrated Seneca Falls Convention

for women's rights, a suffrage resolution passed, despite objections that it was too radical. After the Civil War the pressing question became citizenship for liberated slaves. The Fifteenth Amendment granted the vote to black men but not to white women, which many white suffragists took as an insult. To southerners, furthermore, federal intervention on the franchise violated states' rights.

In 1869 two national woman suffrage organizations formed: the American Woman Suffrage Association, led by Lucy Stone, and the more radical National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. When Anthony attempted to vote in 1872, she was arrested. In 1875 the Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution did not grant women the right to vote. In 1890 the two national suffrage associations merged under Anthony's leadership as the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), which organized local and state leagues.<sup>3</sup>

Suffragist leaders tended to come from urban middle-class families involved in commerce, a profile that fit Jews. Often they were women of wealth, college educated, and free of domestic responsibilities, with the leisure and means to forge independent paths. As New Women in the New South, suffragists were imbued with the Progressive era's spirit of civic uplift, but they retained the social manners and racial attitudes of southern ladies, wanting to dispel stereotypes that suffragists were radical feminists—aliens to the South. Newspapers commented on their social status and southern breeding, often complimenting their comely appearance. Southern suffragist leaders included socially elite women like Madeline MacDowell Breckenridge and Laura Clay of Kentucky.<sup>4</sup>

For women the right to vote was a means to larger social and civic reform, not an end in itself. Typically, women's activist careers began through involvement in church—or synagogue—voluntary benevolence societies.<sup>5</sup> These efforts were at best ameliorative, inadequate to solve systemic problems associated with the rising industrial economy and growth of cities. Progress, they recognized, could be achieved only through the vote as their calls for reform grew louder. The South lagged perhaps a decade behind the nation in realizing these trends, and it was slower, too, to embrace social reform.

As textile mills spread across the New South, progressive southern women responded to the exploitation of white child and woman labor.

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Rather than foster charity, they lobbied for legislation and regulation. Gertrude Weil of North Carolina spoke for many suffragist women when she explained, "Social welfare—that's the chief interest I have ever had."<sup>6</sup> The term *municipal housekeeping* describes how women took their domestic concerns—childcare, education, maternal health, sanitation, and home economics—into the public marketplace. Christian women were motivated by the Social Gospel, while Reform Jews drew on the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885. The letter described Judaism as a "progressive" religion and called upon Jews to participate in the reorganization of society.<sup>7</sup> The woman suffrage movement became the battlefield of a larger social, political, and cultural war fought between Old and New Southerners, between traditionalists content with agrarian ideals and male paternalism and modernists committed to social welfare and political reform.

The women's club movement, founded after the Civil War, evolved from social and literary societies into agencies for civic reform and women's rights, especially after coalescing into a general federation in 1890. For Jewish women the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), founded in 1893, was a portal into civic organizations, including suffrage campaigns. Suffragist Rebecca Rosenthal Judah of Louisville traced a typical activist's career. A volunteer with the Hebrew Relief Association, she helped found Louisville's NCJW chapter in 1893, which affiliated in 1906 with the Federation of Women's Clubs. By 1913 Judah was an officer of the Kentucky Equal Rights Association.<sup>8</sup>

When a regional suffrage movement emerged in the 1890s, it spread unevenly across the South. Local and state societies proved ephemeral, fading as legislatures and constitutional conventions decisively rejected proposed legislation and amendments. In North Carolina a suffrage bill was referred to the committee on insane asylums. The national movement's momentum slowed in the early 1900s as U.S. Supreme Court rulings denied women's rights, and legislative efforts failed. Without popular support, state leagues declined or expired. The South's lag followed the nation's, but more so. The period from 1896 to 1910 is conventionally labeled the movement's "doldrums."<sup>9</sup>

After 1910 the movement revived as more groups endorsed suffrage and a new generation of college-educated women assumed leadership.

Local suffrage societies coalesced into state associations. To arouse support, leading suffragists like Laura Clay, Anna Howard Shaw, and Carrie Chapman Catt crisscrossed the South on speaking tours. NAWSA sent field workers to organize and train women, enlisting affiliates. The 1912 election proved critical. Woodrow Wilson, a native southerner, was regarded as at best a lukewarm advocate favoring a states' rights approach. In 1913 Alice Paul formed the Congressional Union, a NAWSA committee, to advocate for a federal amendment. Paul, though a Quaker, had been a suffrage militant in England along with the celebrated Pankhurst sisters, whose tactics included setting fires, smashing windows, and assaulting police. At Wilson's inaugural in 1913, Paul organized a protest parade of eight thousand that was witnessed by half a million. As they marched, bystanders hooted and rioted. That event proved a turning point. By 1913 every southern state had a suffrage association. In November women gathered in Charlotte to organize the Equal Suffrage Association of North Carolina (ESANC) and joined NAWSA. In 1914 teachers and professional women created the Equal Suffrage Party of Georgia, and a year later it claimed branches in thirteen counties. That year, too, local societies organized the South Carolina Equal Suffrage League, which affiliated with NAWSA. In 1914 two associations formed in Tennessee, merging in 1918 also as NAWSA affiliates.<sup>10</sup>

Those opposed to woman suffrage, the "antis," were slower to organize. Their ranks drew from governing elites centered in the Democratic Party. The northern-based National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage created southern affiliates that enlisted plantation aristocrats, conservative churchmen, and industrialists. Liquor interests feared that women's votes would bring prohibition. Mill owners wanted a free hand to exploit cheap labor. Christian conservatives cited biblical chapter and verse in asserting that a woman's scripturally ordained role was as wife and mother within the home. "The most powerful reason of all," a sympathetic North Carolina state senator told a suffragist, "is that it would bring on race problems."<sup>11</sup>

In the South, race was the overriding factor against woman suffrage. Many feared that enfranchising black women would overthrow white supremacy. Having resolved the so-called "Negro problem" with segregation and disenfranchisement, southerners did not want to let the federal government again dictate to the states who was eligible to vote.



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Suffragists had to assure southern legislators, whose votes were necessary for ratification, that women's votes would not return suffrage to African Americans.<sup>12</sup>

Thus many white southerners were not endeared to the suffrage movement, which was led by northerners and had its earliest successes in western states. Whereas national suffragists pushed for a federal amendment, southern advocates supported states' rights. Which approach would be most effective? In 1913, after NAWSA committed to a federal amendment, Kate Gordon of Louisiana organized a Southern States Woman Suffrage Conference (SSWSC) under the motto "Make the Southern States White." National suffrage groups deferred to southern racial sensitivities. Alice Paul assured South Carolinians that "Negro men cannot vote in South Carolina and therefore Negro women could not." In the 1913 Washington, D.C., parade, Paul had permitted black women to march—in the back. NAWSA President Carrie Chapman Catt employed the "statistical argument": white women's votes would strengthen white supremacy since they outnumbered black women *and* men. However, NAWSA leaders rejected southern demands that "whites-only" clauses be added to suffragist amendments even when southerners threatened to withhold funds. NAWSA's commitment to a federal amendment precipitated a split with the SSWSC. Some states' rights suffragists allied with the antisuffragists rather than support a federal amendment, but most southern women remained with NAWSA.<sup>13</sup>

*Carrie Chapman Catt, c. 1909.*  
(Library of Congress.)

Alice Paul and Carrie Chapman Catt split over tactics. Paul pledged to oppose all Democratic candidates, even those who were prosuffrage, to force Wilson's hand, a position Catt and NAWSA ardently opposed. In 1916, Paul, expelled from NAWSA for her militancy, turned her Congressional Union committee into the National Woman's Party (NWP) and sent workers to organize state campaigns. Among them were two Jews, Russian-born Mary DuBrow of Passaic, New Jersey, who worked West Virginia, and Rebecca Hourwich Reyher of New York, daughter of a Columbia professor, who traveled the southern states. In response, Catt put forward her "Winning Plan" to secure a federal amendment with ratification campaigns in thirty-six states. In Charleston and other communities, women debated remaining with NAWSA or joining NWP.<sup>14</sup>

By 1916 both Democratic and Republican party conventions endorsed woman suffrage, but President Wilson was still regarded as a weak advocate. By 1917 he focused on waging a war to make the world safe for democracy rather than risking political capital on democracy for women at home. NAWSA, despite the pacifism of its leaders, declared a wartime moratorium, arguing that to engage in antigovernment protests while fathers, sons, and brothers were dying on battlefields overseas would brand the movement as unpatriotic and prove counterproductive. In contrast, Paul's NWP paraded by the thousands in 1916 and picketed the White House, actions which the respectable women of NAWSA disavowed as harmful to their cause. In Gallatin, Tennessee, NWP organizer Rebecca Hourwich hired a wagon and rode through town yelling, "Come to the schoolhouse! Hear the White House pickets!"<sup>15</sup>

Starting as Silent Sentinels, NWP protesters chained themselves to the White House fence, burned Wilson's speeches in urns, and threw an effigy of the president in the fire. Mobs attacked the women, and police clubbed them and dragged them away by their hair. Those arrested, often on frivolous charges, were incarcerated in a dungeon-like, vermin-infested workhouse serving as a prison. They went on a hunger strike that police answered with brutal force feedings. Mass arrests inspired more women to travel to Washington to take the place of those arrested. The NWP sponsored a Prison Special, a train of previously incarcerated women that traveled the country, including stops in Charleston, Chattanooga, Jacksonville, and New Orleans, where women held rallies against government brutality. Among the ex-inmate passengers was Caroline

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Katzenstein, a North Carolinian who had moved to Philadelphia. Even opponents felt sympathy. By 1917 South Carolina reported three thousand suffragists in twenty-five leagues.<sup>16</sup>

NAWSA, two million strong, decried the NWP's tactics as radical. Antisuffragists played into regional fears of another northern invasion, this time of money and outside agitators who did not know how things were done in the South. As Kentucky suffragist Madeline Breckenridge observed, southerners were "trying to get suffrage in the most lady-like manner."<sup>17</sup> Belligerence was alien to the character of a southern lady. They hoped that women's wartime service as nurses and teachers, meeting manpower shortages, demonstrated that they qualified for citizenship so that Wilson would reward them with the vote.

### *Jews, Judaism, and Suffragism*

Complicating the choices confronting Jews, the suffrage movement was tainted with antisemitism in its early days. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a freethinker disdainful of religion, wrote a *Women's Bible* that held Judaism responsible for male chauvinism. A suffrage newspaper published by Stanton and Anthony in 1869 described Jews as a "a useless portion of society," and, at an 1885 NWSA conference, Stanton blamed "religious creeds derived from Judaism" for patriarchy. Nor were Jews drawn to the largest women's organization to advocate suffrage, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), which targeted southerners. Its feminism, pacifism, and progressive social agenda might have appealed to Jews—and the WCTU was willing to accept Jewish members and cooperate with Jewish organizations—but Jews did not sympathize with its Christian evangelism or its advocacy of prohibition.<sup>18</sup>

Early in their careers, NAWSA leaders Anna Howard Shaw and Carrie Chapman Catt expressed nativist, anti-immigrant views targeting Jews. They resented that an "ignorant" male immigrant could vote while a native-born American woman could not. Still, Catt in her domestic and international activism associated with Jewish women as friends and colleagues and regularly addressed NCJW conventions. Also allegedly antisemitic (the evidence is thin), Alice Paul, too, worked closely with Jews, notably Anita Pollitzer of Charleston. Mabel Pollitzer described Paul as a "marvelous woman" and cited her as an "inspiration," with "every good quality and wonderful thing you can think of." Nonetheless, Paul

expressed racial views common among patrician classes. In Great Britain, where Paul had served her suffragist apprenticeship, Jewish women had segregated into a separate Jewish League for Woman Suffrage, but American Jews were welcomed into mainstream suffrage organizations. In Kentucky Rebecca Rosenthal Judah and Madeline McDowell Breckenridge fundraised for suffrage.<sup>19</sup> Jews did not feel excluded or the need for a separate organization.

Jewish interest in woman suffrage reflected public sentiment generally. In 1874 when courting Mina Rosenthal, Henry Weil, a Goldsboro, North Carolina, merchant, wrote her wanting to know, "Are you a woman's rights man?" In 1886 members of the Montefiore Literary Society of Selma, Alabama, debated the question. Jews could be found among all parties in the campaign, but the reluctance of local and national Jewish organizations to endorse suffrage suggests a more tempered if not indifferent membership. Indeed, suffragists generally often expressed frustration over their inability to arouse womanhood. Sophie Weil Brown of Columbus, Georgia, was a suffrage league activist, but her Jewish society, the Century Club, considered the issue without taking a stance. In 1908 Charleston's NCJW presented a program, "Various Methods of Voting," and six years later the Atlanta chapter held a program to promote suffrage. However much Atlanta Jewish women's organizations debated suffrage, not one formally endorsed it.<sup>20</sup>

In their suffragism, or lack thereof, southern Jewish women were not likely different from their sisters elsewhere. Eastern European Jewish immigrants settling in rising New South towns and cities had more pressing needs in overcoming their poverty and acculturating to America than in exercising their civil liberties. In 1914 Atlanta attorney Walter Visanska organized a Civic Educational League to inspire these immigrants to shed their apathy and obtain citizenship and register to vote. This problem transcended regions. Rhode Island suffragist Esther Abelson, a 1913 NAWSA convention delegate, expressed the need "to rouse the Jewish contingent from its extreme indifference." That organizations like the NCJW were unable to pass suffrage resolutions, despite the open support of its leadership—notably its founding president Hannah Greenebaum Solomon—suggests widespread apathy or significant opposition to suffrage among its members. Two matriarchs of American Jewry, sisters Maud Nathan and Annie Nathan Meyer, opposed each other vehemently

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on the question. Maud, leader of New York's Consumers League, was an outspoken suffragist, marching in the streets, while Annie, founder of Barnard College, recoiled at what she saw as her sister's undignified militancy.<sup>21</sup>

Although the Reform movement was egalitarian in principle, and its rabbis, notably Isaac Mayer Wise, took progressive positions, it, too, showed reluctance. The Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), the Reform rabbinic body, qualified its endorsement of woman suffrage by leaving it to the individual rabbi and congregation. Not until 1917 did it unambiguously pass a formal resolution endorsing it. Rarely did women serve as synagogue officers or hold voting rights as independent members.<sup>22</sup> For the Jewish masses—eastern European Orthodox immigrants especially—patriarchy was engrained in the religion and culture, and Conservative and Orthodox congregations did not grant women rights. However, if Jewish women were hostile or indifferent to suffrage, they did not apparently lead or affiliate with antisuffrage organizations in appreciable numbers. In contrast to suffragist associations, opponents did not meld into a mass movement. Their leadership tended to be elitist, upper class, and high church, not a likely society for a Jewish crowd.

National figures like Rebekah Kohut saw their work within the traditions of Judaism and linked political suffrage with religious reform. The southern Jewish suffrage leaders tended to be Reform and second- or third-generation Americans of German ancestry. Although the Reform movement did not formally endorse suffrage, women still took inspiration from it. They rooted their social activism in spirituality and specifically cited the Jewish prophetic obligation to be a "light unto the nations" as motivation. When the NCJW rejected a suffragist resolution, Anita Pollitzer, although not notably observant, wrote an article, "Women and the Law," for *The Jewish Woman*, a quarterly published by the NCJW, in which she cited the Talmud and analyzed modern womanhood, noting that Reform Judaism had recognized their equality.<sup>23</sup>

Jewish woman suffragists did not see any incompatibility between women's rights advocacy and Judaism, and they performed double duty as civic activists and Jewish organizational leaders across regions. Dr. Rosa Hirschmann Gantt served as both president of the South Carolina Federation of Temple Sisterhoods and legislative chair of the South Carolina Equal Suffrage League. Suffragist Sadie Crockin of Baltimore headed

her local Hadassah and League of Women Voters. Ida Friend of New Orleans, a member of the suffragist Era Club, founded her city's Hadassah chapter, serving as its president. In Tennessee Jennie Lowenheim Lusky, her sister-in-law Lettie Nassauer Lusky, Helen Wile Mills, and Sarah Lowenstein Teitlebaum prominently led suffrage and Jewish organizations. Also active was Sophie Goldberger Friedman, an immigrant from Austria-Hungary and leader of the Memphis Council of Jewish Women and her temple sisterhood. In 1919 Friedman served as secretary of the Memphis Women's Congress that united the city's suffrage societies. Her role in Tennessee's ratification has been described as "pivotal."<sup>24</sup>

*The Southern Jewish Suffragists*

Although Jewish women were not national suffrage organizational leaders, they worked closely with the national leadership. Foremost among them was Rachel Brill Ezekiel, born in Charleston and raised in Richmond, who established NAWSA's legislative headquarters in Washington, D.C., in 1909 and later worked as Catt's personal secretary. Ezekiel, as NAWSA's lone paid staff member, coordinated its national petition drive and served as its Washington spokesperson. Catt, in tribute, wrote that "among the faithful thousands . . . none was more patient, helpful, understanding and efficient" than Ezekiel. In the NWP Anita Pollitzer worked at Alice Paul's side. Following the lead of her older sisters Mabel and Carrie, Anita began her suffrage career in her native Charleston where she drew posters, sold lemonade, and debated antis on the streets. After graduating from Columbia, she worked in the art department at the University of Virginia but traveled to Washington to join the woman suffrage movement. Paul, recognizing her talents, sent her to Capitol Hill to lobby senators and representatives. Anita, a member of NWP's ratification committee, stood over the politicians to ensure that they made a promised phone call or sent a telegram. By 1915 she was established in New York as a suffragist, where she marched in a celebrated parade down Fifth Avenue. Anita traveled the South—Florida, Virginia, and Tennessee—as a NWP organizer, returning to Charleston often. Pollitzer's climb in the ranks culminated in the party's chairmanship in 1945. The northerner Paul, with a reputation as abrasive, sent the personable Pollitzer to organize eastern Tennessee as the ratification battle reached its climax.<sup>25</sup>

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*Anita Pollitzer (standing) with Alice Paul at the grave of  
Susan B. Anthony, Rochester, New York, July 1923.  
(Library of Congress.)*

More so at the local and state levels, Jewish women served in upper leadership. Rebecca Rosenthal Judah rose from long-time treasurer of the Kentucky Equal Rights Association to its vice presidency. When Georgia organized its Equal Suffrage Party, Matilda Reinhardt Elsas was state organizer and Sara Cohen Schlesinger treasurer. Carrie Pollitzer served as a Charleston Equal Suffrage League officer in various capacities, and in 1912 she opened a stand on King and Broad streets where she distributed suffrage literature. Mabel Pollitzer rose to state chair of the NWP. When Carrie Chapman Catt promulgated her Winning Plan, she appointed Gertrude Weil as field commander of North Carolina. In 1913 an Equal Suffrage Association of North Carolina organized and affiliated with NAWSA with Weil as vice president. By 1914 she organized and presided over the Goldsboro Equal Suffrage League. By 1919 Weil was elected president of the state league, leading the campaign to ratify the Nineteenth

Amendment. Her friend Laura Weill Cone, wife of a Greensboro textile magnate, served as treasurer.<sup>26</sup>

Southern Jewish women followed common suffrage career paths. Like suffragists generally, they typically came from religiously affiliated families and started in benevolence societies. Brill's father was an Orthodox rabbi, and Weil and the Pollitzer sisters recalled pious mothers active in the synagogue. Their first public service was as Sunday school teachers. Their mothers were pillars of benevolence societies and educated their daughters in charity. Many began their civic involvement in woman clubs, a movement dating to the late 1860s. Gertrude Weil, known as Federation Gertie, pushed the state's clubs to evolve from social and literary societies to agencies of prison reform, public health, clean government, maternal care, public education, and women's rights—all municipal housekeeping chores they had failed to achieve without the vote. Carrie Pollitzer, as a member of her local woman's club executive board, was instrumental in opening the College of Charleston to women. The Pollitzers, charter members of Charleston's Equal Suffrage League, joined the city's leading families in organizing settlement houses and advocating for libraries, public schools, and labor rights.<sup>27</sup>

Like other suffragist leaders, Jews prominent in the movement often came from illustrious families. Weil and the Pollitzers came from wealthy families with reputations as entrepreneurs, philanthropists, and civic leaders. Their grandparents had emigrated from central Europe in the late antebellum years. Weils were city councilmen and university trustees, while Pollitzers served on school and health boards as well as the Cotton Exchange. Their parents set models of public service and decorum. Wealth afforded them a measure of independence, and their family's civic engagement opened doors. Cultured and acculturated, they mixed socially with high society. Laura Cone's family, among the state's leading industrialists, enjoyed baronial wealth, and they endowed schools, hospitals, and YMCAs. Her extended family included a mayor, lawyers, and university trustees. Jewish suffragists, too, like Rebecca Rosenthal Judah of Louisville, came from the rising urban middle class, the archetypical builders of a New South whose wealth had freed them for club and civic work.<sup>28</sup>

The Pollitzers described themselves as a "South of Broad" family, clearly identifying with southern genteel society. Upper-class women



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among southern Jewish suffragists had their counterparts among Jewish and non-Jewish suffragists elsewhere. The national movement included Sephardic grandees Maud Nathan of New York and Selena Solomons of San Francisco, who traced their ancestry to the nation's first Jewish families. Rose Pastor Stokes became a national celebrity when the poor, Polish-born Jewish activist married a socially elite Episcopalian millionaire. Rachel Brill was born into a poor eastern European immigrant family in Charleston, but in marrying Jacob Levy Ezekiel of Richmond, she carried the name of a Sephardic family with colonial roots and Confederate service.<sup>29</sup>

Older, aristocratic southern Christian women whose status offered security mentored Weil and the Pollitzers. Such collaborations affirmed the social acceptance of Jews. In Weil's case, a prominent plantation lady, Sallie Southall Cotten, known as the Mother of Woman's Clubs, groomed her for leadership, and their relationship was warm and collegial. Active in the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Cotten was esteemed as the model of southern womanhood, a well-published author who exalted white Anglo-Saxon blood. For the Pollitzers, Susan Pringle Frost, a historic preservationist and founding president of the Charleston Equal Suffrage League, served as mentor. Despite her Old South heritage, Frost, whom the sisters called Miss Sue, ardently supported a federal rather than a states' rights approach. Her status as a Charleston aristocrat was such, Mabel Pollitzer recalled, that she did not suffer the calumny more typically directed at NWP suffragists for their alleged radicalism. Like many in the movement, Weil and the Pollitzer sisters took the mantle from their elders, Old South to New.<sup>30</sup>

Many of these southern Jewish daughters received the finest college educations available for women. At the time women were traditionally destined for marriage and motherhood, and their college enrollment was numerically insignificant. Southern Jews were among those who attended elite northern colleges. Gertrude Weil matriculated at the Horace Mann School at Columbia and then became the first North Carolinian to graduate from Smith. Anita, Carrie, and Mabel Pollitzer held degrees from Columbia Teachers College in New York. They were not alone in graduating from Columbia, and other Jewish suffragists were alumnae of Goucher, Richmond, and Memphis. Ida Weis Friend's parents left

Natchez in 1882 to educate their children in Europe, and Ida spoke French and German fluently.<sup>31</sup> These women were hardly southern provincials.

Suffragists were disproportionately unmarried or relatively free of family and domestic duties. Neither Gertrude Weil nor Mabel and Carrie Pollitzer married, and Anita was childless. Like other suffragists, too, professionals were highly represented. Returning to Charleston, Mabel Pollitzer pioneered science education and environmentalism, while Carrie advanced the kindergarten movement and women's education. Anita taught at the University of Virginia before embarking on her career as a feminist organizational activist. Dr. Rosa Hirschmann Gantt of South Carolina was a pioneering physician. Anita Pollitzer returned to Columbia to earn a degree in international law, and at forty-four, suffragist Sophie Friedman of Tennessee entered law school at Memphis University. Anita Pollitzer, Marguerite Rosett Bishow, and Theresa Pollak of Richmond were professional artists for whom freedom of expression was inherent in their work. Pollak, who had attended the Arts Student League in New York, founded what became the art department of Virginia Commonwealth University and is credited with introducing modern art to conservative Richmond.<sup>32</sup> As wage-earners, professional women echoed revolutionary calls for no taxation without representation. They were pioneers in fields beyond suffrage, conscious of their rights, and not dependent on a father or a husband.

Younger Jewish New Women were less deferential than their mothers' generation. Those who engaged in civil disobedience and subjected themselves to arrest tended to be college-aged youth educated in new ideologies of class and gender. In 1917, when the NWP sent Silent Sentinels to picket the White House, Anita Pollitzer joined the line and was arrested. Answering the NWP's call for a College Day of White House picketing, Dorothy Gertrude Sterne of Anniston, Alabama, and Ida Glatt McCarthy of Baltimore were among thirty Goucher students who defied their college president's explicit directive not to do so. A month later Glatt, who had joined the founding meeting of the Congressional Union, returned to picket. In 1919 Marguerite Rosett Bishow, who attended the Maryland Institute of Art, pulled her Russian-born mother, Sophie, to a watch-fire protest at the White House. Marguerite was arrested, spending forty-eight hours in jail, only to return the next month for the final watch-fire demonstration, which earned her five more days in district jail. Mother and

*Suffragists picketing at the White House, Washington, D.C., 1917.*  
(*Wikimedia Commons.*)

*Ida Glatt McCarthy, 1917.*  
(*Donnybrook Fair, AlexanderStreet.com.*)

daughter were awarded the NWP's prison-door pins. Mabel Pollitzer described the picketers as "dear little young women" who kept the fires burning. She recalled the excitement when the prison special train of released prisoners arrived in Charleston, drawing a large crowd to the Academy of Music.<sup>33</sup>

*Admission ticket for "Prison Special" meeting in Charleston, February 10, 1919.  
(National Woman's Party Records, Library of Congress.)*

Generational conflicts sometimes opened, but not in all cases, given the gamut of opinion. Suffragist mothers drew their daughters into the movement at an early age. Marguerite Rosett Bishow's suffrage baptism had been at thirteen when her mother took her on a celebrated Baltimore-to-Annapolis "pilgrimage." Elizabeth Jonas Jacobs of Tennessee donned a suffragist white dress when she marched with her mother to Nashville's Hermitage Hotel, the ratification campaign's headquarters. Her daughter Adèle pulled Estelle Goodman Clark to suffragist meetings in Richmond. Yet, even in progressive households, the woman's vote might be a bridge too far. The Pollitzer family ethos was "all that was good for the city," but there was no discussion on "the injustice of women not voting," Mabel recalled, "I don't ever remember either mother or father ever speaking of that." Her mother, a normal school graduate, was a "traditional homemaker" involved with family and synagogue. In contrast, Gertrude Weil's mother and aunt, founders of the city's Woman's Club, fought to have women serve on school and library boards. Mina Weil hosted radical feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman for a lecture series. Yet neither mother nor

aunt joined Gertrude's suffrage societies although the older women committed to expand women's civil, marital, and property rights. In 1914 the national Federation of Women's Clubs endorsed suffrage, but not until 1918 was the North Carolina Federation able to pass a similar resolution.<sup>34</sup> Southern public opinion opposed woman suffrage, and not every progressive woman endorsed the vote as necessary to secure women's rights.

Jewish antisuffragists may not have been numerous, but if Tennessee was representative, they were prominent. Yetta Levy of Memphis wanted it known that she should be "put . . . down as emphatically against" woman suffrage. Levy had served thirty-one years as president of the Ladies' Hebrew Relief Association in Memphis. Her opposition was not based on specifically Jewish sources, but she expressed domestic gender views common in antisuffragist literature. Levy told a reporter: "Woman suffrage would degrade womanhood: her household duties would be interfered with by her political duties." She did not see how a woman could leave home and children to do jury duty, nor would a respectable woman go to the polls. She "trusted" men "to guide the ship of state." Also expressing traditionalist views was Rosa Small of Memphis. A Russian immigrant, she would not cast a ballot out of respect for her husband, Louis, who could not even abide talk about women's rights. Elizabeth Bloomstein's background as a highly educated professional seemed more typical of suffragists, but a 1914 profile listed her as "against woman suffrage." A member of the first graduating class of George Peabody College in Nashville in 1877, she did graduate work at Wisconsin and Chicago. Bloomstein spent her life on the Peabody campus as a historian and librarian, active in the Woman's Club and temperance society. Born in 1859, she belonged to an older generation, and her affiliations included the United Daughters of the Confederacy as well as the Southern Women's League for Rejection. Socially conservative publisher Adolph Ochs, raised in Knoxville, was a fervid antisuffragist, and his *Chattanooga Times* editorialized against ratification. Like their suffragist coreligionists, these antis were affiliated Jews and just as various in their histories and identities.<sup>35</sup>

#### *Militants or Moderates?*

For southern Jewish suffragists, no less than others, the viable choices were whether to join the moderate NAWSA with its meetings, lobbying, and letter-writing or the militant NWP with its picketing,

protesting, and mass arrests. Jewish women allied with each camp. When the NWP sent field workers to North Carolina to enlist women, Gertrude Weil organized NAWSA-affiliated ESANC chapters. While NWP protesters chained themselves to White House gates and engaged in hunger strikes, Weil issued a statement dissociating ESANC from “undignified demonstrations” and disavowing “so-called militant methods.”<sup>36</sup>

*Gertrude Weil, seated at left, at the Equal Suffrage Association  
of North Carolina (ESANC) office in Raleigh.  
(State Archives of North Carolina.)*

South Carolina offers another story. Mabel Pollitzer recalled a Charleston parlor meeting that Susan Pringle Frost convened in December 1917 with thirty to forty women. According to Frost, the choices were between a state-by-state approach, which she attributed to Catt and NAWSA, and the federal amendment as advocated by Paul’s NWP. Her account is mystifying since by then NAWSA as well as NWP had committed to a federal amendment. Perhaps the states’ rights position was still endorsed by the South Carolina Suffrage League, which remained affiliated with NAWSA, or perhaps Mabel Pollitzer’s memory—she was interviewed in 1974, nearly sixty years later—was faulty. She explained, “We felt that getting it state by state . . . would be a great mistake. . . . It would delay it for years.” In any case Mabel remembered Frost calling on those who chose to join the NWP to rise to their feet. Among them were Mabel and Carrie Pollitzer. Anita Pollitzer signed on too, likely from New

*Mabel Pollitzer, 1906.*

*(Courtesy of the Jewish Heritage  
Collection, College of Charleston.)*

*Carrie Pollitzer, c. 1925.*

*(Courtesy of the South Carolina  
Historical Society.)*

York as a NWP organizer. Other Jewish women stood as well, some descendants from Old South families. They included the elderly Mrs. Ansley Cohen from the Moïse family of Sumter and Nina Ottolengui, an actress and café owner from a plantation family that had lost its fortune during the Civil War. Narrowly outnumbered, these women withdrew to form a NWP chapter.<sup>37</sup>

Dora Rubin, a legal secretary whom Mabel recalled as “very intellectual,” from a more recently arrived Jewish family, remained seated with the Equal Suffrage League affiliated with NAWSA. The Charleston NAWSA women issued a “declaration of principles” affirming that they, too, were committed to a federal suffrage amendment but would “subordinate” their efforts to “war work.” Moreover, they declared their

disapproval of "picketing," NWP's primary tactic. That declaration addressed the root of their national schism: militancy.<sup>38</sup>

Contrary to the national acrimony, Mabel Pollitzer described the Charleston split as excited but amicable: a "gentle splitting." She could not recall anything "denunciatory," or a "community reaction." Such polite behavior was typical of the southern campaign and suggests a regional distinction. Neither suffrage group was ever large, and the local NAWSA seemed to fade away. South Carolina, like its sister southern states, was notoriously antisuffragist, and women could not vote in state elections until 1921. The legislature failed to ratify the federal amendment until 1969, in time for Mabel's eighty-fourth birthday.<sup>39</sup>

Although these Jewish suffragists aspired to be New Women, they responded as southern ladies. Rather than picket, light bonfires, and confront police, southern suffragists met, paraded, and lobbied. Sadie Jacobs Crockin of Baltimore marched and lobbied, but she recoiled from the idea of picketing the White House or undergoing arrest. Anita Pollitzer subjected herself to arrest in Washington, but her older sisters Mabel and Carrie in Charleston did not. The NWP deliberately sent the twenty-five-year-old Anita Pollitzer to lobby lawmakers because they thought that southern gentlemen would courteously receive a young, vivacious woman gifted with southern charm. "In order to grip the Southern heart a cause must have its glamour," wrote suffragist Anne Dallas Dudley of Tennessee. Newspapers described Weil as a model of southern womanhood, complimenting her fashion and gentility.<sup>40</sup>

*Sadie Jacobs Crockin, late 1890s.*

*(Courtesy of the Jewish Museum  
of Maryland, Baltimore.)*



## 22 SOUTHERN JEWISH HISTORY

To counter the claims of radicalism, Jewish suffragists, like others, downplayed feminism and emphasized domesticity. The unmarried Weil explained to the Woman's Club that with the vote women "shall use it in our old, time-honored business of housekeeping" in ways that would be "beautiful for our families."<sup>41</sup> In their polite demeanor, southern suffragists, including Jewish ones, may have been acting in character, but their domestic posture was also strategic. Suffragism was not popular in the South, and its female adherents were attacked as unwomanly. The Southern Women's Rejection League alleged that suffrage would wreck homes, violate the Bible, and soil women's purity. It warned of abandoned babies and prostitution. Taking on the entrenched Democratic political machine would be confrontational. Political bosses believed that the woman's vote would open the floodgate to blacks, trade unionists, and progressives.

### *Suffragism and Class Lines*

Southern Jewish suffragist leaders, like others, typically came from the urban middle and upper classes. As benevolent women, they often knew the working classes through their support of settlement houses and Americanization programs for immigrants. They joined the National Consumers League, which advocated for workers. A desired but unrealized suffragist ambition was to establish a sisterhood across class lines. Southern Jewry, which tended to be mercantile, did not have the proletarian culture of the urban north, but the eastern European Jewish immigrants recently settled in the South were not far removed from it.

The first stage of their American migration typically began in Baltimore or New York. There they lived in communities which included proletarians committed to socialism and trade unionism, both of which identified with the suffrage movement. Yiddish-speaking southern Jews subscribed to the New York newspaper *Forverts*, which reported on the suffrage movement in the U.S. and abroad. The subject was intensely debated in its pages, including letters from women who feared that the vote would undo family life. Heavily Jewish immigrant voting districts in New York, following the Jewish press, endorsed suffrage referenda in 1915 and 1917. In 1917 the Workmen's Circle/Arbeiter Ring, a leftist, Yiddish-culture fraternal society, endorsed suffrage. The organization had chapters in six southern states, mostly in cities, but its members tended to be petit bourgeoisie rather than working class. Suffragists like Marguerite Rosett

Bishow of Baltimore, Naomi Silverman Cohn of Richmond, and Joe Hanover of Memphis were children of immigrant storekeepers. Raised in a Yiddish-speaking immigrant milieu, they did not have the wealth or social status of the grand dames of suffragism but were aspirational Americans. Suffragist Sadie Jacobs Crockin worked with trade unions and on Americanization programs in Baltimore's immigrant neighborhoods. Henrietta Szold, committed to women's rights, also worked with immigrants in her native Baltimore, and her Hadassah movement was linked with the socialist ethos of labor Zionism. In 1918 Hadassah, which appealed to eastern European immigrant women, telegraphed President Wilson in support of suffrage, noting that women in Palestine had the vote.<sup>42</sup>

Although southern Jews were rarely laborers, they responded to the exploitation of white child and woman labor in the textile mills, which drew them to suffrage as an agency of reform. Suffragists like Gertrude Weil, Naomi Silverman Cohn, and Rebecca Rosenthal Judah took up the cause of child and woman's labor. Some, too, joined or donated to the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL). Weil boldly declared that the "the platform and aims of the Equal Suffrage League and Labor Unions [are] the same." A union trademark appeared on state suffrage league literature. WTUL's president was Rose Schneiderman, a Polish-born New Yorker who traveled the country on behalf of NAWSA. Those committed to improving the lives of working women were drawn to NAWSA, which was linked to social reform movements, rather than to the NWP with its single focus on the vote. Southern Jewish women of eastern European ethnicity would not have felt differently than their northern sisters, with whom they were likely intimately familiar. But with the exception of Ida Glatt McCarthy of Baltimore, they did not have the histories of northern trade unionists like New Yorkers Clara Lemlich, Nina Samordin, or Rose Pastor Stokes, whose radicalism led them to the Communist Party (CP). McCarthy had become a socialist at Goucher College, where she presided over both the Menorah Society and Equal Suffrage League. A WTUL member, she married an Irish immigrant labor organizer. She affiliated with the CP—she was a *Daily Worker* journalist—but only after she left the South for Chicago and Los Angeles.<sup>43</sup> Southern red baiters conflated suffragism with communism, feminism, trade unionism, and race mixing.

*A Cosmopolitan Movement*

College-educated and well-traveled, southern Jewish suffragists had a cosmopolitan perspective, viewing their native South as both insiders and outsiders. They measured their efforts less in terms of the conservative South than by the progress of the national and international movements they knew well. In this regard they were clearly aligned with leading suffragists like Maud Nathan and Carrie Chapman Catt who attended international feminist, suffrage, and peace conferences where European Jewish women often took leading roles. Anita Pollitzer represented South Carolina at the International Feminists Conference in Paris in 1916. A year later she participated in the World Women's Party and International Council of Women. Gertrude Weil and Sadie Jacobs Crokin, among others, joined the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Their most common international cause was Zionism, and many were Hadassah leaders or chapter organizers.<sup>44</sup>

As cosmopolitans, southern Jewish suffragists echoed Enlightenment rhetoric of human rights. After World War I, they questioned how America claimed to have fought for democracy when tyrannical Germany and Bolshevik Russia had granted women voting rights. When debating woman suffrage in 1886 in Selma, Alabama, Jacob Rothschild, a Confederate veteran, cited "Rousseau [*sic*], Voltaire, Locke" on "principles of universal liberty & emancipation." He began a historical survey of women leaders with the Hebrew warrior-prophetess "Debra," then continued through Queen Victoria to a Mrs. Gaines, a New Orleans lawyer. When urging Louisiana to ratify a state suffrage amendment in 1918, state senator Leon Haas evoked President Wilson, Britain's Lloyd-George, and Belgium's King Albert as well as "suffrage sentiment" in Canada, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland.<sup>45</sup>

*Southern Jewish Male Suffragists*

Like their wives and mothers, southern Jewish men took bold stands in support of the woman's vote. Southern Reform rabbis, aligned with the CCAR, spoke out in public forums for the woman's vote. For Atlanta's Rabbi David Marx, a pillar of classical Reform Judaism, woman suffrage was consistent with his social justice agenda, which included improved race relations. He addressed woman suffrage societies. Memphis rabbi

William Fineshriber of Temple Israel, active in the Equal Suffrage Association, was described as "one of the most forceful speakers in the city" for suffrage. At the Tri-State Fair of 1913, he was the lone male speaker. Rabbi Isadore Lewinthal of Nashville also wrote in support. New Orleans rabbi Max Heller once held traditional views on woman's domesticity, but noting the rising numbers of educated women, he sermonized that woman had a place in the "World" as well as the "Home." His writings on suffrage were printed in the *Woman's Journal*.<sup>46</sup>

Joe Hanover of Memphis was among the leading male spokespersons for woman suffrage in Tennessee and played a critical role as floor leader for the amendment's ratification as a member of the state legislature. This Polish-born son of immigrants had earned a law degree from the University of Memphis, and after a stint in the state legislature worked as a city attorney. In 1919, he resigned to reclaim his House seat as an independent against the Democratic machine so he could commit himself to the suffrage cause. A thirty-year-old bachelor, he spoke passionately and eloquently of the women's vote as a patriotic cause.<sup>47</sup>

Attorney Leonard Grossman of Atlanta provided legal counsel to suffrage organizations and founded the Georgia Men's League for Women Suffrage, an affiliate of a national organization. A member of The Temple in Atlanta, he had the support of his rabbi, David Marx. Grossman, a Republican, and his wife, Trudel, attended the 1913 NAWSA convention in Washington. Georgia equal suffrage league president Mary Latimer McLendon recalled, "Mr. Grossman toured the state . . . drafted proposed bills and ratification resolutions . . . appeared before annual conventions . . . occupied church pulpits and addressed women's clubs, civic bodies, city councils, and legislative committees." In 1918 he was elected to represent Fulton County in the legislature. His testimony and politicking was to no avail. The Men's League presence was "nominal," with little influence beyond Atlanta. Georgia legislators expressed pride in being the first state to reject ratification.<sup>48</sup> The character and success of his and others' activism, as with the women, reflected the political realities of their states.

In Louisiana state senator Leon Haas cosponsored a bill authorizing a public referendum on a state constitutional suffrage amendment. The *New Orleans Times-Picayune* succinctly summarized the bill's intent: "Passage of the state suffrage bill, it is believed, presages the defeat of the

federal suffrage amendment pending in the Legislature, which will leave Louisiana standing pat on states' rights." Haas was caught in the crossfire of Louisiana politics. Born in Bayou Chicot to an Alsatian Jewish immigrant storekeeper who had served as a Confederate officer, his family had ties to suffragist Rabbi Heller of New Orleans. After receiving a law degree from the University of Virginia in 1901, he returned home, where he took state leadership posts in civic societies. He represented St. Landry Parish for twenty-one years in the state senate. In defending his bill, Haas argued that woman suffrage was an age-old "question" that "has commanded attention in every civilized country in the world." Despite his effort to universalize the proposition, Haas was responding specifically to Kate Gordon, the suffragist leader of the SSWSC, who was so ardent about states' rights that she would rather have suffrage fail than a federal amendment ratified. The resolution passed the two-thirds threshold in the senate by one vote. When Governor Ruffin Pleasant signed the bill, Gordon excluded members of the NAWSA-affiliated Woman Suffrage Party, and Haas was "shut out." The newspaper reported that the "sensational . . . clash between the suffrage factions" left Haas expressing reservations, "almost shaking my confidence in the wisdom of votes for women." Haas's support for suffrage was principled, but his endorsement of states' rights was expedient. Given Louisiana's politics, he did not take issue with the NAWSA women who wanted ratification of the federal amendment. A study of suffragism in Louisiana noted that Jews were prominent in NAWSA but were wholly absent from the states' rights suffrage organization.<sup>49</sup>

*Southern Jewish Suffragists and the Race Question*

Behind the states' rights argument was white supremacy. Governor Pleasant said that he signed the Haas-Powell bill because he feared that a federal amendment "will force the negro back to the ballot box." In her campaign for states' rights suffragism, Kate Gordon was a virulent, unabashed racist, so much so that she alienated the national suffrage leadership that was otherwise willing to accommodate to the South on race. That Gordon excluded Haas from the "glory" suggests, to his credit, that he was not a fellow traveler in her racist campaign. The linkage between black and woman enfranchisements had bedeviled the movement since abolitionism. When testifying in support of woman's suffrage to the

Georgia legislature in 1914, Leonard Grossman reassured the lawmakers that woman's vote would not lead to black enfranchisement but would rather uphold "white supremacy for a white man's country."<sup>50</sup>

The racial debate on suffrage occurred during an era when antisemitism evolved from a religious to a racial prejudice, and social discrimination became commonplace. Southern Jews certainly had to tread cautiously on the race line. Taking a stand as a white citizen, Grossman shared the general sentiment among suffragists that a tactical support of white supremacy was necessary to persuade southern legislators to ratify. To win over lawmakers, Gertrude Weil employed the statistical argument, as did Carrie Chapman Catt, that woman suffrage would increase the numerical majority of white voters. However, Weil neither race-baited nor disparaged African Americans, as both southern antis and states' rights suffragists did, nor did she endorse or refute white supremacy other than to argue that woman suffrage would not change the political status quo.<sup>51</sup>

Weil's argument assumed that black women would vote, which was a bold and radical position for any white southerner, much less a Jew, during an era when the Jews' whiteness was questioned. The conflation of race, gender, religion, and politics was evident in a letter that Weil received after ratification from a Wayne County neighbor: "Can't help being surprised at you, you being a Jew and knowing the Jews were God's choosen [*sic*] nation to be a light to the gentiles. . . . And knowing the children of Ham the negro was cursed and made servants to Shem." He lamented, "the negro will be put back in politics, then woe to our free South land." He got "cold chills" at the thought of "two negro women" next to a white woman at the polling place, then invoked the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Antisuffragism was stronger in agrarian regions, where most blacks but fewer Jews resided, like Weil's Wayne County, while suffragism was stronger in commercial, New South cities, where most Jews lived.<sup>52</sup>

Some Jews unequivocally equated the rights of blacks and white women. In 1886 Jacob Rothschild, echoing the language of the Fifteenth Amendment, which granted the vote to African American men, affirmed "principles of universal liberty & emancipation irrespective of race, color, or previous condition" in justifying the woman's vote. Whether he held these views as points of debate or from personal conviction is moot. They

were brave arguments to make in post-Reconstructionist Alabama. More exceptionally, Jacob Trieber of Arkansas, the first Jew to hold a federal judgeship, argued that the franchise was a fundamental civil right regardless of sex or race. For Trieber the Constitution was foremost. Recalling the antisemitism of his childhood in Prussia, he was outspoken in defending the "inherent" rights of African Americans as well as of women. He "feared any country's future that would allow such discrimination against its citizens." Appearing often before women's groups, Trieber asserted, "A woman is a person and should be entitled to all the rights guaranteed by the constitution to a male person."<sup>53</sup> As a judge, Trieber, unlike Grossman, did not hold a politically partisan position, and his federal appointment conferred a measure of security and independence.

*Jewish Suffragists and the Fight for Ratification*

In 1918 Woodrow Wilson finally endorsed a federal amendment. Many fellow southerners felt betrayed. Despite continued southern congressional opposition, the amendment passed the House of Representatives in January 1918 and the Senate in June 1919 before being sent to the states for ratification. The approval of thirty-six states was required to ratify. Georgia legislators rushed to be the first state to reject, dismissing suffragist appeals to take no action. By 1920 only Texas, Arkansas and Kentucky ratified among southern states, although Mississippi, Florida, and Louisiana had granted limited voting rights in local elections. By summer 1920, thirty-five states had ratified. The battleground came down to North Carolina or Tennessee.<sup>54</sup>

In August 1920 the Tennessee and North Carolina legislatures met in special sessions to consider ratification. Telegrams flew back and forth between Gertrude Weil in Raleigh and NAWSA president Carrie Chapman Catt, now stationed in Nashville. Alice Paul sent Anita Pollitzer in a three-person delegation to Nashville to lobby state legislators and organize a grassroots campaign. Rumors flew of bogus petitions, out-of-state hordes, and sudden influxes of northern cash. North Carolina legislators sent their Tennessee counterparts a telegram urging them to reject. Although North Carolina's governor expressed support, however tepid, the legislature voted to postpone consideration.

While North Carolina dithered, Tennessee became the last state capable of achieving the "Perfect 36." Anita Pollitzer worked closely with

Sue White, the state NWP chair and its most prominent suffragist, who assigned Pollitzer East Tennessee as her territory to lobby lawmakers.<sup>55</sup> Among these was Harry Burn, who like many backcountry politicians seemed to be uncertain or reconsidering. Could Pollitzer trust an antisuffrage Republican county chairman who assured her that Burn was a sure yes vote for ratification? Rumors flew of plots and boycotts, bribes and payoffs. Pollitzer called on former governor Ben Hooper, a Republican suffragist, who agreed to telephone wavering legislators.<sup>56</sup>

That Tennessee did ratify owes in measure to the tireless effort of Representative Joe Hanover. He had taken residence in the Hermitage Hotel, just doors from the room of Carrie Chapman Catt. Nightly, Hanover was in Catt's suite formulating strategy and bringing her money he had raised.<sup>57</sup> The suffragists, led by Catt, chose Hanover to be floor leader for ratification in the House. He cashed in political debts from old-timers for whom he had drafted bills, convincing one rustic that an offered anti bribe was too cheap to justify a change in his vote. For his advocacy, Hanover was jostled in an elevator, accused of taking bribes, and denounced as a Bolshevik. Seductive females telephoned, attempting to compromise him,

*Tennessee state representative Joe Hanover, right, with leaders of the Tennessee suffrage campaign. From left: U.S. senator Kenneth McKellar, state senator Ernest Hoston,*

*Sue Shelton White, Tennessee governor Albert. H. Roberts.*

*(Tennessee Woman Suffrage Heritage Trail,  
tnwomansuffrageheritagetrail.com.)*



while thuggish males called to threaten his life. Prosuffrage governor Albert Roberts was so concerned that he summoned Hanover to his office and assigned him a police captain as a bodyguard. The officer answered his phone, read his mail, and slept next door.<sup>58</sup>

Catt wrote Weil that she had never seen such “excitable men” or such “drunkenness.”<sup>59</sup> Meanwhile, Anita Pollitzer continued to cajole lawmakers, including Harry Burn. Although Burn assured her that “my vote will never hurt you,” he wore the antis’ red rose in his lapel.<sup>60</sup> Pollitzer crossed him off her list. Burn’s moment of immortality was the climax of the Tennessee—indeed, of the national—suffrage campaign. With the House vote drawing to a tie, Burn, carrying a letter from his suffragist mother in his pocket, dramatically cast the decisive ballot that turned the Nineteenth Amendment into the law of the land.<sup>61</sup>

#### *The Aftermath*

Woman suffrage was achieved through the militancy of the NWP and the political lobbying of NAWSA, through parades and picketing, meetings and letter-writing, quiet diplomacy and violent confrontation. As each state passed suffrage legislation or ratified the federal amendment, NAWSA turned its state suffrage association into a League of Women Voters (LWV), often with little or no change in leadership. In 1920 Gertrude Weil and Laura Cone continued their suffrage roles as president and treasurer of North Carolina’s LWV. After hearing national LWV president Maud Wood Park deliver an inspiring speech, suffragist Sadie Jacobs Crockin of Baltimore became founding president of her city’s league. Josephine Heyman founded the DeKalb County League, and women from The Temple constituted a “significant percentage” of Atlanta’s league membership.<sup>62</sup> To inspire women to vote, the national LWV sponsored citizenship schools and distributed literature to educate women on civic issues. Sophie Friedman of Memphis organized the LWV’s voting campaign in Tennessee. The LWV’s issues were maternal health, child labor, and working women’s wages and hours. In 1924 Naomi Silverman Cohn cofounded (with Adèle Goodman Clark) the Virginia Women’s Council of Legislative Chairmen of State Organizations to promote women’s issues. Cohn told LWV members that through education they would elect “only liberal progressive citizens.”<sup>63</sup> The national LWV’s first great legislative victory was convincing Congress to pass the

Sheppard-Towner Maternal and Infancy Protection Act, which established social welfare and aid to the states as federal principles.

Those who anticipated women providing progressive votes were disappointed; they seemed to vote no differently than their husbands and brothers. League organizers struggled to enlist members and inspire chapters. The league's progressive agenda aroused conservative opposition. It bravely took on the cause of child and woman's labor, which in the 1920s brought charges that it was communist. Naomi Silverman Cohn was a one-woman labor lobbyist in the Virginia legislature. As labor strife stuck the South during the 1920s and 1930s, its identification with unions contributed to its decline. Like many industrialists' spouses, Laura Cone, who had dipped into her wallet to keep her state LWV alive, ended her involvement in respect to her mill executive husband. By the 1930s, with the Depression, state leagues across the country faded, and the national organization was moribund, only to revive a generation later.<sup>64</sup>

Jewish women, like other activists, found other outlets for their social justice work, joining political parties or social welfare advocacy groups. Naomi Silverman Cohn was appointed an inspector in the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry's children and women division. Sophie Friedman served as an officer in the Memphis women lawyers association and was influential in securing protective legislation for woman workers and against child marriage. Political parties, now open to women, drained talent. In 1920 Ida Friend became the first woman from Louisiana to serve at the Democratic National Convention and a year later was one of two women delegates to a state constitutional convention. In 1936 Friedman was a delegate to the Democratic Convention. Women generally now found party activism more efficacious than the nonpartisan LWV.<sup>65</sup>

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which Alice Paul presented to Congress in 1923, proved to be a divisive issue among former suffragists. Its passage became the NWP's single focus. At Paul's side was Anita Pollitzer, now in Washington, who lobbied senators, representatives, priests, rabbis, and ministers to encourage its passage. Seeking support, she wrote women across the country from housewives to aviator Amelia Earhart and met with Eleanor Roosevelt. Whereas Pollitzer lobbied for an equal rights amendment, Weil followed the national LWV policy in opposing the ERA. Joining in opposition was the NCJW. That organization argued that the ERA would disallow legislation with specific protections

for women's health and labor, like maximum work hours or maternal care. When the NWP revived its campaign in 1927, the LWV, claiming to speak for the "majority of women," responded by disparaging the "so-called Equal Rights Amendment" and the "sudden agitation of a small group."<sup>66</sup>

Although white suffrage groups had been reluctant to ally with African American societies, Jewish suffragists by the 1930s shared the growing realization that social justice could not be achieved without addressing the so-called Negro Question. In the 1930s Weil and Ida Weis Friend of Louisiana were appointed to their states' Commissions on Interracial Cooperation. Weil also joined an antilynching society, while Friend helped found New Orleans's Urban League. In her eighties Weil was widely known as a civil rights activist and benefactor to black causes. Laura Cone was also a civil rights activist and benefactor and trustee of a local black college. When Naomi Silverman Cohn ran for Richmond city council in 1950, an alliance of black organizations listed her on its slate.<sup>67</sup>

Women continued their commitment to internationalism, now turning to support the World Court and League of Nations as well as peace and feminist causes. In 1926 Anita Pollitzer represented South Carolina at an international feminist conference in Paris. With Alice Paul she served as vice chair of the World Women's Party. In 1945 Paul picked Pollitzer to head the NWP, but a breakaway group sued, wanting the party to focus on the national movement. Paul thought that the insurgents were antisemites who were upset that Pollitzer was so "pronouncedly Jewish."<sup>68</sup> Antisemites in the U.S. and abroad threw allegations of cosmopolitanism at Jews as rootless internationalists without loyalty to their home countries.

Women also brought their suffragist activism into the synagogue and Jewish organizations. They transformed Jewish communal life. In 1922 a committee of the CCAR that included New Orleans rabbi Max Heller stated, "woman cannot justly be denied the privilege of ordination." The committee attributed this position to the "evolution" of woman's place in civic life. In 1919 Stella Bauer, president of the sisterhood of Atlanta's Temple, spoke on "Congregational government." She argued, "in this age of woman's suffrage" it no longer sufficed for women's representation to be the "figure-head type that we have now that permits us to be present and talk, but gives us no power to vote." She continued, "The Sisterhood should demand the right to have a real working voice in the

deliberations of the Temple Board." She added that "women naturally" know more about "management which concerns the child." Mabel Pollitzer, who became state chair of the NWP, was appointed a trustee at K. K. Beth Elohim. In 1923 suffragists Miriam Lindau and Etta Spier won membership status at Greensboro's Temple Emanuel, and a year later Gertrude Weil's Oheb Sholom granted women "full privileges of membership . . . with voting rights." When in 1928 Memphis's Temple Israel invited women to attend its annual meeting, Sophie Friedman was the first to do so. As historian Karla Goldman notes, every change in woman's role in the synagogue can be traced to woman's progress in public life.<sup>69</sup>

### *Suffragism and the Jewish South*

In joining the woman suffrage campaign, being a southern Jew was not disqualifying, nor were Jews so insecure or fearful that they were afraid to court controversy, challenge tradition, or support an unpopular cause. They did so in the wake of the Leo Frank lynching and during an era when nativism was spreading and intensifying. Those Jews who spoke out did not seem inhibited by the caution—the fitting in—supposedly characteristic of southern Jews.<sup>70</sup> As both civic and Jewish activists, they identified with progressivism, a persistent if suppressed strain in southern political culture. Southern suffrage societies welcomed Jews into their ranks.

Southern Jews were thus acting as Americans precisely when southerners were debating the terms of their reentry into the national cultural and political mainstream. As early as 1886, ex-Confederate Jacob Rothschild argued that the "fundamental law" of the Constitution was "that government derives its just power from the consent of the governed. This is the American idea."<sup>71</sup> Indeed, one motive for action was a patriotic assertion of Americanism. Raised in an immigrant household grateful for America's gifts, Joe Hanover believed that his mother deserved full citizenship. Most suffragists were immigrants or first-generation native born. Aspirational Americans, they fit a national suffragist profile. They tended to be middle class and college graduates, some from elite northern schools. Like other suffragist women, wage-earning professionals were overrepresented: for those exercising the entitlements of citizenship, their Americanism—more than their Judaism—explains their motivation. Certainly some suffragists did cite the Jewish prophetic obligation to bring

light unto the nations, but suffragists brought American democracy to Judaism more than they brought Judaism to American democracy.

Woman's suffrage was not a specifically Jewish issue. Jewish organizations commonly discussed suffrage even without resolving in support or opposition. The likely explanation for the reluctance of these local Jewish organizations to commit in favor of suffrage, like that of the NCJW, is that their membership included antis as well as pros. Or, like other women, Jewish women, despite the high visibility of the suffragists, were indifferent or not strongly committed to the cause. They were less likely to speak out or to be heard. The histories of the indifferent, like those opposed, have been less researched and recorded in the celebratory annals of woman suffrage. Jews in the South—and nation—did not achieve consensus on suffrage.<sup>72</sup> Although most active in suffrage campaigns for a federal amendment, Jews could be found in nearly all camps though were notably lacking among suffragist advocates of states' rights.

Was there a distinctively southern element to Jewish suffragism? "Well-behaved" and "ladylike" are terms applied to the southern suffragist movement generally. In this regard Jewish women seemed to have conformed even as they espoused a cause that would undermine the foundations of society. Southern Jews, like others, were not only acting in character but pursuing a strategy intended to dispel accusations that the woman's vote would upset the racial, social, and economic order. In emphasizing domesticity and decorum, southern suffragists more often aligned with NAWSA. Those who were willing to risk arrest or to turn communist invariably left the region. That southern Jewish suffragists were well-behaved, however, differed only in degree rather than kind from their northern sisters. As the "pleasing" founder of Nevada's Non-Militant Suffrage Society, for example, attorney Felice Cohn, author of the state's suffrage bill, was representative of "a great majority of woman suffragists in this country," a newspaper lauded.<sup>73</sup>

Race, however, was peculiar for southerners, including Jews. Southern Jewish suffragists judiciously parsed the race question. Rarely are southern Jews recorded as advocating for the black franchise. The absence of such evidence may suggest that southern Jewish women, too, shared the reluctance that led national suffrage organizations to avoid allying with African American women. The gamut of opinion ranged from Leonard Grossman's justification of white supremacy to Gertrude Weil's

*Anita Pollitzer with Democratic Party national finance chairman W. J. Jameson,  
checking the tally of the Tennessee legislature's vote on suffrage, 1920.  
(Library of Congress.)*

pragmatic moderation to Judge Trieber's call for black and woman enfranchisement as a universal right.

Yet whatever regional acculturation marked their activism, southern suffragists very much fit the profiles of national Jewish activists. The example of southern Jewish suffragists suggests that southern Jews were not, as Eli Evans described them, provincials, but rather cosmopolitans.<sup>74</sup> Jewish suffragists were almost invariably involved in transnational causes like labor rights, disarmament, and world peace. Virtually all were also Zionist. Highly educated and well-traveled, these Jewish suffragists acted locally but thought globally. Citizens of their hometowns and citizens of the world, southerners and Americans, advocates for the Jewish people and believers in universal rights, Jewish suffragists were rooted cosmopolitans. They lived with complexity and contradiction. They sat in their neighbors' parlors for meetings and traveled to Europe on behalf of global movements. As Carrie Chapman Catt reflected, "No stronger characters

did the long struggle produce than those great-souled southern suffragists."<sup>75</sup> More so were the southern Jewish suffragists.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Casey Cep, "The Imperfect, Unfinished Work of Women's Suffrage," *New Yorker*, July 1, 2019, accessed June 19, 2020, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/07/08/the-imperfect-unfinished-work-of-womens-suffrage>.

<sup>2</sup> Eric L. Goldstein, "'Now Is the Time to Show Your True Colors': Southern Jews, Whiteness, and the Rise of Jim Crow," in *Jewish Roots in Southern Soil: A New History*, ed. Marcie Cohen Ferris and Mark I. Greenberg (Waltham, MA, 2006), 136. Goldstein cites race as a complicating factor in "the desire to fit in."

<sup>3</sup> "Woman Suffrage and the 19th Amendment," National Archives, accessed September 4, 2019, <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/woman-suffrage>.

<sup>4</sup> Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, *New Women of the New South: The Leaders of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the Southern States* (New York, 1993), 48.

<sup>5</sup> See Anne Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930* (Charlottesville, VA, 1995), 141.

<sup>6</sup> *Goldsboro News-Argus*, May 3, 1971, quoted in Leonard Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil: Jewish Progressive in the New South* (Chapel Hill, 2017), 107.

<sup>7</sup> "Article Declaration of Principles: 1885 Pittsburgh Conference," Central Conference of American Rabbis, accessed June 2, 2020, <https://www.ccarnet.org/rabbinic-voice/platforms/article-declaration-principles/>.

<sup>8</sup> Randolph Hollingsworth, "Biographical Sketch of Rebecca Rosenthal Judah, Biographical Database of NAWSA Suffragists, 1890-1920, accessed January 7, 2020, <https://documents.alexanderstreet.com/d/1009656388>.

<sup>9</sup> Elna C. Green, *Southern Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Question* (Chapel Hill, 1997), 4.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, 12; Sarah H. Case, "Woman Suffrage in the Southern States," National Park Service, accessed June 19, 2020, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/woman-suffrage-in-the-southern-states.htm>; Sidney R. Bland, "Women's Suffrage," *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, accessed October 12, 2019, <http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/women%C2%92s-suffrage>.

<sup>11</sup> Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil*, 124.

<sup>12</sup> See Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender & Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill, 1996), 204.

<sup>13</sup> Green, *Southern Strategies*, 12.

<sup>14</sup> Mabel Pollitzer, interview conducted by Constance Myers, June 16, 1974, accessed September 2, 2019, [https://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/html\\_use/G-0047-2.html](https://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/html_use/G-0047-2.html).

<sup>15</sup> Inez Haynes Irwin, "'Telling the Country': The National Woman's Party in Tennessee, 1917," in *Votes for Women! The Woman Suffrage Movement in Tennessee, the South, and the Nation*, ed. Marjorie Spruill Wheeler (Knoxville, TN, 1995), 173.

<sup>16</sup> "Caroline Katzenstein papers," Historical Society of Pennsylvania, accessed June 15, 2020, <http://www2.hsp.org/collections/manuscripts/k/KatzensteinAm8996.html>; Green, *Southern Strategies*, 13.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Green, *Southern Strategies*, 59.

<sup>18</sup> Melissa R. Klapper, *Ballots, Babies, and Banners of Peace: American Jewish Women's Activism, 1890-1940* (New York, 2013), 32. On the WCTU and race, see "Willard, the WCTU and Race," New York Heritage Digital Collections, accessed October 15, 2019, <http://www.newyorkheritage.org/exhibits/albion-tourgee-civil-war-civil-rights/willard-wctu-and-race>.

<sup>19</sup> Mabel Pollitzer, interview conducted by Constance Myers, September 19, 1973, accessed September 2, 2019, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/G-0047-1/menu.html>. During the 1930s, Catt created and led a Protest Committee of Non-Jewish Women Against the Persecution of Jews in Germany. Paul also committed to rescue European Jewry. Amy Roe, "Rebecca Rosenthal Judah," Kentucky History, accessed January 15, 2020, <https://explorekyhistory.ky.gov/items/show/341>.

<sup>20</sup> Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil*, 30; Untitled manuscript, 1886, Gail Cohn Family Papers, Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History, William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum, Atlanta (hereafter cited as Cohn Family Papers and Cuba Family Archives); Klapper, *Ballots*, 51, 52; Melissa R. Klapper, "Jewish Feminists and Intersectionality: New World, Old Story," *Lilith*, accessed October 15, 2019, <https://www.lilith.org/blog/2017/10/jewish-feminists-and-intersectionality-new-wordold-story>.

<sup>21</sup> Mark K. Bauman, "Factionalism and Ethnic Politics in Atlanta: German Jews from the Civil War to the Progressive Era," in *A New Vision of Southern Jewish History: Studies in Institution Building, Leadership, Interaction, and Mobility* (Tuscaloosa, 2019), 120; Scott Beattie, Melisa Erdal, Anya Lamarre Anderson, Dan Le, Brian Wang, Jacob Wang, "Biographical Sketch of Esther H. Abelson," Biographical Database of NAWSA Suffragists, 1880-1920, accessed January 15, 2020, <https://documents.alexanderstreet.com/d/1010026785>; Faith Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting: The National Council of Jewish Women, 1893-1993* (Tuscaloosa, 1993), 61, 78-83; Pamela S. Nadell, *America's Jewish Women: A History from Colonial Times to Today* (New York, 2019), 105-107.

<sup>22</sup> Klapper, *Ballots*, 56; Karla Goldman, *Beyond the Synagogue Gallery: Finding a Place for Women in American Judaism* (Cambridge, MA, 2000), 55-58. Widows, Goldman notes, might be granted independent membership but without voting privileges.

<sup>23</sup> "Anita Pollitzer," The Pollitzer Family of South Carolina, Lowcountry Digital History Initiative, accessed September 3, 2019, [https://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/pollitzer\\_family\\_sc/anita\\_pollitzer](https://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/pollitzer_family_sc/anita_pollitzer).

<sup>24</sup> Diane Vecchio, "Rosa Hirschmann Gantt: Pioneering Doctor and Suffragette," Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina, accessed June 19, 2020, <http://jhssc.org/2020/04/15/rosa-hirschmann-gantt-pioneering-doctor-and-suffragette>, and see also Vecchio's article in this volume; Nadell, *America's Jewish Women*, 107; Eric L. Goldstein and Deborah R.



Weiner, *On Middle Ground: A History of the Jews of Baltimore* (Baltimore, 2018), 231; “Friedman, Sophie G. (Sophie Goldberger),” Social Networks and Archival Context, accessed June 19, 2020, <https://snaccooperative.org/ark:/99166/w6fn56hh>; Karen Trahan Leathem, “Ida Weis Friend, 1868–1963,” Encyclopedia, Jewish Women’s Archive, accessed June 5, 2020, <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/friend-ida-weis>; Mark K. Bauman, “Southern Jewish Women and Their Social Service Organizations,” in Bauman, *A New Vision*, 96.

<sup>25</sup> Jewish labor or social activists like Maud Nathan, Alice Goldsmith Brandeis, and Rose Schneiderman were prominent suffragists, but not national organizational leaders. Jewish women did lead international organizations. Rosika Schwimmer of Hungary and Rosa Manus and Aletta Jacobs of Holland worked closely with Catt in the International Woman Suffrage Alliance. Diane Vecchio notes that Anita Pollitzer served as national secretary of the NWP (1921–26), national vice chairman (1927–38), and national chairman (1945–49), but she held these posts after the suffrage fight had been won. Diane Vecchio, email to Mark Bauman and Leonard Rogoff, February 12, 2020; Judith Ezekiel, “Biographical Sketch of Rachel Brill Ezekiel, Biographical Database of NAWSA Suffragists, 1890–1920, accessed January 15, 2020, <https://documents.alexanderstreet.com/d/1009859983>; Elaine Weiss, *The Woman’s Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote* (New York, 2018), 162.

<sup>26</sup> Mark K. Bauman, “The Hebrew Benevolent Congregation: Living Up to the Name and the Legacy; The Temple and Its People” (forthcoming), 55. The Fulton and DeKalb chapters enjoyed the home hospitality of Mrs. Albert Herskowitz. Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil*, 146. At the first meeting of the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia in 1909, Adèle Goodman Clark was elected recording secretary. Clark was born to a Christian father and Jewish mother, who was buried in Richmond’s Hebrew Cemetery. Clark was baptized and confirmed an Episcopalian but converted to Catholicism in 1942. She enlisted her mother and sister in suffragism. An artist, she designed campaign literature besides speaking, writing, touring, and organizing new chapters. Her spirited debates with an antisuffragist enlivened Richmond newspapers. When the legislature considered the federal amendment, Clark chaired the league’s ratification committee. Jennifer Davis McDaid, “Biographical Sketch of Adèle Goodman Clark,” Biographical Database of NAWSA Suffragists, 1880–1920, accessed June 4, 2020, <https://documents.alexanderstreet.com/d/1009860065>.

<sup>27</sup> Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil*, 76–78; Betsy Newman, “The Pollitzer Sisters: Fighters for Women’s Rights,” Jewish Historical Society of South Carolina, accessed October 12, 2019, <http://jhssc.org/2020/04/15/the-pollitzer-sisters-fighters-for-womens-rights>.

<sup>28</sup> Weil was a third-generation American on her mother’s side and second-generation on her father’s. “Moritz Pollitzer,” The Pollitzer Family of South Carolina, Lowcountry Digital History Initiative, accessed October 12, 2019, [http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/pollitzer\\_family\\_sc/moritz\\_pollitzer](http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/pollitzer_family_sc/moritz_pollitzer). Gladys Avery Tillett, “Cone, Laura Weil,” NCPedia, accessed October 13, 2019, <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/cone-laura-weil>; Hollingsworth, “Rebecca Rosenthal Judah.”

<sup>29</sup> Mabel Pollitzer interview, June 16, 1974; Ezekiel, “Biographical Sketch of Rachel Brill Ezekiel.”

<sup>30</sup> Mabel Pollitzer interview, June 16, 1974; Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil*, 23, 49, 76–79.

<sup>31</sup> Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil*, 35–36; Leathem, “Ida Weis Friend.”

<sup>32</sup> As an artist, Anita Pollitzer famously introduced college classmate Georgia O'Keeffe to Alfred Stieglitz. Mabel Pollitzer interview, September 19, 1973; The Pollitzer Family of South Carolina, Lowcountry Digital History Initiative, accessed October 15, 2019, [https://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/pollitzer\\_family\\_sc](https://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/pollitzer_family_sc); "About Theresa Pollak," VCU Libraries Gallery, accessed May 19, 2020, <https://gallery.library.vcu.edu/exhibits/show/remembering-theresa-pollak/about-theresa-pollak>. Pollak, a graduate of Westhampton College of the University of Richmond, had studied at Harvard and was a professional educator. Bonnie Eisenman, e-mail to author, May 13, 2020.

<sup>33</sup> Mabel Pollitzer interview, September 19, 1973; Clara Hartman, "Biographical Sketch of Dorothy Sterne," Online Biographical Dictionary of Militant Woman Suffragists, 1913–1920, accessed September 2, 2019, <https://documents.alexanderstreet.com/d/1008342606>; Clara Hartman, "Biographical Sketch of Ida Glatt McCarthy," Online Biographical Dictionary of Militant Woman Suffragists, 1913–1920, accessed June 19, 2020, <https://documents.alexanderstreet.com/d/1008342620>; Jessi Stickel, "Biographical Sketch of Marguerite Rosett Bishow," Online Biographical Dictionary of Militant Woman Suffragists, 1913–1920, accessed June 19, 2020, <https://documents.alexanderstreet.com/d/1008297983>.

<sup>34</sup> Stickel, "Marguerite Rosett Bishow"; Jean Roseman, e-mail to author, November 27, 2019; Mabel Pollitzer interview, September 19, 1973; Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil*, 30. The one Weil woman to join Gertrude's suffrage society was her aunt, Elizabeth McDonald Rosenthal, a local Christian married to her uncle Joseph Rosenthal. Her cousin Lionel – a prominent business, civic, and Jewish leader – publicly endorsed the suffrage campaign. When Gertrude's brother Leslie mentioned woman's rights at the dinner table, cousin Etta Spier, later a pioneer professor at North Carolina's Woman's College, opined that they "were not capable of arguing about them." Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil*, 30.

<sup>35</sup> *Nashville Tennessean*, February 23, 1913; *Nashville American*, February 23, 1913; John William Leonard, ed., *Woman's Who's Who of America: A Biographical Dictionary of Contemporary Women of the United States and Canada, 1914–1915* (New York, 1914), 109; Jean Roseman, *Shalom Nashville: A Jewish History* (Nashville, 2010), 57; Weiss, *Woman's Hour*, 12–13.

<sup>36</sup> Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil*, 123, 128.

<sup>37</sup> Mabel Pollitzer interview, June 16, 1974.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* Dora Rubin's brothers included Dan, a Hollywood playwright, and Manning, a Charleston journalist. Her nephew Louis D. Rubin, Jr., was a noted publisher, professor, novelist, and critic, labeled the "Dean of Southern Literature." See Louis D. Rubin, Jr., *My Father's People: A Family of Southern Jews* (Baton Rouge, 2002).

<sup>39</sup> Mabel Pollitzer interview, June 16, 1974.

<sup>40</sup> "VOTE! The Life and Works of Sadie Jacobs Crockin, 1879–1965," Jewish Museum of Maryland, accessed January 15, 2020, <http://jewishmuseummd.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/SJC-brochure2-12-1-10.pdf>; "Anita Pollitzer"; Anne Dallas Dudley, "The Southern Temperament as Related to Woman Suffrage," in Wheeler, *Votes for Women!*, 163; Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil*, 85–86.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil*, 126.

<sup>42</sup> Klapper, *Ballots*, 60, 44, 54; Josh Parshall, "In Southern States: Historical Texts from the Arbeter Ring's Southern District (English Translation from the Yiddish)," *Southern Jewish History* 17 (2014), 149–50.

<sup>43</sup> Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil*, 119; Klapper, *Ballots*, 48. New York labor organizer Pauline Newman founded a Wage Earner's Suffrage League, which affiliated with NAWSA. Hartman, "Ida Glatt McCarthy."

<sup>44</sup> Wheeler, *New Women*, 63, 65. See Melissa R. Klapper, *Jewish Girls Coming of Age in America, 1860–1920* (New York, 2005), 98–99, 103–104; "Anita Pollitzer"; "Sadie Jacobs Crockin."

<sup>45</sup> Jacob Rothschild Speech, Cohn Family Papers; *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, June 19, 1918; "Leon Samuel Haas," Fanta-Levey Genealogy, accessed May 15, 2019, <http://www.fanta-levey.com/showmedia.php?mediaID=228&medialinkID=1044&ss=1>.

<sup>46</sup> Berkley Kalin, "William Fineshriber in Memphis," in *The Quiet Voices: Southern Rabbis and Black Civil Rights, 1880s to 1990s*, ed. Mark K. Bauman and Berkley Kalin (Tuscaloosa, 1997), 54; Bobbie Malone, *Rabbi Max Heller: Reformer, Zionist, Southerner 1860–1929* (Tuscaloosa, 1997), 199.

<sup>47</sup> Carol Lynn Yellin and Janann Sherman, *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage* (Oak Ridge, TN, 1998), 99.

<sup>48</sup> A. Elizabeth Taylor, "Revival and Development of the Woman Suffrage Movement in Georgia," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 42 (December 1958): 352.

<sup>49</sup> Armatine M. Smith, "The History of the Woman's Suffrage Movement in Louisiana," *Louisiana Law Review* 62 (Winter 2002): 556, accessed January 15, 2019, <https://digitalcommons.law.lsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5926&context=lalrev>; Fanta-Levey Genealogy, accessed May 15, 2020, <http://www.fanta-levey.com/showmedia.php?mediaID=228&medialinkID=1044&ss=1>; Green, *Southern Strategies*, 144.

<sup>50</sup> Smith, "Woman's Suffrage Movement in Louisiana," 556; Bauman, *A New Vision*, 102; Elizabeth Stephens Summerlin, "'Not Ratified but Hereby Rejected': The Women's Suffrage Movement in Georgia, 1895–1925" (master's thesis, University of Georgia, 2009), 69, 77–78.

<sup>51</sup> Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil*, 130. Weil, like Catt and the LWV, endorsed an educational requirement, a literacy test, for the franchise as a solution to the "Negro problem," but she spoke of it as a universal requirement, not targeted to race, yet its effect would inevitably have discriminated against African Americans given their greater illiteracy. Glenda Gilmore alludes to Weil's assumption of a black woman's vote as a break with the southern past in *Gender & Jim Crow*, 210.

<sup>52</sup> Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil*, 139; L. J. H. Mewborn to Gertrude Weil, August 26, 1920, Equal Suffrage Association of North Carolina Papers, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, quoted in Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil*, 139; Green, *Southern Strategies*, 71.

<sup>53</sup> Jacob Rothschild Speech, Cohn Family Papers; "Jacob Trieber (1853–1927)," Encyclopedia of Arkansas, accessed May 3, 2020, <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/jacob-trieber-26>; Carolyn Gray LeMaster, "Civil and Social Rights Efforts of Arkansas Jewry," in Bauman and Kalin, eds., *Quiet Voices*, 101. Several men of Jewish origin played critical roles in state suffrage campaigns, but their Jewish identity was problematic. Martin Behrman, mayor of New Orleans from 1904 to 1920 and boss of its Democratic machine, was born to Jewish parents in New York but had no Jewish affiliation. His opposition to a 1918

state suffrage amendment led to its defeat. West Virginia became the thirty-fourth state to ratify only when state senator Jesse A. Bloch dramatically raced five days by train from California to cast the decisive vote. His rush to beat the deadline and cast a last-second vote riveted the national media. Bloch warrants an asterisk as a Jew. He was born into a Jewish family affiliated with the Wheeling temple, but they subsequently left Judaism and joined the Presbyterian Church. See "Jesse A. Bloch," *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, accessed January 12, 2020, <https://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/551>. Also born to Jewish parents was David Sholtz. In 1917, as a member of the Florida House of Representatives, he supported woman suffrage, arguing that no "gentleman" would disrespect a woman for voting. Sholtz, however, had intermarried and joined an Episcopal church. He was elected governor in 1933. See A. Elizabeth Taylor, "The Woman Suffrage Movement in Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 36 (July 1957): 57.

<sup>54</sup> Cep, "Imperfect, Unfinished Work." By contrast, Wyoming in 1869 was the only state that allowed the woman's vote. Forty years later four more western states joined it. In 1916 Montana elected Jeannette Rankin, the first woman in Congress.

<sup>55</sup> Yellin and Sherman, *The Perfect* 36, 93, 94.

<sup>56</sup> Weiss, *Woman's Hour*, 169-70.

<sup>57</sup> Yellin and Sherman, *The Perfect* 36, 99.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>59</sup> Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil*, 138.

<sup>60</sup> Yellin and Sherman, *The Perfect* 36, 103.

<sup>61</sup> Weiss, *Woman's Hour*, 305-306.

<sup>62</sup> Bauman, "Hebrew Benevolent Congregation," 67.

<sup>63</sup> Jennifer Davis McDaid, "Woman Suffrage in Virginia," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, accessed April 3, 2020, [https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/woman\\_suffrage\\_in\\_virginia](https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/woman_suffrage_in_virginia).

<sup>64</sup> "Naomi Silverman Cohn," *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, accessed April 3, 2020, [https://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.php?b=Cohn\\_Naomi\\_Silverman](https://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/dvb/bio.php?b=Cohn_Naomi_Silverman).

<sup>65</sup> "Sadie Jacobs Crocker"; "Friedman, Sophie G."; "Naomi Silverman Cohn"; Leathem, "Ida Weis Friend."

<sup>66</sup> Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil*, 171.

<sup>67</sup> "Naomi Silverman Cohn."

<sup>68</sup> "Anita Pollitzer."

<sup>69</sup> Selma S. Lewis, *A Biblical People in the Bible Belt: The Jewish Community of Memphis, Tennessee, 1840s-1960s* (Macon, GA, 1998), 112; Malone, *Rabbi Max Heller*, 154; Klapper, *Ballots*, 66; Stella Brauer, "What Has the Sisterhood Done for the Cause of Judaism," Box 4, file 5, Mss 042, The Temple Sisterhood Records, Cuba Family Archives; Rogoff, *Gertrude Weil*, 108; Goldman, *Beyond the Synagogue Gallery*, 202.

<sup>70</sup> Goldstein, "'Now Is the Time to Show Your True Colors,'" 136. See also, Leonard Rogoff, *A History of Temple Emanu-El: An Extended Family* (Durham, NC, 2007), 63.

<sup>71</sup> Jacob Rothschild Speech, Cohn Family Papers.

<sup>72</sup> Klapper, *Ballots*, 24.

<sup>73</sup> "Felice Cohn," Nevada Women's History Project, accessed June 1, 2020, <https://www.nevadawomen.org/research-center/biographies-alphabetical/felice-cohn>.

<sup>74</sup> See Eli N. Evans, *The Provincials: A Personal History of Jews in the South* (Chapel Hill, 2005 [1973]).

<sup>75</sup> Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics: The Inner Story of the Suffrage Movement* (New York, 1923), 81. Rooted cosmopolitanism is the brainchild of Kwame Anthony Appiah. See *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York, 2006). Also germane is James Loeffler, *Rooted Cosmopolitans: Jews and Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, 2018).