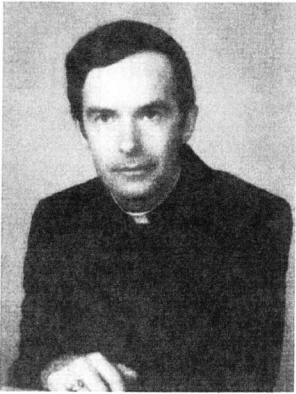


Chaplain's Corner, Hughes Camp Chaplain Richard W Rudd...



As a Continuation of last month's article, the subject now turns to the roles played by Jews in the Old South and the Confederacy. Before the 20th century, approximately one fifth of American Jews lived in the South. A minimum were Sephardic

from Spain and Portugal; the majority were Ashkenazi from Germany, Alsace, Hungary, and Poland. Charleston once had the largest Jewish community in the U.S.; Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim Synagogue, one of the oldest congregations in America, had so many of its men serving in the Confederate army that the required quorum for a trustees' meeting could not be reached.

Jews experienced more anti-Semitism in the North than in the South, with northern newspapers regularly denigrating them. Yankee Generals Butler, Tecumseh, and Grant openly displayed northern anti-Semitism. In 1862, Grant's Order #11 expelled all Jews within 24 hours from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi. In the South, Jews experienced a higher degree of assimilation and were able to live as equals. Politically, Judah Benjamin of Louisiana was the first Jewish U.S. senator. Sen. David Levy represented Florida. Benjamin also served in President Davis' cabinet as Attorney General and Secretaries of State and War. Henry Hyams served as Louisiana's Lt. Governor during the WBTS. Edwin De Leon sought help for the Confederacy from Britain and France. Socially, southern Jews had a higher rate of intermarriage with Gentiles than in the North. Howard Sachar, author of *A History of the Jew in America*, wrote, "For southern Jews, loyalty to the Confederacy often was a matter of intense personal gratitude. Nowhere else in America had they experienced such fullness of opportunity or achieved comparable political and social acceptance." One Jewish southerner testified to this by saying, "This land has been good to all of us. I shall fight to my last breath." Rabbi James Gutheim explained why southern Jews had no doubts or reservations

about fighting for their beloved Confederate states. They viewed their service during the war as loyalty, not rebellion; they fought for independence against Yankee invaders who threatened their lives and the lives of their families and neighbors.

During the war, Rabbis Max Michelbacher and James Gutheim encouraged loyalty to the Confederacy and Michelbacher wrote *Prayer For the Confederacy*. While some Jews disagreed about the issue of slavery, many of those who opposed it were perceptive enough to view the true motives behind the abolition movement with suspicion. Moses Ezekiel, a Confederate soldier who attended the Virginia Military Institute, said, "We were not fighting for the perpetuation of slavery, but for the principle of states rights and free trade and in defense of our homes which were being ruthlessly invaded." His mother confirmed this comment by affirming that she "...would not tolerate a son who declined to fight for the Confederacy." Albert Moses of Charlotte, N.C., was the first Jewish Confederate to be killed in the war and one of the first major battles of the war was at Manassas, named after Manasseh, a Jewish innkeeper in Virginia. Simon Baruch fought at Manassas and served as surgeon general of the Confederacy. Another surgeon general was David De Leon, who organized the medical department of the Confederate army and Abraham Meyers was quartermaster general. Joseph Goldsmith was known as the Jewish Confederate chaplain. As a percentage of the total population, a higher percentage of southern Jews fought for the Confederacy than northern Jews fought for the North, with many serving as officers up to the rank of general. Lee and other generals honored Jewish soldiers' requests for furloughs during holy days when feasible, but were sometimes compelled by circumstances to deny furloughs because Jewish soldiers formed a significant part of the military effort. Behind the lines of conflict, Jewish women supported Confederate troops by supplying food, clothes, and serving as nurses.

According to the normal rules of grammar, reconstruction and deconstruction are antonyms. But, where American history is concerned, they are synonyms. Militarily, politically, economically, and

culturally the antebellum South was decimated. Families, homes, relationships, the whole social order and structure of southern society were left in ruins. Only the South's religious foundation remained standing after the war. The North could destroy the physical features of the land, but it could not destroy the spiritual foundation of the South which rested securely in the hearts of the people. Hostilities did not end in 1865; the tactics just changed. Deconstruction did not end in 1877 when the last southern state was reattached to the Union and the last troops of occupation were withdrawn. Monuments continue to be removed. Buildings, parks, and streets are renamed. Our ancestors are slandered and symbols misrepresented. History is being revised, rewritten, and fabricated. Ever since the end of the war, the North has focused attention on the postbellum South, a culture struggling to survive, and claimed that those abnormal conditions, instigated by the North, characterized the Confederacy. According to the North, southerners have always been racist, anti-Catholic, and anti-Semitic. The truth discovered by honest and unbiased academic research reveals that those unflattering characteristics the North continues to project onto the South accurately trace their roots back to the antebellum North. Caucasians and Negroes, Catholics and Jews and Protestants lived peacefully together in the society that was the Old South. Rather than aspire to emulation of these higher qualities, the North sought to conceal its shame by prosecuting the war against the South. At the conclusion of the war, the North next turned its attention and forces toward the West. As they say, if the truth be told, "The rest is history."

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Fr. Richard Rudd

Hughes Camp Chaplain