

# **Garment Workers as Bridge Builders:**

## **Immigrant Radicalism and the Search for Economic and Social Justice**

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When one examines the dynamic Latino-Jewish relations of some sixty years ago in Boyle Heights—an extraordinary multilingual, working-class neighborhood in Los Angeles’ Eastside—one organization stands out above all others: the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union. The ILGWU served as a labor organization, a Jewish organization, and a socialist organization. In the years following World War II, the garment union committed itself to empowering its increasingly Latino membership on the job and in the community. Driven by ideology and demographics, the ILGWU served as a bridge builder in the formation and operation of numerous organizations committed to inter-group relations, including the Jewish Labor Committee, the Jewish Community Relations Council, the Central Labor Council’s Labor Committee to Combat Intolerance, the Catholic Labor Institute, and the Latino-oriented Community Services Organization. These groups, collectively and individually, played a central role in the struggle for social and economic justice in postwar Los Angeles.<sup>1</sup>

### **The ILGWU, Boyle Heights, and Jewish Los Angeles**

Yiddish-speaking Jews from eastern Europe were an anomaly in a turn-of-the-century Los Angeles dominated by Protestants and business interests. The first ILGWU local was formed in Los Angeles in 1911, but it was not until President Franklin Roosevelt in the early 1930s recognized the right of workers to organize that the union grew. The intervening years were filled with bitter strikes and internal battles between the

largely socialist-oriented union and the smaller (but well-organized) number of Communists that first fought to control the union and then set about to supplant it by organizing a dual union in the needle trades. Under the direction of Israel Feinberg, the Los Angeles ILGWU membership rose from 30 to 2,000 between 1930 and 1935, making it one of the larger unions in Southern California. Part of the growth resulted from the 1933 strike by Latina dressmakers.<sup>2</sup> By 1938 the ILGWU's Spanish-speaking branch had a float in the city's annual Labor Day parade, and Latinas were active within the union.<sup>3</sup>

The union, like the Boyle Heights neighborhood where many of its members lived, was both Jewish and multicultural. The area became the center of immigrant Jewish life in Los Angeles and the largest Yiddish-speaking community west of Chicago. Ethnicity and politics overlapped as the Heights became a caldron of radical politics in an otherwise conservative city. The bulk of the Jewish population had entered the U.S. through New York, and then traveled across the county, some in search of the clean air that was seen as the antidote for tuberculosis. They bought small homes left vacant by non-Jews who were moving to more desirable neighborhoods. As they left, the Gentiles took most of their institutions with them, including Occidental College, which moved west to its current location.

With some 20,000 Jewish families, the vibrant neighborhood included small shops, union halls, synagogues, and other cultural and political buildings. Three of these buildings were owned by groups within the socialist milieu—the Workmen's Circle, the largest fraternal organization, on Evergreen Street; the Jewish Socialist Verband on North St. Louis Street; and the Jewish Bakers Union on East Fourth Street. The garment workers, both the ILGWU and the smaller Amalgamated Clothing Workers, had their

union halls downtown in the garment district, a ten-minute streetcar ride across the Los Angeles River. The proximity of work and home facilitated a life with a high rate of participation in the unions and community institutions. Jews also interacted with other foreign-born workers in Boyle Heights, including Latinos and Japanese Americans, and a mix of Armenian, Irish, Italian, and Russian Molokans.<sup>4</sup>

Politically, Jews in Boyle Heights remained a world apart from both the Protestant-dominated city and the more established German Jews. The ILGWU became a leading voice for Jewish workers and made strategic alliances with non-Jewish workers through the AFL Central Labor Council and the Socialist Party. According to Joseph Roos, who would later head the Jewish Community Relations Council, these immigrants from eastern Europe considered the established Jewish leaders—with their influence centered in the emergence of Hollywood or a few downtown law firms—as the “nouveau riche,” “German Jews,” or even “White Jews.”<sup>5</sup>

The election of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the establishment of the New Deal proved critical to political recalibration of the Jewish community and its trajectory toward the political center. In 1932, the year Roosevelt was elected president, 4,500 voters—the bulk of the community—marked their ballots for a Jewish socialist, Herbert S. Elstein, for the state Assembly against the Democratic candidate. Then in 1934, Jewish socialists followed Pasadena’s muckraking author and Socialist Party leader, Upton Sinclair, into the Democratic Party. After reregistering as a Democrat, he organized the End Poverty in California (EPIC) movement as part of an effort to bring the New Deal to the as yet Republican-controlled state. To the dismay of mainstream Democrats, Sinclair won the party nomination for governor. As part of this new coalition of Jews, EPIC supporters,

and the AFL Central Labor Council, Boyle Heights was able to elect a progressive Jewish Democrat, Ben Rosenthal, to the state Assembly.<sup>6</sup>

### **Jewish Labor Committee, 1934-1945**

That same year, 1934, the ILGWU was instrumental in the formation of the Jewish Labor Committee (JLC), which emerged on New York's Lower East Side in response to the rise of Hitler. The founding constituency groups were the garment unions, the largest Jewish-run labor organizations; the Workmen's Circle, the largest Jewish fraternal organization; and the *Jewish Daily Forward*, the largest Yiddish-language newspaper. These U.S. institutions had flowed from, and remained in fraternal union with, the General Union of Jewish Workers of Russia, Poland, and Lithuania — also known as the Jewish Labor Bund. This underground organization was a powerful force in the Jewish communities of these countries. It was committed to socialism, unionism, and Jewish culture. Personal relationships within the bund reinforced shared organizational and ideological bonds. For example, David Dubinsky, president of the ILGWU, and Baruch Charney Vladeck, general manager of the *Jewish Daily Forward*, had spent time together in one of the czar's prisons.<sup>7</sup>

The JLC of Los Angeles began to function as a distinct organization in early 1935. It established an office downtown in space it shared with the *Jewish Daily Forward* in the Stack Building at 228 West Fourth Street. *Forward* manager Julius Levitt served as the first chairman. Its affiliates included the Forward Association, the Southern California District Council of the Workmen's Circle, fourteen Workmen's Circle branches, and the Left Labor Zionists. Labor affiliates included four locals of the ILGWU, Local 278 of the

Amalgamated Clothing Workers, Local 453 of the Bakery and Confectionery Workers Union, and Local 48 of the Millinery Workers.<sup>8</sup>

Julius Levitt at forty-nine was an established force within the Jewish and socialist communities. Six years earlier, in 1928, he had run, along with Upton Sinclair, as a presidential elector for Norman Thomas on the Socialist Party ticket. Born in 1885 in a small town near Vilna, Lithuania, during the reign of the czars, the teenage Levitt went to work as a bank clerk. He also joined the Jewish Labor Bund. On several occasions he was jailed for his political activities. Finally, in 1906, he was forced to leave Russia. At the age of twenty-one, he arrived in the U.S., where he settled in New Jersey and went to work in an electrical factory and began to organize a union. He also joined the Workmen's Circle. Levitt moved to Los Angeles in 1910, when there were only 5,000 Jews in the city. He remained active in the Workmen's Circle, which started its own school and family-oriented summer camp. He also helped establish local branches of the Socialist Party, as well as the Jewish Consumptive Relief (now known as the City of Hope), which treated tuberculosis. Levitt became manager of the *Jewish Daily Forward's* West Coast edition in 1919. He shared the platform with AFL Central Labor Council executive J. W. Buzzell at a rally on behalf of striking streetcar workers in 1934.<sup>9</sup>

In the spring of 1935, the Los Angeles JLC brought new organization to the boycott of German-made products, which had been quite successful in New York.<sup>10</sup> The JLC took the initiative, working through its affiliated organizations and reaching out to the larger Jewish community. Levitt and the JLC sent a letter to all Jewish organizations asking for their assistance in advance of Passover, a time when people bought domestic items such as kitchen supplies and clothing. "When making a purchase—" the letter said,

“regardless of what it is—before paying for it, be sure to find out where the article is made. Tell the clerk that you do not wish to have anything ‘Made in Germany.’” The JLC offered to send speakers to organizational meetings to discuss the merits of the boycott and to request like-minded organizations to print on their stationery: “Do Not Buy Anything Made in Germany.”<sup>11</sup>

By 1938 the JLC was considered one of the “big four” national Jewish defense organizations along with the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, and the American Jewish Congress. This led to a national coalition with the purpose of collective action against anti-Semitism and Nazism. Cooperation between groups nationally led to a parallel coalition in Los Angeles. This is significant because, for the first time, the established Jewish leaders were reaching out to the JLC and the garment workers in Boyle Heights. “Based on the urgent necessity of unity,” wrote Judge Harry A. Holler, head of the Los Angeles Jewish Community Council, “the Board of Directors of the Los Angeles Jewish Community Council [is] urging that everything possible be done to bring together these four great organizations and other national Jewish organizations in a common program” for Southern California.<sup>12</sup>

On November 10, 1938, Nazi gangs in Germany looted Jewish-owned stores, burned synagogues, and beat people in the streets. It was *Kristallnacht*, or Night of the Broken Glass. At its meeting in Los Angeles the following month, the JLC—led in Southern California by ILGWU International Vice President Feinberg—adopted a two-track strategy: raise awareness within its own community and raise funds for JLC activities in Europe. The first would be achieved by promoting a rally the following January 4. The second required fundraising. Every unionized garment worker donated a

day's pay, quickly raising \$10,000 in Los Angeles.<sup>13</sup> It was the beginning of an aggressive effort that would only increase as the JLC sought to work with trade union and socialist parties in Europe to organize a resistance movement. An underground movement was extended following the 1939 German and Russian invasions of Poland and the subsequent attacks by Nazis and Communists on Jewish socialists, trade unionists, and cultural leaders. With the start of the Holocaust, the JLC bribed and smuggled Jewish and non-Jewish leaders out of Nazified Europe.<sup>14</sup>

### **Fighting Discrimination, 1946-1950**

The enormity of the Holocaust and the destruction of the Yiddish-speaking world had a far-reaching impact on the JLC and the Jewish community in Los Angeles. So, too, did the JLC's role in the anti-German boycott and the rescue efforts. There was an emerging consensus on a number of issues. First and foremost, the Jewish community needed friends. The Jewish community's failure to adequately pressure President Roosevelt to focus on the Holocaust or to goad Congress into admitting a significant number of Holocaust survivors demonstrated the political need for coalition partners. Second, fair employment was central to the social mobility of Jews and other minorities. This could be won by an appeal to fairness, greater Jewish political engagement, and coalition politics. Third, Latinos were the least organized minority group in Los Angeles and faced discrimination from employers and the government, as demonstrated by the courts' treatment of the Zoot Suit Riots and the Sleepy Lagoon trial. Fourth, Latinos and Jews were neighbors in Boyle Heights and worked together in the garment industry.



Fifth, the garment union—directly and working through other groups—was in the best position to form class-based and multiethnic coalitions.

Thus, with the end of World War II, the ILGWU turned its attention toward achieving civil rights, beginning with support for local, state, and national fair-employment laws. The garment union partnered with the JLC (of which it was a large part), to shift its orientation from fighting fascism to promoting civil rights. The JLC identified its role as the Jewish voice within organized labor, and labor's voice within the organized Jewish community.<sup>15</sup>

The ILGWU helped establish and support four new and complementary Los Angeles-based organizations, which were, briefly:

The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) was formed to serve as the official voice of the organized Jewish community in dealing with non-Jewish religious traditions and minority groups. Here, the ILGWU's fraternal relationships reaped big dividends in that several self-made businessmen with socialist ties joined the group. This compounded the ILGWU's influence on the council.<sup>16</sup>

The AFL Central Labor Council's Labor Committee to Combat Intolerance was established in 1946 at the initiation of the Los Angeles ILGWU in conjunction with the national JLC, which arranged for letters of support from national AFL and CIO leaders. Moreover, the union, working through the JLC, provided a full-time staff person for the committee and was the only union to have two seats on the committee. The committee promoted fair employment practices within labor (as some unions still discriminated) and worked in coalition with minority groups to promote new laws. Its first big project was to

support Proposition 11, which would have established a Fair Employment Practices Commission on the November 1946 ballot, but it did not pass.<sup>17</sup>

The union was also instrumental in creating the Catholic Labor Institute (CLI). The CLI was founded to support trade unionism among Catholics, which included most of the garment union's Mexican American members. This also provided an opportunity to work with the United Steel Workers, a progressive CIO union that shared an antipathy toward Communism. With the support of Archbishop John J. Cantwell, the CLI held its first Labor Day Mass in 1947, and drew headlines by its call for Congress to repeal the recently enacted Taft-Hartley Law.<sup>18</sup>

These three new groups in which the union played a role—the Jewish Community Relations Council, Labor Committee to Combat Intolerance, and Catholic Labor Institute—all supported a broad civil rights agenda, the most important piece of which was outlawing the practice of discrimination in employment. The ILGWU's support for a fourth group was different—the mission of the Community Service Organization (CSO) was to empower Mexican Americans, starting in Boyle Heights.

### **Edward Roybal and the Community Service Organization**

CSO grew out of Mexican-American Edward Roybal's failed 1947 city council campaign. The World War II veteran had sought to build a broad coalition for his campaign but most activists in polyglot Boyle Heights had either stayed with the Anglo incumbent, Parley P. Christensen, or backed the Jewish candidate. Among the cadre of supporters were local leaders in the garment and steel unions. Roybal became CSO's first

president, and Maria Duran, an immigrant and member of the ILGWU Dressmakers' executive board, accepted the post of treasurer.

With the organizational and financial support of Saul Alinsky, head of the Industrial Areas Foundation and a well-known Jewish radical, CSO also moved to strengthen its ties to two strategically situated unions: the AFL ILGWU and CIO United Steel Workers. Each had ten to fifteen thousand members in Los Angeles, and they believed in organizing around labor and community issues. Moreover, Maria Duran and Tony Rios from the steelworkers were part of the CSO leadership. The two unions also shared a progressive anti-Stalinist vision and had an independent relationship with the Catholic Church.<sup>19</sup>

The garment union's interest in supporting CSO was driven in part by its desire to organize new workers and to empower them to fight for their rights. "In '47 we had a big strike here and we organized the sportswear industry. The sportswear industry was 95 percent Latino at that time. And here were these Latino garment workers, men and women, particularly women, being led by a couple of Jews from New York," explained ILGWU's Abe Levy, son of the union's Pacific Coast director, Louis Levy. "We tried to get connections from the community," stated Levy, "through Tony Rios, through helping Roybal, through contacts with Spanish priests, and Irish priests, like Father Kearney and Monsignor O'Dwyer, and the Catholic Labor Institute."<sup>20</sup>

As a result of these shared efforts and a desire to strengthen institutional linkages at the local level, both the steel and garment unions assigned staff to work with the CSO. The ILGWU donated organizer Hope Mendoza, a World War II "Rosie the Riveter," who

also served as Congressman Chet Holifield's point person on immigration issues.

Mendoza, in turn, reached out to fellow AFL labor leaders.<sup>21</sup>

These efforts led to the first large-scale voter registration among Latinos in Los Angeles and to the growth of CSO as a mass-based organization. The results were phenomenal. “In a 3 1/2-month campaign by the Community Services Organization, more than 11,000 voters were registered in Los Angeles’ Eastside communities,” announced the weekly *Belvedere Citizen* in April 1948.<sup>22</sup> Despite the political and organizational successes, CSO remained without a permanent funding source.

So, in the fall of 1948, Alinsky returned to Los Angeles. Liberal Jewish businessmen made significant contributions, but the largest piece of the budget by far came from the Jewish Community Relations Council. The JCRC included the head of the West Coast ILGWU, Louis Levy, and four prominent businessmen who shared socialist politics, membership in the Workmen’s Circle, and top leadership positions in the JLC: Ben Solnit, shoe manufacturer and vice president of the JLC and third vice president of the JCRC; Pinches Karl, owner of Karl’s Shoes, JLC vice president, and treasurer of the JCRC; Harry Sheer, attorney and treasurer of JLC and JCRC board member; and Julius Levitt, West Coast editor of the *Jewish Daily Forward*, founding president of the JLC, and JCRC board member. These men also served on the boards of other Jewish groups, such as the City of Hope, which strengthened their relationships with the other business-oriented members of the committee with whom they raised money for Jewish causes. For example, Ben Solnit served as chair of the Trades and Professions Division of the Jewish Welfare Fund’s \$10 million fundraising drive in 1948.<sup>23</sup>

In 1949 Roybal announced that he would run for city council. The Jewish community, which was the largest minority group in the Ninth District, decided to postpone its dream of electing a Jew to the council. Without a Jewish candidate in the race, Roybal assembled a Latino-Jewish coalition with the help of the garment workers. According to Abe Levy, the ILGWU activated allied Jewish organizations such as the JLC and the Workmen's Circle, which operated out of the Vladeck Educational Center on North St. Louis Street in Boyle Heights.<sup>24</sup> "We were active in the Roybal campaign," recalled Workmen's Circle youth leader Sam Margolin.<sup>25</sup> Roybal was "good for the people," stated Ed Buzin.<sup>26</sup> Support came from the Boyle Heights-based AFL Jewish carpenters' and painters' unions, which were in the process of moving from left to liberal, and were among the first craft unions to admit Latinos.<sup>27</sup>

The campaign reached into the Jewish business and professional ranks. Bill Phillips of Phillips Music Company on Brooklyn Avenue organized support among fellow merchants. Attorney Filmore Jaffe, the Jewish council candidate two years earlier, gave Roybal \$100 and agreed to serve as finance chair. The largely ceremonial post still sent a powerful signal: "When I endorsed him, all the people that supported me supported him," including theater owner Jack Y. Berman and *Eastside Journal* publisher Al Waxman.<sup>28</sup> Jewish labor leaders and business owners helped with fundraising. "Ed and his people were reaching across town for Jewish money from the Westside, but that was facilitated by the approval and support of the Jews in Boyle Heights," stated Mexico-born Phil Newman, who was part of Roybal's fundraising network centered in the Jewish, labor, and Hollywood communities.<sup>29</sup>

When the polls closed and the votes were counted, the extent of CSO's operation and the larger Roybal campaign became clear for all to see. Roybal received more than twenty thousand votes, twice his primary total, and more than double the *total* votes cast in the entire 1947 election. Roybal's margins were greatest in the Latino and Jewish sections of Boyle Heights.<sup>30</sup> In joining a city council with thirteen white Protestant men and one Irish Catholic man, Roybal would serve as the voice for Latinos, as well as other groups, particularly Jews, Blacks, Asians, Catholics, unionists, and progressives. Or, as Roybal stated at his swearing-in ceremony, he would “represent all the people in my district—one of the most cosmopolitan in our city.”<sup>31</sup>

### **The ILGWU’s Legacy**

Soon after being sworn in, in 1949 Councilman Roybal introduced a fair employment ordinance. The ILGWU, JLC, and CSO joined other labor and minority groups in organizing a massive lobbying campaign on behalf of Roybal’s proposal. It was symbolic of the new relationships. The ILGWU would remain close to Roybal and the CSO, and the AFL would recognize the Latino group as its representative in the Mexican-American community. It would be a coalition of independent organizations with shared values and overlapping memberships. In the early fifties, the ILGWU and CSO would help form the California Committee for Fair Employment, with Roybal as a cochair and the JLC providing the staff in both Los Angeles and San Francisco. Sigmund Arywitz, the ILGWU’s Education Director in Los Angeles, would become Governor Pat Brown’s labor commissioner. Brown also named JLC’s Bill Becker as his civil rights

advisor. These two men provided CSO leaders access to the highest levels in the administration. The union experience also led to more personal interethnic relationships. For example, ILGWU business agent Hope Mendoza married Harvey Schechter, a staffer for the Anti-Defamation League. She remained among Roybal's closest friends and provided linkages between labor, Latinos, and Jews.<sup>32</sup>

What is so remarkable about that period is its lasting impact as seen in the person of Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. He reassembled the "Roybal coalition," winning strongest support from Latinos, Jews, and union members.<sup>33</sup> In one of his first speeches after being elected, he addressed more than 500 people at a brunch sponsored by the JLC, another ILGWU legacy. Villaraigosa placed his story in the context of the Latino-Jewish alliance that emerged from Boyle Heights. He told of the influence of his Jewish teachers and neighbors growing up on the Eastside, of his trip to Israel, and his commitment to working families. The new mayor's commitment to represent all the people of Los Angeles is the most durable legacy of the Boyle Heights experience.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For more on the ILGWU, see Max D. Danish, *The World of David Dubinsky* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1957); David Dubinsky and A. H. Raskin, *David Dubinsky: A Life with Labor* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1977); Gus Tyler, *Look for the Union Label: A History of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995). For more on the larger milieu, see Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers: The Journey of the East European Jews to America and the Life They Found and Made* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976); Tony Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Ronald Sanders, *The Downtown Jews: Portraits of Immigrant Generation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969); David A. Shannon, *The Socialist Party of America: A History* (New York: Macmillan, 1955); Judah J. Shapiro, *The Friendly Society: A History of the Workmen's Circle* (New York: Doran, 1970); Murray B. Seidler, *Normal Thomas: Respectable Rebel* (Binghamton, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2nd ed., 1967), part. 30-68.

<sup>2</sup> John Laslett and Mary Tyler, *The ILGWU in Los Angeles, 1907-1988* (Inglewood, CA: Ten Star Press, 1989), 30-36; Louis B. Perry and Richard S. Perry, *A History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement, 1911-1941* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 251-80; Benjamin Stolberg, *Tailor's Progress: The Story of a Famous Union and the Men Who Made It* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran, 1944), 227-29.

<sup>3</sup> Author's interview with Jaime Gonzalez Monroy, Monrovia, CA, June 22, 1997; Antonio Rîos-Bustamante and Pedro Castillo, *An Illustrated History of Mexican Los*



*Angeles, 1781-1985* (Los Angeles: Chicano Studies Research Center Publications, UCLA, 1986), 133, with a photo of the float that includes Jaime Gonzalez Monroy's immigrant mother.

<sup>4</sup> Deborah Dash Moore, *To The Golden Cities: Pursuing the American Jewish Dream in Miami and L.A.* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 56-57; David P. Shulbinder, *Of Marx and Moses: Folk Ideology and Folk History in Jewish Labor Movement* (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1999); Max Vorspan and Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1970), 203-205; Video, *Meet Me on Brooklyn and Soto: Celebrating the Jewish Community of East Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Jewish Historical Society of Southern California, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Roos Oral History Interview, p. 68, Urban Archives Center, California State University, Northridge.

<sup>6</sup> Author's interview with Hyman and Mimi Weintraub, Pacific Palisades, CA, July 18, 1997; "Jews Elected to Government Jobs," *California Jewish Voice*, November 15, 1934, p. 1; "45 EPIC Assemblymen Nominated In Primaries With Four Senate Seats," *EPIC NEWS*, September 10, 1934, p. 3; Joseph L. Malamut, ed., *Southwest Jewry, vol. 3* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Jewish Institutions And Their Leaders, 1957), 122-23; Map showing the Assembly and Congressional Districts of The Los Angeles County, 1932, MC 2:2-2, California State Archives (CSA); Statement of Vote, General Election, November 8, 1932, p. 34, and Statement of Vote, General Election, November 6, 1932, p. 26, CSA.

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth C. Burt, "The Birth of the Jewish Labor Committee in Los Angeles and the Fight Against Nazism," Program, Recognition Awards Brunch, Century City, CA, May 23, 2004; Gail Malmgreen, "Labor and the Holocaust: The Jewish Labor Committee and the Anti-Nazi Struggle," *Labor's Heritage*, vol. 3, no. 4 (October 1991), 20-35; Gail Malmgreen, "Comrades and Kinsmen: The Jewish Labor Committee and Anti-Nazi Activity, 1934-1941," in Christine Collette and Stephen Bird, eds., *Jews, Labor and the Left, 1918-48* (England: Ashgate, 2000), 4-20; Benjamin Stolberg, *Taylor's Progress: The Story of a Famous Union and the Men Who Made It*, 162.

<sup>8</sup> "Jewish Labor to Campaign for Nazi Boycott," *California Jewish Voice*, March 28, 1935, p. 1; Letter, J. Levitt to B. Gebiner, June 28, 1935, and other items in JLC 1934-1947, box 21, folder 7, BTAM R-7015/Roll #56, RFWLA, Wagner Labor Archives, New York University. For more on Los Angeles' Jewish unions, see Max Vorspan and Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 197-99.

<sup>9</sup> Statement of Vote, General Election, November 6, 1928, pp. 3, 8, CSA; "Julius Levitt, 1885-1952, *Southwest Jewry*, vol. 3 (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Jewish Institutions and Their Leaders, 1957), 160-61; "Street Car Strikers to Hold Mass Meeting," *EPIC News*, December 24, 1934, p. 1; "Speakers Denounce Streetcar Company," *EPIC News*, December 31, 1931, p. 1; Louis B. Perry and Richard S. Perry, *A History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement, 1911-1941* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 306-307.

<sup>10</sup> "Merchant Prince Joins The Anti-Nazi Boycott," *California Voice*, April 5, 1934, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Letter, J. Levitt to Dear Friends, [1935,] JLC 1934-1947, box 21, folder 7, BTAM R-7015/Roll #56, RFWLA, NYU.

<sup>12</sup> Judge Harry A. Hollzer and Aaron Riche to JLC, June 22, 1938, JLC 1934-1947, box 21, folder 9, BTAM R-7015/Roll #56, RFWLA, NYU.

<sup>13</sup> Letters, Levitt to Minkoff, December 14, 1936, Dubinsky to Feinberg, December 30, 1938, General Secretary-Treasurer [Schlossberg] to Elet, December 23, 1938, JLC 1934-1947, box 21, folder 9, BTAM R-7015/Roll #56, RFWLA, NYU.

<sup>14</sup> Gail Malmgreen, "Comrades and Kinsmen: The Jewish Labor Committee and Anti-Nazi Activity, 1934-1941," in Christine Collette and Stephen Bird, eds., *Jews, Labor and the Left, 1918-48*.

<sup>15</sup> Kenneth C. Burt, "Jewish Labor Committee of California: Celebrating 60 Years of Commitment to Civil Rights, Worker Solidarity, Support for Israel and Peace in the Middle East," Program, JLC Recognition Award Lunch, West Hollywood, CA, June 11, 1995; Author's interview with Gloria Busman, Carlsbad, CA, May 17, 1996; Author's interview with Abe F. Levy, Esq., Los Angeles, May 31, 1996; Author's interview with Zane Meckler, Malibu, CA, March 29 and April 5, 1996.

<sup>16</sup> Zane Meckler interview; Joseph Roos Oral History.

<sup>17</sup> Zane Meckler interview; "Jewish Labor Maps Campaign Against Bigotry," *Los Angeles Times*, July 17, 1946; "Labor Committee Takes Up Fight On Tolerance," *California Jewish Voice*, September 27, 1946, p. 6; *Los Angeles Citizen*, September-November 1946; Philip Taft, *Labor Politics American Style: The California State Federation of Labor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 177-78.

<sup>18</sup> Author's interview with Cass Alvin, Downey, June 27, 1994, and Los Angeles, CA, May 6, 1995; Author's interview with Msgr. William J. Barry, Newport Beach, CA, November 2, 1994; Author's interview with Msgr. John V. Coffield, San Clemente, CA, February 10, 1995; Author's interview with Msgr. Joseph V. Kearney, Carpinteria, CA, January 23, 1995; Abe Levy interview; Author's interviews with Tony Rios, Los Angeles, 1994-1997; "Public Welfare Duties of Labor Told by Priest," *Los Angeles Times*, September 2, 1947, part 2, p. 12.

<sup>19</sup> Cass Alvin interview; Bill Barry interview; Abe Levy interview; Author's interview with Margarita Duran Mendez and James Mendez, Norwalk, CA, March 11, 1995; Tony Rios interview; Author's interview with Hope Mendoza Schechter and Harvey Schechter, Sherman Oaks, CA, September 3, 1994, and subsequent telephone interviews.

<sup>20</sup> Author's interview with Abe Levy, Los Angeles, May 31, 1996.

<sup>21</sup> Hope Mendoza Schechter interview.

<sup>22</sup> "Latin Vote Registration Doubled, Group Announces," *Belvedere (CA) Citizen*, April 30, 1948, p. 1. See also "X-Ray Used in Registration of Voters for Tests for TB," (Los Angeles) *Daily News*, March 6, 1948, p. 2; "Spanish-Speaking Group Spurs Vote Registration," *Los Angeles Times*, March 15, 1948.

<sup>23</sup> Zane Meckler interview; Hyman and Mimi Weintraub interview; Joseph Roos Oral History Interview, 21-22, 50-55; Letter, Charles Brown, president of LA JCRC to Adolph Held, National JLC, December 31, 1948, JLC 1948-1956, Roll 56, RFWLA, NYU; "City's Proudest Campaign Rolling," *California Jewish Voice*, April 12, 1948, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Abe Levy interview.

<sup>25</sup> Sam Margolis interview, Los Angeles, September 27, 1997.

<sup>26</sup> Author's interview with Ed Buzin, Los Angeles, September 3, 1997.

<sup>27</sup> Author's interview with Dave Fishman, Oceanside, CA, January 29, 1997.

<sup>28</sup> Author's interview with Filmore Jaffe, Esq., Beverly Hills, CA, March 7, 1997;

Author's interview with Judge Phillip Newman, Los Angeles, June 22, 1997; Tony Rios interview.

<sup>29</sup> Phil Newman interview.

<sup>30</sup> "Tabulation of Returns, City Council District 9, City of Los Angeles, May 31, 1949,"

Los Angeles City Archives. The precincts were plotted to a precinct map of the district to develop insights in voting patterns by neighborhood. See also Katherine Underwood,

"Process and Politics: Multiracial Electoral Coalition Building and Representation in Los Angeles' Ninth District, 1949-1962" (PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 1992).

<sup>31</sup> "Roybal Takes Office," *CSO News*, July 6, 1949, p. 1, author's files.

<sup>32</sup> Kenneth C. Burt, "Fighting for Fair Employment: Celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the FEPC," program, JLC Recognition Awards Brunch, Beverly Hills, CA, June 6, 1999, an edited version of which appeared as "Battles for Fairness: California's Unions Fight Discrimination," in Mona Field and Brian Kennedy, ed., *The People and Promise of California* (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2008), 118-26. See also Kenneth C. Burt, "Honoring Latino-Jewish Coalitions," program, JLC Recognition Awards Brunch, Century City, CA, June 11, 2000; Hope Mendoza Schechter interview.

<sup>33</sup> “The 2005 Mayoral Election Compared to 2001,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 19, 2005, p. A19.

<sup>34</sup> Two items published after the presentation of this paper provide additional insight: Kenneth C. Burt, “Yiddish Los Angeles and the Birth of Latino Politics,” *Jewish Currents*, May-June 2008, 22-26; Kenneth C. Burt, *The Search for a Civic Voice: California Latino Politics*, with a foreword by Antonio Villaraigosa (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 2007).