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EARL RAAB

# Candid Comments

## A Jewish Experience

A Jewish meeting in Sacramento last week somehow brought to mind the Police Commissioner of New York City who identified "perhaps half of the criminals" in that city as Jewish. "They are burglars, firebugs, pickpockets and highway robbers - when they have the courage," he said. "Among the most expert of all street thieves are Jewish boys under 16 who are brought up to lives of crime."

At the time, some tried to dispute the allegation of the Police Commissioner, made in the year 1908, that a disproportionate number of criminals were Jewish. One Jewish newspaper, the *Warheit*, published daily lists of the names of prostitutes convicted in night court, and pointed out that only 27 or 28 per cent of the prostitutes were Jewish, although about 33 per cent of the borough's population was Jewish.



Raab

But more sensible Jews recognized that, while some estimates might be exaggerated, there was a high crime rate among Jews. There is always a direct connection between poverty and crime. The Jews, as a group, were poverty-stricken and displaced. Jewish crime, said Louis Marshall was "a cancer...gnawing at our vitals."

The New York Jewish community set up a vigorous Jewish vice squad which operated for a number of years. It was mainly an intelligence service which reported Jewish criminals to the Police. The Yiddish Blackhand Assn., which extorted money from stable owners on the threat of horse-poisoning, was broken up. A number of stuss (gambling) houses were closed. And the brothel of Mother Rosie Hertz was shut down, after 30 years on the same street. But by and large none of this police activity, succeeded in making any serious dent on Jewish crime.

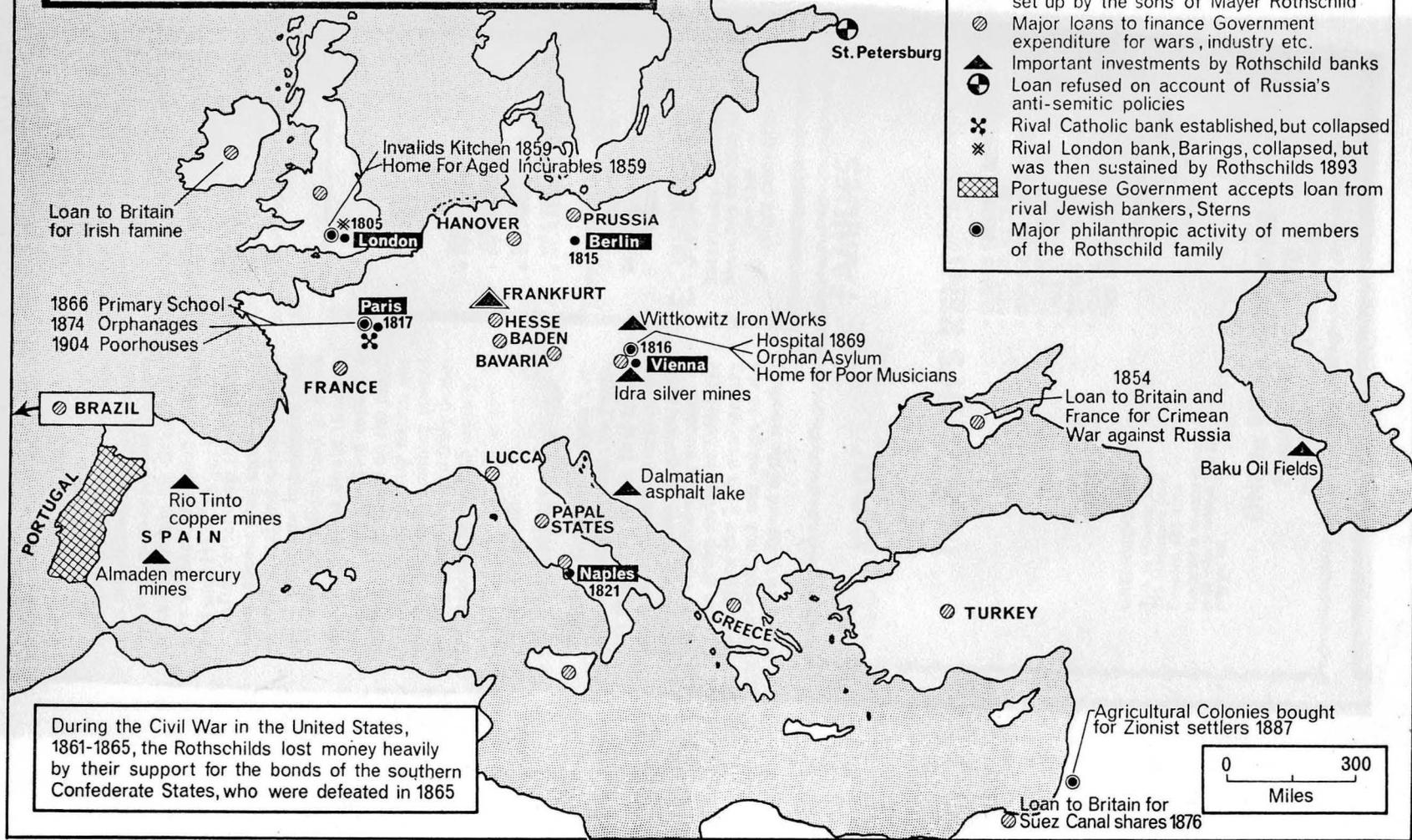
The only thing that made a dent in Jewish crime was the reduction of Jewish poverty and displacement. The work of the Jews in helping to create a labor movement was more instrumental than 1,000 vice squads would have been. The rapid absorption of the Jews into the expanding American economy was what dealt the death blow to prevailing Jewish poverty - and to Jewish crime.

Today, other ethnic and racial groups are caught in poverty and displacement - and, therefore, crime. They are emerging with more difficulty into an economy which is not wildly expanding. The resultant lawlessness now threatens the Jews and the society in which the Jews live. Jewish self-interest tells us we must be concerned with a remedy; and Jewish Experience tells us what the remedy is: not more vice squads, but a reduction of poverty and displacement.

And this Jewish Experience made its presence felt at the annual meeting of the Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California, last week in Sacramento. This Committee is made up of the seven organized Jewish communities of the state. It is chaired by San Francisco's Reynold Colvin and is the main body that deals with state-wide public affairs of concern to the Jewish community. The agenda in Sacramento included certain specific health and welfare issues as they related not only to pockets of Jewish poverty, but to the poverty and displacement of the population in general. The Passover story bids us remember the meaning of our Experience not only in Egypt, but in the New York City ghetto of 1908 as well.

# THE ROTHSCHILD FAMILY 1760-1914

- ▲ First Rothschild bank, about 1760
- Banking Houses with dates of foundation set up by the sons of Mayer Rothschild
- ⊙ Major loans to finance Government expenditure for wars, industry etc.
- ▲ Important investments by Rothschild banks
- ⊕ Loan refused on account of Russia's anti-semitic policies
- ✱ Rival Catholic bank established, but collapsed
- ✱ Rival London bank, Barings, collapsed, but was then sustained by Rothschilds 1893
- ▨ Portuguese Government accepts loan from rival Jewish bankers, Sterns
- Major philanthropic activity of members of the Rothschild family



During the Civil War in the United States, 1861-1865, the Rothschilds lost money heavily by their support for the bonds of the southern Confederate States, who were defeated in 1865

