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# “NCJW Joins the War on Poverty”: The National Council of Jewish Women and the Quest for Opportunity in 1960s Atlanta

by

Emily Alice Katz\*

In April 1968, Marilyn Shubin, president of the Atlanta section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), put a blunt question to the section’s membership. “What should be the role of the ‘middle class volunteer’ in helping to meet the Urban Crisis? That’s the real sixty-four dollar question,” she wrote in the section’s monthly *Bulletin*, warning that “there are certainly no pat answers.”<sup>1</sup> Shubin paused to ask this question at a heady and perplexing moment in American history, a time of unprecedented opportunity and increasing unrest both locally and nationally. President Lyndon Baines Johnson—an adroit power broker with a bedrock faith in the federal government as an engine of social progress—had translated John F. Kennedy’s New Frontier optimism into a series of liberal legislative victories in the mid-1960s after Kennedy’s assassination. Troubled by the specter of entrenched poverty despite a booming postwar economy, Johnson and his many liberal allies in the Democratic-held Congress launched a so-called “War on Poverty” in 1964. The landmark legislation of 1964 and 1965 included the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act, which aimed to expand equality of opportunity to all Americans, an extension of the legal and moral demands of the civil rights movement that arose as a powerful force in American life in the preceding decade. Yet by April 1968, the liberal promise of racial and economic progress was being challenged by powerful critiques from the left and the right. Liberal coalitions frayed as public violence intensified among and between black nationalists, the

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urban poor, radical student activists, white supremacists, and the police. The month that Shubin posed her “sixty-four dollar question” to the council’s members, Atlanta’s own Martin Luther King, Jr., now working to build a poor people’s movement in the United States, was assassinated in Memphis. News of his murder sparked widespread rioting in decaying city centers across the country.<sup>2</sup>

This paper examines two community services initiatives organized, staffed, and supported by the Atlanta section of the NCJW during this period of momentous change in American life: Women in Community Service (WICS) and the council’s Youth Project. Both served as local iterations of the national push to redress the educational and vocational disadvantages wrought by poverty: WICS was a Job Corps program targeting low-income young women, whereas the Youth Project was conceived as a response to the vast inequities in the city’s public school system that had come to light in the era of desegregation. In the case of WICS, a joint project of the federal government and several prominent women’s organizations, Atlanta’s council women helped organize and implement the program in its earliest stages, recruiting and interviewing candidates from Atlanta and the state more broadly for Job Corps training centers across the country. Meanwhile, the council’s Youth Project, also known as Council in the Schools, brought members as volunteers into several underserved schools in urban Atlanta neighborhoods.

### *The Atlanta Milieu*

Atlanta, a growing southern city with complex racial politics, faced its own crises in the 1960s. The city’s leadership and citizens, black and white, reckoned publicly and sometimes violently with the entrenched, racialized power imbalances still underlying the city “too busy to hate” (as its boosters claimed). As radicalized activists of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) jostled with King’s Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and Atlanta’s established black leadership for influence, small-scale riots erupted in the Atlanta communities of Summerhill, Vine City, and Dixie Hills over issues of police brutality and the city’s longstanding, blatant, and deliberate neglect of low-income black neighborhoods.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, Atlanta avoided the major explosions of unrest that characterized several northern cities in the course of the sixties. Un-

der the leadership of Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr., and in consultation with the city's moderate black elite, Atlanta embarked on urban reform and human relations initiatives designed to equalize access to city services and to foster interracial harmony. Such good-faith efforts to address the grievances of black citizens, historian Ronald H. Bayor notes, were largely unprecedented in the urban South.<sup>4</sup> And while the 1958 bombing of Atlanta's Reform synagogue, The Temple, by white supremacists exemplified the rise of violent antisemitism in the civil rights-era South, the act of terrorism had elicited the outrage and sympathy of the moderate gentile majority. The outpouring of support and goodwill toward Atlanta's Jews in the wake of the bombing suggested a widespread, tacit acceptance of the liberal activism of Jewish leaders such as Rabbi Jacob Rothschild and hastened the further integration of Jews into the fabric of Atlanta life.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, council materials from the 1960s and early 1970s exude optimism that the Atlanta section and its home city were equal to the demands of this historic moment. In April 1967, the local section had hosted the NCJW's annual meeting in Atlanta for the first time. The theme was "One Woman Can Make A Difference." NCJW national president Pearl Willen noted that "rarely has the American Jewish woman been so sharply challenged to create a better society."<sup>6</sup> Hosting the convention was an opportunity the local section viewed as consonant with Atlanta's status as an ascendant city: not only the state capital, but a hub of transportation and business, home to two professional sports teams and more than a million residents, bearing an "impressive skyline" and suffused with "Southern Hospitality," as the *Bulletin* boasted.<sup>7</sup> So, too, was Atlanta a magnet for ever-growing numbers of young Jewish families and an incubator for Jewish organizational leadership at the local and national levels.<sup>8</sup>

#### *The NCJW Atlanta Section*

From the time of its founding in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the Atlanta section had occupied a unique status as a Jewish women's organization in the city. Its members assumed leadership positions at the state level and shaped a politically progressive agenda in tandem with the national organization and local allies.<sup>9</sup> As the U.S. government, civic bodies, and grassroots organizations worked

*Vice President Hubert Humphrey,  
event speaker, with NCJW president  
Pearl Willen at the group's national  
meeting in Atlanta, April 13, 1967.*

*(Courtesy of the Cuba Family  
Archives for Southern Jewish  
History at the Breman Museum,  
Atlanta.)*

actively to engineer a more equitable civil society during the course of the 1960s, the Atlanta section continued its crucial and often pathbreaking work in the spheres of legislative advocacy and community services. On the eve of the 1967 convention, council volunteers ran a multitude of projects intended to buttress the social welfare of the local community, encompassing the absorption of Jewish immigrants, recreational opportunities and job referral services for older citizens, a new partnership with the Georgia Mental Health Institute, and education and employment initiatives for young people, among other things. The council's work with WICS and its Youth Project in the schools thus coexisted within a wide-ranging portfolio of communal services initiatives in keeping with the organization's longstanding record, locally and nationally, of activism for the public good. Both initiatives examined in this paper reflect the NCJW's liberal political platform and its practice of "civic feminism," in which members—still largely unpaid volunteers rather than salaried professionals—worked closely with government institutions and other civic organizations throughout the country to safeguard



*From the NCJW Atlanta section Bulletin, January 1970.  
(Courtesy of the Cuba Family Archives for Southern  
Jewish History at the Breman Museum, Atlanta.)*

civil liberties and pursue social justice and human rights at home and abroad.<sup>10</sup>

In a broader sense, the council's work with WICS and its Youth Project sheds new light on American liberalism at the crossroads. In philosophy and practice, President Johnson's War on Poverty aimed to remove the barriers that, according to the liberal diagnosis of inequality, kept some Americans from finding a place in the American economy. Through the creation of job training programs such as Job Corps and by securing increased federal funding for schools, the president and Congress focused particular attention on creating educational and vocational opportunities for disadvantaged youth. Essentially optimistic in conception, the War on Poverty was intended to open individual paths, en masse, to the American dream. To the extent that they grasped the complex structural causes of inequality then coming to light, neither the president nor the American public supported the radical economic and social measures that might have fostered the equitable sharing of power and resources among all sectors of the American population. In its conceptualization and implementation of WICS and the Youth Project, the Atlanta council section serves as a microcosm of forces at work in public life at this pivotal moment in American history. As its leaders and volunteers made clear, the council exemplified the ambitious optimism of midcentury liberalism that envisioned the gradual, orderly expansion of opportunity for the disadvantaged as a joint government-civic project. The particular failings of WICS and the Youth Project, however, also point to the limits of midcentury liberalism in solving the entrenched inequalities that characterize American society.

Specifically, in focusing on these two community services initiatives in their prime years of operation between 1964 and 1973, this paper attempts to enrich our understanding of how Jewish women in the postwar urban South attempted to remake the South as a more equitable society. While several scholars have made notable contributions to the historical literature on southern Jewish women as public advocates for social change in the first postwar decades, we still know relatively little about the roles these women played "in the field," how they framed and understood their motives, and how they were perceived by the subjects of their interventions.<sup>11</sup> This essay contributes further to this literature. In uncovering one aspect of the largely untold story of the Atlanta section

of council, it pays particular attention to the tensions and contradictions that characterized its on-the-ground approach to expanding opportunities for low-income youth, in and out of school, during the 1960s and early 1970s.

The council women involved in these projects embraced and enacted serious efforts to open equal opportunities to disadvantaged youth. Yet, simultaneously, they were often blind to the paternalism that marked and sometimes stymied their efforts. As was true of participants in liberal organizations generally in the first postwar decades—Jewish and non-Jewish, black and white— council members did not “fully recognize the structural underpinnings to racism” and class discrimination, as Cheryl Lynn Greenberg has shown. As religious bigotry and social discrimination against Jews receded from public and private life, liberal Jewish groups were slower to “question the efficacy of the liberal vision” than, for example, black activists.<sup>12</sup> In their work with disadvantaged populations, however, at least some council volunteers began to grasp the enormity of the problem at hand and broaden their perspectives on poverty and privilege. The Atlanta section’s involvement in WICS and in its Youth Project serve, in this light, as a powerful lens for focusing the sometimes fraught, often poignant interactions between middle- and upper-middle-class Jewish women and those underserved Atlantans they attempted to help.

Atlanta Jewish women had a long-standing involvement with the NCJW. In 1895—a mere two years after the birth of the council at the Chicago World’s Fair as the first national organization of Jewish women in the United States—a group of women affiliated with Atlanta’s Hebrew Benevolent Congregation (The Temple) formed a local chapter of the NCJW with Rebecca Solomons Alexander as president. The Atlanta chapter reflected the shared spiritual and social agenda of Atlanta’s Reform community and the national organization. Indeed, the Atlanta section served until 1912 as the women’s auxiliary of The Temple, cultivating fellowship and encouraging the study of Judaism among local Reform women as well as raising funds for the congregation. From its earliest years, however, the Atlanta council also served as a civic organization, providing an array of social services for immigrant Jews and campaigning for hallmark Progressive Era initiatives such as free kindergartens and fair labor laws.<sup>13</sup> With its paired focus on strengthening

the Jewish community and reforming broader society, the Atlanta council bore the influence of both Rabbi David Marx of The Temple, whose active support for the Atlanta section of the council was crucial to its founding, and NCJW founder Hannah G. Solomon, both of whom propounded American Judaism as an enlightened partner of liberal Protestantism and a force for the progressive restructuring of modern urban society.<sup>14</sup> For Solomon and the members of council sections across the country, acculturated Jewish women had a particularly important role to play in this endeavor as educators in the private domain and as advocates and protectors of the masses of immigrant Jewish women in the public realm.

The Atlanta section did not simply reflect the values of its founding ideologues; it helped spur reform in the urban New South. As historian Beth Wenger has shown, leaders of the Atlanta section played an outsized role in local civic life through the 1920s (1930 is the endpoint of her study), establishing sustained, working relationships with non-Jewish women's clubs to a greater degree than their northern counterparts. In the first decades of the twentieth century, for example, council members assumed significant positions in the Georgia Federation of Women's Clubs and the League of Women Voters. In the interwar period, the Atlanta council spearheaded public health initiatives for local schools and the mentally disabled and lobbied on behalf of children and immigrants, even as members continued to devote their energies to the cause of Jewish "uplift" in partnership with the Jewish Educational Alliance and the Federation of Jewish Charities.<sup>15</sup>

The post-World War II council bore the legacy of these early years of activism and organizational prowess in service to the local Jewish community and Atlanta's and Georgia's populations more broadly. In the course of the 1940s and 1950s, council committees worked to organize and staff a children's day care at Grady Memorial Hospital; to provide recent immigrants with English and citizenship classes; and to sponsor social and educational activities for seniors, among other things, initiatives that continued through the sixties. The council defended civil liberties at the height of McCarthyism, endorsing a resolution put forward by the League of Women Voters against political intolerance and supporting the Georgia Educators' Association in rejecting a loyalty test for teachers.<sup>16</sup> And in anticipation of *Brown v. the Board of Education*, the

council began to concern itself with the issue of desegregation, sometimes directly and sometimes obliquely. In December 1953, for example, the Public Affairs Committee hosted a lecture by local entrepreneur and white political progressive Philip Hammer, whose research on the deleterious effects of “separate but equal” schools helped influence the Supreme Court’s decision in favor of desegregation.<sup>17</sup> Later in the decade, the council section spoke out against the state’s efforts to privatize public education and thus forestall integration.

True to its roots, the Atlanta section of the council remained integral to the public life of the city in the postwar period; so, too, did the section maintain its high status in, and centrality to, Atlanta’s Jewish community. Council materials from the first decade following World War II not only disclose the content of the organization’s commitments to the welfare of Jews—locally, nationally, and globally—but also reveal the extensive network of local Jewish organizations with which council members fraternized. The council joined other local Jewish organizations for conferences and special events, and members made it their business to keep current on doings in the Jewish community.<sup>18</sup> Marilyn Shubin, council president from 1967 to 1969, serves as an exemplar of the interconnected quality of organized Jewish life in the city. By October 1970, she had served not only as council president but also as director of The Temple Sisterhood, recording secretary of Hadassah, and speaker of the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federation and Welfare Funds in Atlanta.<sup>19</sup>

Mark K. Bauman and Solomon Sutker have both shown that, in the postwar period, Atlanta’s growing Jewish community established an increasingly sophisticated organizational structure and employed a new professional cohort to direct its communal and philanthropic efforts.<sup>20</sup> In his sociological analysis undertaken in the immediate postwar years, Sutker described the transference of power within the local Jewish community from a native, high-status “lay elite” to a nonnative cohort of “professional community workers.” Members of this new “professional elite” stemmed largely from northern cities or Europe; were college graduates who had received professional training in Judaism and/or the social sciences; and espoused liberal political commitments.<sup>21</sup>

As a women’s voluntary association with deep roots in Atlanta’s Jewish ecosystem as well as a magnet for new arrivals to the city, the

council represents an interesting hybrid of the old and new leadership. A look at the membership and especially the leadership of the council in the first postwar decades indicates an Atlanta Jewish community in flux.

The council section of the fifties and sixties was deeply entwined with the established lay elite, whether of "German" or eastern European origin. Many prominent members were relatives and descendants of the founding elites of the council and Atlanta's Jewish community at large, including the Alexander, Eiseman, Gershon, Gross, Guthman, Harris, Heyman, Hirsch, Marx, Oberdorfer, and Oppenheimer clans.<sup>22</sup> The occupational positions of the spouses of board members illustrate the high socioeconomic status of this group within and beyond the Jewish community. For example, Arthur L. Harris, husband of board member Helen Eiseman Harris (later Helen Alexander), served as president of his family's Atlanta Paper Company and later occupied an upper-level position at the Mead Corporation. Edward Elson, husband of council president Suzanne (Susie) Elson, built a career as an airport retail magnate and served as vice president and then president of the Atlanta News Agency in the years under consideration. Local arts patron Reuben Crimm, who along with his wife and council board member Janet Crimm was among the victims of the Paris-to-Atlanta flight that crashed at Orly Field in 1962, was senior partner in the law firm Crimm and Postell. Walter Bunzl, husband of council president Frances Bunzl, served as consul to Vienna. The spouses of council presidents Vicki Pressman, Fanny Jacobson, and Marilyn Shubin were employed in high-level retail positions with local department stores.

Although a full occupational and socioeconomic portrait of this cohort is beyond the scope of this paper, these examples provide a glimpse of the status of council-affiliated families who comfortably inhabited the entrepreneurial, managerial, and professional niches common among acculturated and highly successful American Jews. The council, in this light, maintained its profile as a voluntary outlet for a middle- and upper-middle-class lay elite, and the largely married, female cohort of this stratum in particular.

On the other hand, similar to the new male professional elites studied by Sutker, many leaders of the Atlanta section of the council during the fifties, sixties, and seventies were migrants to Atlanta educated else-

where. Many had accrued experience in the labor market before assuming leadership positions with the council. Fanny Jacobson, president in the late 1950s and founder of the council's Golden Age Employment Service, was a New Orleans native who attended Barnard College and worked as a social worker in Chicago and New Orleans before moving to Atlanta for her husband's work.<sup>23</sup> Frances Bunzl, president in the mid-1960s, arrived in Georgia in 1940 as a refugee from Nazi Germany. Although she did not work again until 1968, when she opened a travel agency, Bunzl had been employed at a Jewish hospital in Frankfurt and as an au pair in London before immigrating to America.<sup>24</sup> Philadelphia-born Marilyn Shubin graduated from Drexel University, where she studied business. She met her husband as a fellow trainee in a junior executive training program. Her positive experience as a volunteer for the council while living in Cleveland prompted her to contact the organization when her husband's job brought them to Atlanta in 1962. Barbara Asher, president in the early 1970s, was a Wisconsin native. After graduating from Sophie Newcomb College in New Orleans, she moved to New York, where she took a position as a student center adviser at New York University and then worked for several years at Bloomingdale's. Asher worked at Rich's Department Store after moving to Atlanta but, after the birth of her first child, she resigned the job to make time to volunteer with the council. Sherry Frank, president in the mid-1970s and a native Atlantan who attended Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, joined the council as a young mother in Plainfield, New Jersey, before returning to Atlanta with her husband in 1968.<sup>25</sup>

Certainly, as the biographical information above attests, the majority of the council's leaders in the sixties and early seventies had accrued education and experience outside of the postwar South. So, too, several of these leaders recalled having had firsthand, nuanced encounters with African Americans in the years before taking up their Atlanta council work. In her youth, Sherry Frank sometimes worked at her uncle's downtown clothing store, which catered to a black clientele, and she has described having had "a real comfort level" with local African Americans. Martin Luther King, Sr., delivered the eulogy at her uncle's funeral. Shubin attended an integrated high school in Philadelphia, where she befriended African American fellow students. As a student at integrated Barnard, Fanny Jacobson studied with African American classmates, and

she worked under a black supervisor as a social worker in Chicago and supervised black social workers in New Orleans.<sup>26</sup>

This combined background, as Sutker's earlier findings suggest, may have influenced the liberal activist spirit that propelled and buttressed the council's community services initiatives examined in this paper. Yet such activism followed in the paths of Rhoda Kaufman, Josephine Heyman, Rebecca Gershon, and Hannah Shulhafer, most of whom were Georgia natives who worked actively and publicly for progressive causes in Atlanta beginning before the 1960s.<sup>27</sup> The collective educational and life experiences of these presidents suggest the cosmopolitan, liberal orientation of much of the council's leadership. They brought their experiences, skills, and interests to the council, an organization with a longstanding record as a progressive force in Atlanta's civic life, and shaped its community services agenda accordingly.

*From the Atlanta section  
Bulletin, April 1965.  
(Courtesy of the Cuba  
Family Archives for  
Southern Jewish History  
at the Breman Museum,  
Atlanta.)*



*WICS: Mission, Implementation, and Challenges at the Local Level*

"NCJW Joins the War on Poverty," trumpeted the Atlanta section *Bulletin* in April 1965, announcing the incorporation of WICS and its first local volunteer training session at the Atlanta section's Council House. In a full-page article, the unnamed author explained that the initiative, like the newly instituted Job Corps program, would "give poor youths a chance to help themselves" by targeting "young women . . . who are now largely unemployable because they lack the education and job skills to move ahead." Selected recruits from the WICS office in Atlanta and twenty-four other screening centers across the country would attend Job Corps training centers "from 10 months to two years," the article explained, depending on the vocational curriculum required, and would receive "room and board, clothing, [and] a new cultural and environmental experience" — as well as payment — during the training period. The article proclaimed that WICS offered potential volunteers, "women of all faiths and races," the chance to "combine their resources, programs, and contacts" in the campaign to eradicate poverty.<sup>28</sup> In Atlanta, as at the national level, a coalition of four women's organizations — the NCJW, the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), United Church Women, and the National Council of Catholic Women — would implement this subsidiary of the federal Job Corps program for young women.

From the beginning, the implementation of WICS at the local level required an intricate delegation of duties among players with varying degrees of expertise, power, and rootedness in the Atlanta community. These included the longstanding local chapters of the middle-class women's organizations tasked with many of the practical details of its rollout; the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), established in 1964 as a linchpin of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, and its local offshoot, Economic Opportunity Atlanta (EOA); the neighborhood centers and their largely female staff, which, according to the "maximum feasible participation" mandate for the OEO, were charged with much of the local oversight and staffing of programs for its disadvantaged constituencies; and the young women recruit-trainees.<sup>29</sup> Recruitment efforts, for example, required NCJW and its sister organizations to reach out to local schools, Fulton County's Department of Family and Children

*President Lyndon B. Johnson signing the Economic Opportunity Act, a cornerstone of the War on Poverty, at the White House, August 20, 1964. (Photograph by Cecil Stoughton, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library.)*

Services (among other social service agencies), and neighborhood centers to find potential candidates, as well as to “sell” the worth of the program to underserved young women. In these years, too, the Atlanta Urban League (AUL) worked to bring wider economic opportunities to the local African American population, conducting research and implementing vocational training programs, employment recruitment efforts, and information services in partnership with the federal government as well as with the Atlanta Negro Voters League and the SCLC. The AUL, however, apparently did not focus particular attention on women per se, leaving the field open for WICS coalition members.<sup>30</sup> In any case, the NCJW was one of a patchwork of civic organizations in 1960s Atlanta seeking to redress economic inequality. In staffing, oversight, and budgetary matters, as discussed below, NCJW Atlanta both cooperated with and was constrained by its local and federal partners.

Hannah Stein, executive director of the NCJW, wrote to Atlanta section president Frances Bunzl in February 1965 that WICS was to be the Atlanta section's "top priority for the next six weeks," with a goal of mobilizing "the womanpower in your Section and the Jewish community to get the job done."<sup>31</sup> Volunteers in the WICS office in Atlanta—then located downtown at 41 Exchange Place—were to solicit and process the applications of young women between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one living in poverty and to forward completed applications to the national office in Washington, D.C. Young women deemed by the national office to be suitable for the program were then invited to enter vocational programs at one of the training centers across the country. In April 1970 Atlanta became the site of one such training center. Council volunteers organized recruitment efforts, screened candidates, assisted with related office work, provided transportation, and participated in home visits to the candidates' households. They also helped organize and sponsor special events such as public forums and social get-togethers.<sup>32</sup>

By fall 1965, the WICS pilot program in Atlanta was fully underway. A statistical report from early in the program's tenure demonstrates that Atlanta WICS was making small but notable strides. Twenty-four young women processed by the Atlanta office had been accepted by the federal Job Corps and assigned to training centers; of those, seventeen were already undergoing training.<sup>33</sup> The minutes from WICS board meetings tell of notable achievements by young women screened by the Atlanta office, such as winning full college scholarships and providing assistance in opening new training centers.<sup>34</sup>

Yet problems surfaced early and remained seemingly intractable. Some were bureaucratic in nature, in part a function of the top-down relationship between the federal government and its local partners. In particular, Atlanta WICS was stymied by constantly shifting directives from the national WICS office, as set out by the OEO and the Community Action Agency bureaucracy. As early as summer 1965, only months after the program's launch, national headquarters alerted local project managers of delays in the opening of training centers and announced a moratorium on recruiting and interviewing young women due to budgetary wrangling with the OEO. Ten months into the program, the Atlanta office had only fully processed 68 of the 569 applications received.<sup>35</sup> These numbers pointed to a hunger for oppor-

tunity among impoverished young Georgians and the dire effects of the moratorium.

In this scenario, the president and executive director of national WICS suggested community-based interim measures, from offering remedial reading and physical fitness programs and providing field trips for underserved young women to coordinating with local employment services to find work for graduates of the training centers.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, under the OEO, the government now earmarked funding specifically for locally based Community Action Programs and, along these lines, requested that WICS coordinate its screening and referral service with the neighborhood centers.<sup>37</sup> In a letter to the council's national WICS liaison in 1966, Bunzl described efforts to fulfill the directive to provide pre- and postplacement services to young women in Atlanta—providing field trips and lectures, for example, and overseeing weekly individual meetings. She expressed disappointment, however, that such services were not more successful. "I cannot say we are doing a wonderful job with the girls returning," she wrote, "but we are getting a little better every week in our placements and follow ups."<sup>38</sup>

Staffing proved to be another serious problem. In part, this was intrinsic to the sphere of women's voluntary work and the seasonal nature of its members' family obligations. At the end of WICS's trial year, leaders of the Atlanta council section worried with good reason about losing volunteers once school let out for the summer and women were obliged to stay home with their children.<sup>39</sup> Add to that the constantly shifting demands of WICS work for the individual volunteer in terms of both skills and time needed, as well as the lack of pay and the program's uncertain future, and one begins to understand why staffing was a perennial issue for the council and its partner organizations. Bunzl wrote to NCJW's field representative of her work for WICS that she had "never done anything so fascinating in [her] life." She also described, however, working by necessity in the WICS office nearly full-time, a situation best suited to a trained professional in her view.<sup>40</sup> A later council report on WICS described the clerical work and management of the Atlanta WICS office as an "overwhelming" task.<sup>41</sup>

Moreover, according to some sources, volunteer efforts on the part of the various women's organizations were not always evenly distributed. Both Bunzl and fellow section leader Marilyn Shubin described an

*Frances Bunzl, former president of  
the Atlanta section of the NCJW,  
accepting an award from Martin  
Luther King, III, in Atlanta, 1970.  
(Courtesy of the Cuba Family  
Archives for Southern Jewish  
History at the Breman Museum,  
Atlanta.)*

unequal shouldering of responsibility among the women's organizations and expressed frustration concerning the disparity.<sup>42</sup> Bunzl suggested in retrospect that, in practice, members of the white Christian organizations balked at volunteering with the black members of the coalition, and that the bulk of the work for Atlanta WICS was therefore carried out by members of the NCNW and the NCJW.<sup>43</sup> While racial animus or discomfort with integration may certainly have hampered full cooperation on the ground among the four women's organizations, documents in the Atlanta section records do not address this specifically or explicitly as an issue. Indeed, a seeming discrepancy existed between the NCJW and the NCNW in each organization's presentation of WICS to members. In the NCNW's *Progress Report* of 1966, leaders billed the initiative as "an independent, interracial women's undertaking."<sup>44</sup> In contrast, WICS-related news in NCJW's *Bulletin* often cited the NCNW prominently as a coalition member, but the word "interracial" never appears in the council's reports on the program. This fact suggests that, from the outset, volunteers framed their understanding and expectations differently depending on the angle from which each organization approached issues of social justice, poverty, and race.

In any case, it was clear within the program's first year that, whatever its philosophical goals, in practical terms WICS was struggling to retain recruits. Many trainees dropped out of Job Corps before graduating, a fact that no doubt weighed heavily on the minds of volunteers, not to mention the recruits themselves. By January 1966, partway through the first year of training, two of the thirty-three young women in the first cohort that had been sent from Atlanta WICS had dropped out of the program. Single mothers apparently comprised a quarter of all recruits, and at least one of the young women was unable to reconcile child care obligations back home with training at a distant center.<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile, according to another estimate presented at an Atlanta WICS board meeting in 1966, "80 percent of the white girls at centers do not stay to completion."<sup>46</sup> By fall 1967, half of the 208 young women sent from Atlanta to Job Corps training centers had dropped out, an unsurprising fact given the tremendous obstacles they faced.<sup>47</sup> (Several years later, data showed that, at the national level, only 20 percent of recruits had completed courses at Job Corps training centers to date.<sup>48</sup>) Nor was employment guaranteed at the end of training, a reality that in 1968 led to the opening of an EOA-funded Graduate Aid to Employment (GATE) office in Atlanta, one of sixteen in the country.<sup>49</sup>

These issues did not disappear over time. Board minutes and annual reports indicate low morale among participating council women and show that the section had continuing trouble recruiting and keeping volunteers. Indeed, Atlanta WICS was bedeviled by problems in staffing and administrative oversight as well as mission clarity into the early 1970s. Council's relationship with the Labor Department was "very strained," in the words of an internal report by the Atlanta NCJW conducted from 1970 to 1971, with "no understanding or cooperation between the two groups." Atlanta WICS in general, according to the same report, was "terribly disorganized."<sup>50</sup> A separate internal report called it "unstructured and floundering."<sup>51</sup> The Atlanta section's leadership described being "unsure of the validity of the Center's program; . . . disappointed with the quality of the WICS national leadership and unable to find a solution to the paucity of volunteers."<sup>52</sup> At the national level, the fate of WICS remained uncertain, especially as the Nixon administration reshuffled and downgraded the public welfare bureaucracy. Atlanta WICS was not alone in its dysfunction. Other federal-local jobs

initiatives in Atlanta, particularly those that targeted black unemployment, failed to rectify widespread inequities in education, vocational training, and job placement.<sup>53</sup>

In light of these ongoing difficulties and apparently as part of an attempt by each of the women's organization coalition members to target one discrete area for service provision, the Atlanta section refocused its responsibilities by overseeing publicity and public relations, an initiative that met with some success.<sup>54</sup> Council volunteers were also given some responsibility for recruitment and screening at a newly established Job Corps training center in Atlanta. Yet the council section still struggled to find its footing. By the early 1970s, Bunzl had resigned her position as assistant project director for WICS. The Atlanta WICS office, failing to make its quotas in placements for recruits, had its full-time secretary removed.<sup>55</sup> Despite the Sisyphean nature of its efforts, the Atlanta section leadership continued to make the case that WICS provided uniquely compelling opportunities to know and improve Atlanta as a diverse, burgeoning urban center. For those section members who "really want to get out and work in the community, . . . directly with the people," as one report suggested, WICS served as an unparalleled conduit to on-the-ground engagement.<sup>56</sup>

*Between Paternalism and Empathy: WICS as Zone of Contact*

What did that on-the-ground engagement look like as members of the Atlanta section of the council intervened in the lives of underserved women? Extant documents lend at least a partial picture of these encounters. Indeed, one may view WICS's institutional and social spaces as rare zones of contact among disparate sectors of the Atlanta populace, including the middle- and upper-middle-class Jewish women who made up the council's membership and the young, low-income Georgia women, black and white, whom they attempted to help.

While WICS primarily served as an effort to extend opportunity to disadvantaged youth, in practice it was also a laboratory for racial integration. In Atlanta, its role as an engine of integration provoked some anxiety, especially, it seems, among the families of potential white recruits. Racial animus proved a stumbling block in this regard. According to a report dating from spring 1965, during the first months of the program's existence, the Atlanta WICS office had trouble recruiting white

candidates because the parents of these young women objected to sending their daughters to integrated training centers.<sup>57</sup>

Several years later, the NCJW's national liaison to WICS, Eudyce Gordon, encouraged the Atlanta section to address issues of race and integration publicly in a special presentation on WICS, a sign of the significance of this problem for the local community. A program was planned for April 1968 at The Temple, the home congregation of many council members. Several graduates of WICS training centers—Rosa Shivers, Julia Bailey, Patricia Knott, and Christine Merrit, all of whom had found employment since graduating—were invited to speak.<sup>58</sup> In a letter to Bunzl, Gordon emphasized the importance of broaching difficult subject matter, including the topic of integration, at the public event. She suggested several prompts to relay to the young WICS graduates to help them prepare for the event. "If you have a Caucasian girl" speaking at the event, Gordon wrote to Bunzl, "ask her to tell the women [in the audience] what her family had to say about her going into an integrated training program. Ask her . . . what her first feelings were when she saw so many 'black faces.' How did she adjust to this new exposure to interracial living and learning?"<sup>59</sup>

Alternately, the liaison suggested that each of the black participants in the event "tell if she or her family were suspicious of those white (home visitors) 'do-gooders' who seemed to want to help them, and if they tried to figure out . . . what 'they' were going to get out of it." Gordon advised that the young women be encouraged to talk about "the attitude of the people, shopkeepers, and police" in the surrounding community and to discuss any behavioral "trouble" they might have gotten into at the centers and how that trouble was resolved.<sup>60</sup> She concluded:

Bring up the things that you know the girls and your volunteers are concerned about; help them understand that you *want* a 'no holds barred' . . . approach to problems and their possible solutions. They'll carry on from there if you just point the way by introducing the subject of black and white, and behavior. . . . Remind them that one of the rewards the volunteer gets is the knowledge that she may have helped them develop hope, and to dream of a better future.<sup>61</sup>

As these comments suggest, the Job Corps training centers to which local recruits were sent presented various opportunities for contact and



*NCJW Atlanta section Bulletin describing an upcoming program featuring successful WICS graduates, April 1968. (Courtesy of the Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History at the Breman Museum, Atlanta.)*

conflict, not only among peers but also among recruits, staff, and local populations. Accounts of the opening of the first Job Corps training center, located in Saint Petersburg, Florida, detailed tensions between the center and members of the business community, the local school board, and the city government. Conflict occurred amid reports of delinquency and “immoral” behavior among trainees, staff, and graduates of the center, which was forced to close under mounting pressure in 1966. Others associated with the center—including staff, students, graduates, and some community members—argued that behavioral lapses were minimal and suspected that locals had balked, in fact, at the facility’s integrated status.<sup>62</sup> Reports of violent fights and allegations of prostitution put the training center in Charleston, West Virginia, in the spotlight.<sup>63</sup> Several years later, a report on the Jersey City, New Jersey, center described “petty larceny . . . homosexual acts and the use of drugs and alcoholic beverages,” as well as pregnancy and the spread of venereal diseases, among the issues with which program staff grappled. Recruits and graduates described being stigmatized in the wider community as “bad girls.”<sup>64</sup>

In the very first issue of the WICS national newsletter, published in July 1966, the organization’s president, Rosemary Kilch of the National Council of Catholic Women, alluded to similar difficulties. “Some of you may become discouraged by adverse reports by one or the other Job Corps centers for women,” she wrote, admitting that, “[no] doubt centers have many problems and . . . make some mistakes in dealing with youngsters.” She concluded this vague admission by noting that she felt the reports, which she also neglected to specify, were “somewhat exaggerated,” and she encouraged volunteers to keep at their work, knowing that, however messy the process may be in the short term, “we are doing the right thing over the long run.”<sup>65</sup> Reports in the mainstream press on the organization’s struggles also highlighted the fervent belief among the young women interviewed that WICS presented an unprecedented opportunity for personal growth, interracial harmony, and economic success.<sup>66</sup>

Extant materials provide a poignant glimpse of the lives of the disadvantaged young women targeted by WICS. As the comments and exhortations of council and other women volunteers make clear, the young women faced significant hurdles at every turn. Raised in poverty

in the urban and rural South, many of these young women lacked adequate educational opportunities and access to medical and dental care. Some, according to reports, had never slept in beds. They required the most basic material goods needed for travel to and life in training centers in faraway places including Iowa, Nebraska, and Ohio. The Atlanta council section called on its members throughout this period to donate coats and suitcases. The council's thrift store downtown served as an important staging ground in this regard. Newsletters and meeting minutes reveal consistent efforts among volunteers to correspond with young Georgia women in the training centers and send them care packages to ease homesickness and build morale.<sup>67</sup>

Unfortunately, little of the recruits' voices survives in the NCJW records. Testimonials by trainees culled from correspondence with WICS screening centers and published in bulletins and newsletters portray their experiences in a positive light. A representative newsletter, circulated by Atlanta WICS in spring 1967, brims with cheerful news:

We have wonderful reports from POLAND SPRINGS, MAINE. ROSE MANAGAN, SARAH STERLING, BEULAH SMITH—have written several letters telling how very happy they are . . . that their experience is interesting and satisfying and the Job Corps means a great deal to them. Their training includes retail salesclerking, clerk typist. Attention is also being given to their physical conditions and dental work is being done. Rose writes that she is also learning to skate and ride a horse! . . .

ST. LOUIS JOB CORPS CENTER may be "snowed in" from time to time but our trainees write that they enjoy everything there. GLENDA SMITH has two roommates who make her "feel like home." ANNIE ALBRIGHT is in child care and [nurse] training and writes "May God bless and keep you all" for your kindness. DOROTHY JEAN WILLIAMS is studying very hard and enjoys going to school every day.<sup>68</sup>

Yet even the brief, vetted statements that appear in newsletters evoke a subterranean reality as these young women made painful adjustments to their new lives. As one recruit wrote to the WICS national newsletter, "My schedule is crowded but it keeps my mind off of my home."<sup>69</sup> One of the first Georgia recruits, sent to a training center in Albuquerque, wrote to the Atlanta WICS office to "try and send a fellow Atlantan out here. I'm lonesome."<sup>70</sup> A young African American woman from Atlanta, Rosa Shivers, recalled her "fear of the unknown" upon

embarking for the training center in Charleston, West Virginia, to which she was assigned. Her sister told her not to go, and Shivers nearly decided against leaving home. "It was scary," she told a reporter in regard to her transition to life at the Job Corps center. "I'd never been that far from home, and I didn't know anybody." Her story, at least, ended happily. She made friends and studied with "nice teachers," and she ultimately obtained employment on the clerical staff of the Atlanta WICS office after completing her Job Corps training.<sup>71</sup>

While race mattered, class was perhaps the central dividing line, as the experiences and worldviews of recruits from poor families rubbed up against the sensibilities and expectations of the middle-class professionals and volunteers to whom they were entrusted. Documents from the time illuminate a degree of cultural disconnect between providers and recruits and suggest at least some inability on the part of some volunteers to comprehend the economic and psychological needs of impoverished young people. In a story about WICS published in the *Atlanta Constitution*, for example, Atlanta WICS project director Helen Oppenlander lauded the changed comportment of Georgia women undergoing Job Corps training—an improvement in "poise, dress, and attitude," as she put it—as the chief example of their progress.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, a newsletter sent by WICS to recruits and volunteers encouraged and patronized its target audience in equal measure. The author of the newsletter article admonished those who skipped classes at the training centers and wrote in response to one young woman's legitimate concern about posttraining employment that the young woman was sure to get a job back home if she "works hard to become a *GOOD* draftsman."<sup>73</sup>

From one angle, these comments convey faith in individual agency and personal merit for overcoming barriers to socioeconomic survival, a message that young women in WICS training programs may have found encouraging. Yet in emphasizing—and perhaps overemphasizing—the role of personal effort, individual perseverance, and decorous comportment, WICS staff and volunteers ran the risk of downplaying the systemic obstacles, such as widespread employment discrimination against African Americans, that young recruits faced.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, this focus on the individual was intrinsic to the conceptualization of WICS and to the War on Poverty as a whole. War on Poverty initiatives such as Job Corps operated according to the liberal assumption that the expansion of

opportunity for individuals—a “hand up, not a hand out” as OEO head Sargent Shriver often put it—would level the playing field. Yet a growing body of research at the time and after suggested that deeply rooted systems of racial and class inequality, including endemic job and housing discrimination against African Americans in particular, called for more comprehensive, structural reforms.<sup>75</sup> Those who implemented WICS as a War on Poverty initiative—including the women of the Atlanta council—understood Job Corps training as providing the necessary equality of opportunity. What a young woman did with that opportunity afterward, the reasoning went, was up to the individual.

Economic philosophy aside, however, paternalism certainly played a role in the relations between providers and recipients. WICS staff and volunteers, including those of the council, assumed that underserved young women were better off far from home, under the guidance of middle-class volunteers and social welfare professionals, not only during Job Corps training but also after. That middle-class club women, by modeling appropriate comportment and by serving as a conduit to formal vocational training, were uniquely equipped to usher young women out of poverty was not a new notion. In an earlier era, the NCJW had targeted young eastern European Jewish immigrants for such acculturating efforts alongside their advocacy work on behalf of immigrant women. This effort resembled those of other middle-class women’s organizations that had applied themselves to reshaping members of a vast, urban immigrant underclass into middle-class citizens. The NCJW applied this policy of integration into middle-class life and values to continuing waves of Jewish immigrants, from German refugees and Holocaust survivors to Russian refuseniks and refugees from Cuba and Iraq. This tension between progressive reform and paternalism had characterized the women’s organizational sphere—voluntary and professional, black and white—since earlier in the twentieth century.<sup>76</sup>

Council women, like their coalition partners, apparently viewed WICS training as a means of inculcating middle-class mores and work habits as much as imparting concrete vocational skills. For example, a 1972 issue of the *Bulletin* reported that Atlanta section member Dudley Stevens, in addition to bringing young WICS recruits to the symphony and theater, taught courses in grooming and interior design at the Atlanta WICS training center. The anonymous author of the report insisted

*Job Corps brochure distributed by the NCJW Atlanta section.  
(Courtesy of the Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish  
History at the Breman Museum, Atlanta.)*

that anyone “who has visited the center has been impressed by the obvious care most of the girls take in their appearance” and noted that “the first step ‘up’ is feeling good about the way you look.”<sup>77</sup> While middle-class comportment may have played some role in the success of young female Job Corps recruits, particularly in the context of the conservative workplace culture of the 1960s, the singular focus in the report on personal appearance is striking.

A failed social event designed for potential WICS recruits described in the Atlanta section’s 1970–71 annual report provides a telling example

of this sensibility and its limits. For the event, council volunteers organized a "'Coke' party" at Rich's department store in downtown Atlanta.<sup>78</sup> Members sent out successive waves of flyers and made phone calls to reach the targeted audience of potential recruits ("drop-outs," in the words of the report), as well as their friends and relatives. Puzzling over low turnout to the event, the committee chairs concluded that the fault lay mostly with the potential recruits: "drop-outs lack motivation," they wrote, "even to get themselves to Rich's on a Saturday afternoon."<sup>79</sup> Yet a number of alternate explanations for the low turnout among potential recruits are possible, including a lack of transportation to the event; conflicting work schedules of family members and other competing family obligations; and, perhaps, reluctance to spend the afternoon sipping sodas with a roomful of potentially disapproving, middle- and upper-middle-class women. That the report's authors could not imagine these other scenarios speaks to a lack of familiarity with the everyday lives of impoverished Atlantans and suggests a failure of empathy, at least in this case.

Occasionally, however, documents show that at least some volunteers were mindful of the structural gap between club women and Job Corps recruits and were sensitive to the perils of paternalism. A recommendation from a WICS meeting in spring 1966, for example, drew attention to the profound dislocation that such interventions signified for impoverished young women and highlighted the sometimes dehumanizing effects of social welfare bureaucracy. The author pointed out that, unlike young men leaving home to join the army, little precedent existed for young women to set off for opportunities away from home and family. Furthermore, while low-income families were "familiar with professional social workers . . . talking to them," it was "unusual for a volunteer to take her own time and at her own expense come out to the home and take a personal interest in the girl and her family. This makes quite an impact. It shows that we feel the child and her family are important to us and this alone is a big help."<sup>80</sup> This exhortation is notable for its empathic imagining of the point of view of the potential WICS recruit. It also illuminates the sincere impulse to help on the part of council members and other women volunteers.

As of 1971, more than 6,400 women had received training through WICS, representing between one-third and one-fourth of all Job Corps

trainees.<sup>81</sup> The numbers of young women interviewed by WICS volunteers was much higher: 51,000 applicants had been screened as potential recruits by 1973.<sup>82</sup> Atlanta, as an early screening center for WICS, was a significant site for this endeavor, and the Atlanta office ultimately sent more than five hundred recruits to training centers throughout the country.<sup>83</sup> Although they expressed frustration with the administration of WICS and disappointment with the slow pace of change, members of the Atlanta council were integral actors in this ambitious attempt to expand opportunity for all Americans. Many statements in the minutes, annual reports, and bulletins suggest that council women involved in WICS were essentially optimistic about the suitability of their talents and “womanpower” to create much-needed change. Through a proposed combination of organizational skill and “maternal” warmth—not only interviewing applicants and filing papers, but also providing recruits with coats and suitcases, writing them letters, and sending them care packages—volunteers attempted to learn about poverty and to set disadvantaged young women on the path to economic success. As council committee members insisted in a program evaluation, “The work is *very* interesting and gratifying even if one gets discouraged at times. The volunteer gets a first-hand exposure to poverty with all its problems and is learning how to handle it.”<sup>84</sup>

At the local level, council women remained confident that their intervention into the lives of underserved Atlantans was sound and necessary. This spirit of hopefulness, too, infused the efforts of these women in Atlanta’s public schools. Yet, as discussed below, gaps in expectations and goals also arose among council volunteers and their client populations in the schools.

#### *The Council in the Schools: Roles and Rationales*

Although it had distinguished itself as a major nerve center for the civil rights movement and was known for the moderate progressivism of its white leadership, Atlanta lagged far behind even other southern cities in addressing the striking inequities that characterized the public schools.<sup>85</sup> Beginning in 1961, under the leadership of superintendent John Letson, the Atlanta school board adopted a modified school choice plan, a gradualist approach to desegregation in which students could apply to transfer to public schools which, historically, had served either



black or white populations. In practice, however, as Ronald Bayor has written, the plan translated into “difficult transfer policies for blacks but not for whites, and the underutilization of white schools.”<sup>86</sup> The policy resulted in overcrowded, underfunded black schools, even as majority-white schools sometimes in the very same neighborhoods remained well below capacity.

In the decade before Atlanta’s first widespread effort to end segregation, council women took a stand against the state’s resistance to the court-mandated integration of the public schools. The Public Affairs Committee of the Atlanta council section rejected the state of Georgia’s efforts in the 1950s to effectively privatize the public schools, an attempt by governors Herman Talmadge and Marvin Griffin to override federal demands for desegregation. In 1954, for example, the committee actively opposed Talmadge’s proposed Amendment 4 that would have allowed the state to disburse funds to cover private school tuition for white families pulling their children out of public school. In concert with the Atlanta Jewish Community Council, the committee argued that “nothing is more vital in a Democracy than the preservation of the Public School System.”<sup>87</sup>

The council’s community services arm turned to the public schools as a site of sustained attention when Atlanta began to address desegregation in earnest. Council women first broached the idea of a “local youth project” in summer 1959. The board agreed at the time that “if the need exists among Jewish Youth, that should come first.”<sup>88</sup> It appears, however, that local disadvantaged, largely African American youth—the products of impoverished center-city neighborhoods—were understood thereafter to be the target beneficiaries. Early ideas for interventions included youth employment or teacher training for children with special needs.

The council conceived of a concrete youth-related program in 1964 when it organized a “summer reading club” and tutoring services at a majority-black elementary school in partnership with a local church.<sup>89</sup> In spring 1965, the city of Atlanta solicited the council’s aid in implementing Head Start at the same school, Charles L. Gideons Elementary, in the Pittsburgh neighborhood southwest of downtown Atlanta.<sup>90</sup> In fall 1965, the council’s Youth Project took definitive shape. With funds from the Ford Foundation, the Atlanta Board of Education established a volunteer

*Mrs. Dean Coleman, volunteer for the Youth Project, assisting a student. From the NCJW Atlanta section Bulletin, May 1968. (Courtesy of the Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History at the Breman Museum, Atlanta.)*

training center and selected two city schools to serve as initial sites of volunteer intervention. Council members began volunteering at E. A. Ware Elementary School, serving the black, low-income neighborhood of Vine City, and Grant Park Elementary School, whose students included low-income whites in Grant Park and Cabbagetown.<sup>91</sup>

Approximately fifty council women regularly volunteered in the partner schools into the early 1970s. From the beginning, council members trained and volunteered to administer hearing tests to young students. Volunteers in this case were sent specifically to African American schools, apparently because there were no active PTAs from which to draw parent volunteers to administer the tests. Volunteer duties expanded beyond tutoring to include general aid in the classroom, working with special needs children (“emotionally disturbed” and/or “retarded but educable” in the parlance of the day). Council volunteers were the first in Georgia and apparently among the first in the entire United States to serve as aides to developmentally disabled children in the classroom. They also took children to dental appointments among other ad hoc responsibilities. In a more “educational” vein, Youth Project volunteers developed and implemented a “cultural enrichment” program for students.<sup>92</sup>

The Youth Project was clearly a beloved initiative among council members. Whatever tasks they were called on to fulfill, volunteers seemed to treasure the sustained, personal contact they had with young

students. "I was a kind of friend," explained one volunteer, "a playmate, a teller of stories, a patient listener, and a teacher without portfolio." This was a volunteer job, another participant wrote, "in which I really felt needed." Echoing such personal testimonies, the *Bulletin* insisted to potential volunteers that with "very little effort you can do so much and gain from your efforts so much satisfaction." An annual report on the council's community services projects in the year 1965-66 described the Youth Project as a "most attractive project for new members." Such was the excitement generated by the initiative that, several years later, some of the older children of the most engaged council participants began volunteering alongside their mothers in the schools.<sup>93</sup>

Council women also credited the Youth Project with opening their eyes to the realities of urban poverty and empowering them, as middle-class women, to create change.<sup>94</sup> "Working with children in a poverty area also makes you see the world as it really is," explained Claire Gettinger, a volunteer at Ware Elementary School, who, as a classroom aide, organized field trips and invited students to her home. "You learn that there are no quick solutions and no miracles," she continued, but "you are no longer satisfied to sit passively by, bemoaning the ills of your society. You want to at least try to change things."<sup>95</sup> Sherry Frank, council president in the mid-1970s, described her experience with the Youth Project as instrumental in building close ties with the African American community, including with civil rights activist and future Atlanta mayor Andrew Young, on whose campaign she later worked.<sup>96</sup>

The records indicate that the Atlanta council section had to work continually to solicit adequate numbers of volunteers. Working with "emotionally disturbed" children, in particular, demanded skill and long-term commitment, and retention became a problem.<sup>97</sup> Still, especially in comparison to the continuing trials that WICS faced in these years, the Youth Project appears in contemporaneous documents as a source of pride and accomplishment. Just as council women reported finding satisfaction with their volunteer work in the schools, so, too, did officials at the municipal and school levels express appreciation for the time and energy that the volunteers expended on behalf of underserved schools.<sup>98</sup> The Atlanta Board of Education, for example, singled out Atlanta NCJW for praise, pointing to the important role of council volunteers as part

of a “differentiated team” that ideally included lead teachers in the classroom as well as “paraprofessional[s], parent[s], or volunteer worker[s].”<sup>99</sup>

However, some school officials and community leaders began to voice caveats about the participation of council women in the struggle to change the status quo. These actors increasingly sounded warnings that white, liberal interventions did not and perhaps could not by nature fix Atlanta’s unjust and unequal educational system. As it turned out, through the Youth Project at least some volunteers encountered the new style of black, grassroots activism at close range and began to reflect more deeply on the power and privilege that accrued to them as middle- and upper-middle-class white women.

*The Council’s Youth Project as Community Flash Point*

By the mid-1960s, the civil rights movement had seen real gains in the enfranchisement of African Americans and in turning the conscience of many white Americans against the blatant racism of the Jim Crow South. Yet King’s and the SCLC’s nonviolent approach began to seem impotent to some black activists in the face of the formidable forces blocking the liberation of black people: the seemingly inviolable political power of white opponents of civil rights in the rural South, on the one hand, and, on the other, the astonishing violence perpetrated against black protesters and their allies as King undertook a campaign against housing discrimination in the urban North. The creation of the Lowndes County Freedom Organization in Alabama (the genesis of the Black Panther Party) in the spring of 1966 following the election of Julian Bond to the Georgia legislature made black political power a tantalizing possibility.<sup>100</sup> While Stokely Carmichael’s unabashed call for “black power” during the March Against Fear in Mississippi in June made national headlines, SNCC in Atlanta, with less fanfare, undertook community organizing among low-income blacks as a new frontier of radical activism and as a conduit to real political power. During the year of its “Atlanta Project” in 1966, SNCC leaders framed important and contentious ideological questions about the goals of black organizing and insurgency and the possible limits of white support for such activism. Against this backdrop, several black neighborhoods in Atlanta rose up in violent protest against police brutality and the political status quo during

the summers of 1966 and 1967.<sup>101</sup> Also within this context, African American community activists began to formulate a new framework for educating local black citizens that abandoned the rhetoric of equal access for that of Black Power.<sup>102</sup>

While the national resolutions of the NCJW in the late 1960s included a statement in support of government intervention to “wipe out racial imbalance in the public schools insofar as possible,” – a statement reprinted in the Atlanta section’s *Bulletin* in 1967 – extant community services materials reveal no significant discussions of desegregation efforts in the courts by black Atlantans or, for that matter, of the Atlanta School Board’s inadequate responses to these challenges.<sup>103</sup> Annual reports, board minutes, and bulletins in these years reflect the council members’ preference for discussing poverty over race. For example, the Atlanta section *Bulletin* published statistics about illiteracy and hunger among public school students and lamented the poor state of local school facilities, witnessed firsthand, all without mentioning that black students suffered disproportionately in the educational sphere.<sup>104</sup> On the record, at least, the Atlanta council section also appeared to have little to say about SNCC or the Black Panthers in regard to education or any other local matters. This remained true even as council members continued to serve as school volunteers in Vine City, the neighborhood at the center of post-civil rights black activism in the city.<sup>105</sup>

Faith in public education was a hallmark of Jewish liberalism, stemming from the positive correlation between educational opportunity and the social and economic advancement of Jews in the course of the twentieth century. Public school, in this light, served as an ameliorating and inherently democratic institution. This notion, however, ran counter to critiques of systemic racism in American society emanating from the new generation of black activists. The diverging views of African Americans and Jews on this fundamental institution in American life – the public school – cohered with broader disagreements on the nature of power and privilege in American society. The Black Power movement rejected “the assumption that the basic institutions of this [American] society must be preserved. The goal of black people,” as Stokely Carmichael and academic activist Charles Hamilton asserted, was to “not be . . . assimilated into middle-class America.”<sup>106</sup> In contrast, the council premised its Youth Project on the notion that enhancing educational

opportunity and thus a path to the middle class for low-income children, black and white, was an absolute good.

Similarly, liberals and radicals disagreed about the extent to which African American families and communities bore responsibility for the failure of low-income blacks to integrate into broader society. At least some council members subscribed to the idea that African Americans inhabited and fostered an ostensible “culture of poverty.” The concept, prominent in the contemporaneous public discourse including in the local press, held that poor African American communities were fundamentally defective, even if slavery and Jim Crow discrimination were the root causes of this dysfunction.<sup>107</sup> “Culture of poverty” rhetoric is visible in the remarks of volunteers who worked in the schools. In reflecting on volunteer work in the *Bulletin*, for example, council members drew sharp distinctions between the benefits of the public school and the detrimental influence of the home and its surrounding community.<sup>108</sup> So, too, did volunteers repeatedly use the term “culturally disadvantaged” in discussing the schoolchildren they encountered. In the context of the council’s “cultural enrichment” initiatives at the Ware and Grant Park schools and beyond, this language suggests an indictment of poverty as a barrier to the presumed edifying value of high culture such as classical music and mainstream theater. One can speculate, however, that such judgment was premised at least implicitly on volunteers’ ignorance, lack of interest, and/or disparagement of the cultural resources and artistic heritage of African Americans and Atlanta’s African American community in particular.

As discussed above, this tension between paternalism and liberal altruism had characterized the council’s work at the national and local levels from its inception. The women of the council were not alone in this regard. A strained empathy between middle-class providers and low-income recipients of aid was also noted in the African American community at the time. In 1968, for example, The Links, Incorporated, a national organization of African American women, took the issue seriously enough to sponsor a regional panel addressing the gap “between affluent and influential Negro leadership and the unorganized poor.” Locally, community activists Ethel Mae Matthews and Dorothy Bolden criticized Atlanta’s black elite for disdaining the lives and needs of impoverished African Americans.<sup>109</sup>

*From the NCJW Atlanta section Bulletin,  
May 1968. (Courtesy of the Cuba Family  
Archives for Southern Jewish History at  
the Breman Museum, Atlanta.)*

Yet volunteers in the council's Youth Project did come to appreciate some of the complexities of American schooling in the era of desegregation. The work of the Urban Laboratory in Education appears particularly noteworthy in this regard.<sup>110</sup> Headed by Dr. Warren Bachelis, the laboratory received funding from the Ford Foundation and ran in partnership with Atlanta University, Emory University, and the Atlanta Board of Education. It hosted workshops to sensitize volunteers to the demographics, learning styles, and linguistic particularities of the student populations of the targeted elementary schools. The goal of such workshops, as articulated in the *Bulletin*, was to glean "a better understanding of the areas and problems involved and also what the teachers and principals expect" from volunteers.<sup>111</sup> Council members reported a "very close rapport" with the Urban Laboratory and appeared to cooperate with "sensitivity training" requirements with enthusiasm.<sup>112</sup> Beginning in 1974, Atlanta NCJW's school volunteers also participated in training sessions for the new Green Circle Program, a national inter-group relations initiative founded in the late 1950s by African American social worker Gladys Rawlins.<sup>113</sup> That some council women were en-

countering black perspectives on institutional racism is also illustrated anecdotally by the remarks of one prominent member of the Atlanta section then active as a volunteer with the Youth Project. Fanny Jacobson recalled her experience in one of the predominantly African American schools, which she does not name but was probably Ware: "I was greeted there by the Principal, who said to me, 'Mrs. Jacobson, you have to realize that to these children there's only two kinds of white people: one is a social worker or the welfare worker, and the other is the police. . . . [They're] not used to a white teacher.'" <sup>114</sup>

As this comment suggests, middle- and upper-middle-class Jewish volunteers and low-income students could be said to inhabit different worlds, and aligning the perspectives and expectations of both groups remained difficult. In December 1968, the Atlanta council section hosted a panel discussion, "Where Do We Go From Here?" in which participants were slated to address "the times and . . . the issues in the inner city—with special attention . . . to the problems of the children being served" by the Youth Project. <sup>115</sup> Scheduled speakers included the associate director of the Urban Laboratory in Education, the principals of the three participating elementary schools, and the executive director of Big Brothers Association of Atlanta. The report in the Atlanta section's *Bulletin* on the December meeting conveys a civil but charged encounter between council members and community and school representatives. Encouraged by Dr. Bachelis of the Urban Laboratory and by the panelists to "express any and all views and to air any and all questions"—a directive that calls to mind the WICS presentation at The Temple earlier that spring—attendees engaged in a "stimulating, far-reaching, and often heated discussion that covered a full range from education to community involvement to slum landlords to attitudes of both blacks and whites to poverty," the *Bulletin* reported. <sup>116</sup>

The apparently overarching issues at stake in the panel discussion were those of cultural sensitivity and black agency. While school administrators expressed appreciation for a "good beginning," they made clear that council volunteers needed to "accept and appreciate other cultures and other values rather than trying to impose [their] own" on the children, as the *Bulletin* reported. Vine City Association member Bob Waymer, also in attendance, was more pointed in his critique, espousing, according to the council report, the "pride of black people in their own



humanity and heritage” and arguing that if council members “really wish to help, [they] must now support rather than lead.” Members of the Atlanta section in attendance were thus given a memorable, firsthand lesson in the tenets of Black Power. Although council members in attendance voiced both “dissent and assent” to these suppositions, the *Bulletin* noted, “all agreed that much remains to be done.”<sup>117</sup>

This contest between white liberalism and black radicalism, while pointed, was mild in comparison to the contemporaneous struggle in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district of New York City, where blacks and Jews clashed rancorously over community control of schools. Even as tensions flared, the council continued to report success in the schools and enthusiasm among volunteers and continued to solicit volunteer participation in the Youth Project to combat understaffing.<sup>118</sup> Reports on the program at Ware Elementary School described the atmosphere as “friendly and cooperative” and conveyed the school principal’s appreciation to council volunteers for “providing a service that is unique and valuable to the ‘opening up of new horizons’ for the children.”<sup>119</sup> Yet according to the recollections of Marilyn Shubin, president of the Atlanta section in the late 1960s, a sense of resentment existed within the African American community at the time about “white, genteel . . . do-gooders” in the schools. While she notes that there was also some reciprocal bitterness among council members, Shubin recalls that “we . . . understood the dynamics, and why there were these feelings” among African American educators and community leaders.<sup>120</sup> Clearly the presence of council women in the schools elicited complex responses from the local black community that encompassed both appreciation and resentment.

### *Conclusion*

To its leaders and those volunteers active in its community services projects initiated in the 1960s, the council stood undoubtedly on the right side of history—engaged in “the right work, at the right time, at the right place,” as Frances Bunzl put it at the time.<sup>121</sup> “The most politically [savvy], activist people” joined the Atlanta section of NCJW, another president, Sherry Frank, recalled. There was an “openness” in Atlanta, she insisted, “a progressiveness in part because the Civil Rights movement started here.”<sup>122</sup> Yet the historical record reveals limits to the council’s efficacy, largely thanks to entrenched racial disparities in ser-

vice provision and employment opportunities, locally and nationally. Extant materials also reveal council members' blind spots and assumptions about the poor generally and low-income African Americans in particular.

However, there were signs that Atlanta NCJW was becoming sensitive, under the leadership of a series of effective and politically attuned presidents, to the ways in which the socioeconomic status of its members obscured the realities of the urban poverty and racial inequality that they sought to mitigate.<sup>123</sup> In a monthly message in the *Bulletin* in November 1970, for example, council president Susie Elson made explicit the painful awakenings that the council's work demanded of the organization's members:

The right of every person to a decent living with dignity is inherent in our Jewish heritage and certainly is embodied, as well, in the American Dream. . . . We have addressed ourselves as an organization to the intellectual problem at hand, but have we, as individuals, attempted to truly empathize with the poor? Do we understand the feelings of hopelessness, the sense of false expectations and disappointment that permeate the life of people in poverty? As innately sensitive, aware, and intelligent women, we have a special quality for compassion. We are sensitized, too, by our Jewish heritage which embodies centuries of suffering.<sup>124</sup>

In this particular case, the council's leadership planned an open meeting, to take place over the course of two days, intended to explore the emotional impact of poverty. As Elson's comments indicate, the council in these years framed its progressive, intellectual, and emotional commitments as inherent to its members' identities as women and as Jews. The council remained a bastion of Jewish liberalism, committed to expanding opportunities for all, optimistic in its embrace of empathy, altruism, and civic-mindedness as Jewish virtues.

And the Atlanta section of council did continue to serve on the ground in community services initiatives—from day care to juvenile justice to the welfare of older citizens—that benefited all sectors of Atlanta's population. Yet the records also indicate that, in spirit and deed, the council of the early 1970s was turning from civil rights concerns to focus increasing attention on the needs of the Jewish community, from Israel to Soviet Jewry to Jewish day care in Atlanta.<sup>125</sup> The national body of NCJW had called explicitly for its membership to grapple with and buttress the

organization's Jewish identity, and the Atlanta section appears to have taken up the call.<sup>126</sup> This move was characteristic of the American Jewish organizational world in general in the wake of the Six-Day War of 1967 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and in light of the diverging political worldviews of African Americans and Jews in these years.<sup>127</sup>

In its work with WICS and in the schools, the members of Atlanta NCJW sought to widen educational and economic opportunities for low-income Atlantans and attempted to understand the day-to-day realities of the urban poor in their midst. As was true of the liberal administration that launched the War on Poverty, the council viewed expansion of opportunity as the key to progress; redressing structural inequalities in education and employment remained beyond the imagining, desire, and capacities of the council and its ilk. It does not diminish the council's record of service to its home city to simultaneously acknowledge the organization's limited reach at a time of urban ferment and widening socioeconomic and racial strife. One is left with a sense of the enormity of the task taken up by these Atlanta Jewish women in the 1960s and an appreciation for the expertly organized, serious efforts of the council section members, in concert with community partners, to expand opportunity by means of the tools at hand. Although these efforts met with mixed success, they provided a unique mechanism for contact and exchange between a portion of Atlanta's middle- and upper-middle-class Jewish women and young, disadvantaged residents of the city.

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## NOTES

The author thanks Jeremy Katz, Maureen MacLaughlin, and Mickey Harvey of the Cuba Family Archives at the Breman Museum, Atlanta, for their expert assistance and warm collegiality; and Janice Rothschild Blumberg, Marilyn Shubin, and Frances Buzzl, exemplary interview subjects, for sharing their memories with me.

<sup>1</sup> Marilyn Shubin, "President's Message," *Bulletin* 22 (April 1968), National Council of Jewish Women, Atlanta Section Records, Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History, William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum, Atlanta (hereafter cited as *Bulletin*; NCJW Atlanta Section Records; and Cuba Family Archives). *Bulletin* issues were not paginated throughout the period under consideration, therefore pages are not provided in the citations below.

<sup>2</sup> For a succinct overview of the year 1968 and an analysis of its centrality to postwar American history, see James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945–1974* (New York, 1996), 678–709.

<sup>3</sup> Winston A. Grady-Willis, *Challenging U.S. Apartheid: Atlanta and Black Struggles for Human Rights, 1960–1977* (Durham, NC, 2006), 114–40; Alton Hornsby, Jr., *Black Power in Dixie: A Political History of African Americans in Atlanta* (Gainesville, FL, 2009), 122–24; Taylor Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965–68* (New York, 2006), 524–26.

<sup>4</sup> Ronald H. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta* (Chapel Hill, 1996), 141.

<sup>5</sup> For the definitive account of the bombing, the trial that followed, and the effect of these events on Atlanta's Jewish community, see Melissa Fay Greene, *The Temple Bombing* (Boston, 1996). See also Janice Rothschild Blumberg, "The Bomb That Healed: A Personal Memoir of the Bombing of the Temple in Atlanta, 1958," *American Jewish History* 73 (1983): 20–38.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in "Convention Highlights," *Bulletin* 21 (April 1967).

<sup>7</sup> "A Convention Comes to Us: Welcome to Dynamic Atlanta," *Bulletin* 21 (April 1967).

<sup>8</sup> According to annual demographic reports in the *American Jewish Year Book*, the Jewish population of Atlanta increased nearly 20 percent between 1959 and 1965, from 13,000 to 15,500; by 1970, Atlanta's Jewish population stood at 16,500. "Jewish Population in the United States, 1959," *American Jewish Year Book* 61 (1960), 4; "Jewish Population in the United States, 1965," *American Jewish Year Book* 67 (1966), 87; "Jewish Population in the United States, 1969," *American Jewish Year Book* 71 (1970), 349. As Mark K. Bauman has demonstrated, the Jewish community in Atlanta had developed an increasingly sophisticated and diverse organizational structure by midcentury, encompassing both locally generated groups and the outposts of national organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee. "Atlanta's Jews," Bauman writes, "were incorrigible joiners." Mark K. Bauman, "The Transformation of Jewish Social Services in Atlanta, 1928–1948," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 53 (2001): 94.

<sup>9</sup> Beth Wenger, "Jewish Women of the Club: The Changing Public Role of Atlanta's Jewish Women (1870–1930)," *American Jewish History* 76 (March 1987): 311–33; Steven Hertzberg, *Strangers Within the Gate City: The Jews of Atlanta, 1845–1915* (Philadelphia, 1978), 119, 165–66.

<sup>10</sup> See Kathleen A. Laughlin, "'Our Defense Against Despair': The Progressive Politics of the National Council of Jewish Women After World War II," in *A Jewish Feminine Mystique?: Jewish Women in Postwar America*, ed. Hasia R. Diner, Shira M. Kohn, and Rachel Kranson (New Brunswick, NJ, 2010), 48–64.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Clive Webb, *Fight Against Fear: Southern Jews and Black Civil Rights* (Athens, GA, 2003), 147–68; Hollace Ava Weiner, *Jewish "Junior League": The Rise and Demise of the Fort Worth Council of Jewish Women* (College Station, TX, 2008), 62–88; Mark K. Bauman, "Southern Jewish Women and their Social Service Organizations," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 22 (Spring 2003): 34–78.

<sup>12</sup> Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton, 2006), 165.

<sup>13</sup> Hertzberg, *Strangers Within the Gate City*, 119; Wenger, "Jewish Women of the Club," 315-16.

<sup>14</sup> Hertzberg, *Strangers Within the Gate City*, 69-72; Janice O. Rothschild, *As But a Day: The First Hundred Years, 1867-1967* (Atlanta, 1967), 44-61; Faith Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting: The National Council of Jewish Women, 1893-1993* (Tuscaloosa, 1993), 36-85.

<sup>15</sup> Wenger, "Jewish Women of the Club," 319-30, 331.

<sup>16</sup> Minutes of board meeting, May 18, 1953, file 4, box 10, series I; J. Harold Saxon (secretary of Georgia Educators' Association) to Mimi Van Stavoren, June 2, 1954, file 8, box 23, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>17</sup> Minutes of board meeting, December 21, 1953, file 4, box 10, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records; J. Y. Smith, "Philip Gibbon Hammer, 85, Dies," *Washington Post*, January 23, 2000, accessed May 25, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2000/01/23/philip-gibbon-hammer-85-dies/e21bf1ae-5e50-47bb-93a5-ceabdfda8fd0/>.

The following month, the committee organized a panel discussion on the value of public schools with the superintendents of Atlanta, Fulton County, and Dekalb County. "What Do Public Schools of the Community Offer Children," *Bulletin 7* (January 1954).

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, minutes of board meeting, February 16, 1953, file 4, box 10, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>19</sup> Curriculum Vita of Marilyn Shubin, October 22, 1970, file 8, box 13, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. Bauman has written of the significant cross-pollination in Atlanta among Jewish women's organizations in particular, a phenomenon that is also reflected in the council's records. As indicated in the minutes by the receipt of New Years greetings over the course of the 1950s, the council maintained cordial relations with Hadassah, Pioneer Women, Mizrahi Women, B'nai B'rith Women, the Ladies Auxiliary of Jewish War Veterans, the Atlanta chapter of the Women's Committee of Brandeis University, and the sisterhoods of The Temple, Or VeShalom, Shearith Israel, Ahavath Achim, and Beth Jacob. The council sometimes arranged joint meetings with Hadassah, and there is occasional evidence that the council took care to schedule events so that meetings did not conflict with Hadassah's, presumably to accommodate women with memberships in both organizations. See Bauman, "The Transformation of Jewish Social Services in Atlanta," 98; minutes of board meetings, September 21, 1953, October 18, 1954, and September 12, 1956, file 4, box 10, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>20</sup> Bauman, "The Transformation of Jewish Social Services in Atlanta"; Solomon Sutker, "The Jewish Organizational Elite of Atlanta, Georgia," in Marshall Sklare, *The Jews: Social Patterns of an American Group* (Glencoe, IL, 1958), 249-61.

<sup>21</sup> Sutker, "Jewish Organizational Elite of Atlanta," 249, 253-55. Although he doesn't say so explicitly, Sutker's analysis is premised on a male leadership structure. Thus the council, as a voluntary women's organization with a quasiprofessional status in both Jewish and civic life, lay outside the purview of his analysis.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, list of members of the board of the Atlanta section of NCJW, May 1957, file 4, box 10, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. In a different study focusing on the social affinities of the so-called "German" and eastern European Jewish cohorts in Atlanta in the mid-1940s, Sutker wrote that "in time [the council] broadened its membership basis" to include both eastern European and German Jewish socioeconomic elites. Solomon Sutker, "Role of Social Clubs in the Atlanta Jewish Community," in Sklare, *The Jews*, 262-70.

<sup>23</sup> Fanny Jacobson interview, February 10, 1986, Esther and Herbert Taylor Oral History Collection of the Cuba Family Archives (hereafter cited as Taylor Collection). According to the interview, NCJW founder Hannah Solomon, whom Jacobson befriended while in Chicago, encouraged Jacobson to complete professional training in social work at the University of Chicago and was dismayed that Jacobson failed to finish. Jacobson cited pregnancy-related fatigue as the reason for not completing the program.

<sup>24</sup> Frances Bunzl interview, October 28, 1985, Taylor Collection. Bunzl served as president from 1964 to 1967. The following served as presidents of the Atlanta section after Bunzl in the specific years under consideration in this paper: Marilyn Shubin (1967-69), Susie Elson (1969-71), Barbara Asher (1971-73), and Sherry Frank (1973-75).

<sup>25</sup> Marilyn Shubin interview, November 16, 1998; Barbara Asher interview, November 20, 1985; Sherry Frank interview, April 21, 1993, Taylor Collection. Council leaders went on to positions of increasing power and prestige in Atlanta after the events discussed in this essay. Shubin, for example, later worked as an executive of the Atlanta Jewish Federation; Asher served on Atlanta's city council; Susie Elson served as the director of Volunteer Atlanta and chair of Atlanta Regional Commission's Mental Health Task Force; and Frank headed the southeast regional office of the American Jewish Committee. In the latter capacity, Frank spearheaded the creation of the Black-Jewish Coalition in 1982.

<sup>26</sup> Sherry Frank interview, June 16, 1993; Marilyn Shubin interview, November 16, 1998; Sherry Frank interviews, July 28, 1985, and February 10, 1986, Taylor Collection.

<sup>27</sup> See Patricia E. Smith, "Rhoda Kaufman: A Southern Progressive's Career, 1913-1956," *Atlanta Historical Bulletin* (Spring-Summer 1973): 43-50; Mark K. Bauman, "The Youthful Musings of a Jewish Community Activist: Josephine Joel Heyman," *Atlanta History* 39 (Summer 1995): 46-59; interviews with Rebecca Gershon and Josephine Joel Heyman, Taylor Collection. Materials relating to Hannah Shulhafer and Rebecca Gershon can be found in the Helen Shulhafer Whitehall Papers, Cuba Family Archives.

<sup>28</sup> *Bulletin* 19 (April 1965).

<sup>29</sup> Atlanta was an early recipient of federal money under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. In the conception of Economic Opportunity Atlanta (EOA), the neighborhood centers were primarily sites for "employment counseling, social services, community development, and numerous self-help programs." Economic Opportunity Atlanta, *Economic Opportunity Atlanta, Inc.: A Brief History, 1964-1971* (Atlanta, 1971), 1. For a discussion of the role of women as volunteer aides at the neighborhood centers, see Robert Dare, "Involvement of the Poor in Atlanta," *Phylon* 31 (1970): 121-22. "The EOA," Dare writes, "was predominantly an organization administered by white men but carried out by Negro

women" (128). Recent research on the War on Poverty sheds new light on the significant role of low-income women as antipoverty activists and service providers. See Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gayle Hazirjian, eds., *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964–1980* (Athens, GA, 2011).

<sup>30</sup> Alton Hornsby, Jr., and Alexa Benson Anderson, *The Atlanta Urban League, 1920–2000* (Lewiston, NY, 2005), 72–77. The unemployed population of Atlanta was disproportionately black. In 1961, for example, African Americans comprised 41 percent of the jobless population while comprising approximately 38.3 percent of the city's population. Few African Americans served on staff at EOA initially, and local black leaders criticized the EOA for discrimination and neglect of black concerns at least until the late 1960s, when a new executive administrator came on board. Slightly earlier jobs initiatives implemented under the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962 and the Vocational Education Act of 1963 had disproportionately aided white young men and neglected the entrenched inequalities that kept unemployed African Americans from accessing new programs. Hornsby and Anderson, *Atlanta Urban League*, 70; Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*, 7, 118–20.

<sup>31</sup> Hannah Stein to Frances Bunzl, February 24, 1965, series II, box 22, file 8, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>32</sup> For an initial overview of volunteer tasks, see minutes of the Atlanta WICS board meeting, March 10, 1965, file 7, box 10, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. See also the minutes of the Atlanta WICS board meeting, May 15, 1966, file 9, box 22, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>33</sup> Helen S. Oppenlander, memorandum to Frances Bunzl, October 22, 1965, file 8, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, minutes of Atlanta WICS board meetings, October 27, 1966, April 25, 1967, and May 20, 1966, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. Similar examples are peppered throughout the minutes during the period under consideration.

<sup>35</sup> Oppenlander to Bunzl, October 22, 1965.

<sup>36</sup> Joan M. Cooper and Mary [A.] Hallaren, memorandum to all project directors and field personnel, August 13, 1965, file 8, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. For information on the compromise budget reached with the OEO, see Joan M. Cooper and Mary A. Hallaren, memorandum to board of directors, members of corporation, project directors, liaison personnel, and regional coordinators, December 16, 1965, file 8, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>37</sup> Mary A. Hallaren, memorandum to all project directors, February 17, 1966, file 8, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>38</sup> She continued, "At least we have contacted all the girls and we are keeping in continuous contact with them. We have a regular program for the girls who are waiting to be assigned which is quite well attended. We meet with the girls once a week. They are [taken] on field trips and have lectures." Frances Bunzl to Eudyce Gordon, November 18, 1967, file 8, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>39</sup> Minutes of Atlanta WICS board meeting, May 12, 1965, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>40</sup> Frances Bunzl to Lorraine Sulkin, July 12, 1968, file 8, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>41</sup> "Annual Report—WICS," 2, file "Annual Reports, 1970-71," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>42</sup> Frances Bunzl, telephone interview conducted by author, May 1, 2015; Lorraine Sulkin, memorandum to Marilyn Shubin, November 29, 1972, file 8, box 13, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. At the close of the program's first year, the project director of Atlanta WICS noted that women volunteers wishing to work within local communities had channels other than WICS for doing so, including, prominently, through local churches. This may have drawn volunteers away from WICS. Helen S. Oppenlander, memorandum regarding WICS questionnaire of December 30, 1965, to Mary A. Hallaren, 1966, file 8, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>43</sup> The NCNW took up WICS as an extension of its activism in voter registration drives and freedom schools in the South in the early- to mid-1960s. See Tracey A. Fitzgerald, *The National Council of Negro Women and the Feminist Movement, 1935-1975* (Washington, DC, 1985), 29-32.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>45</sup> Maxine A. Rock, untitled and undated clipping, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records; Doris Lockerman, "Worthy Project for Young Women Needs Funds," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 10, 1966. Initially, in coordination with Fulton County Family and Children's Services, recruits with children were required to apportion twenty-five dollars of their thirty-dollar monthly allotment to childcare, an amount augmented by twenty-five dollars from the federal government. By the early 1970s childcare was provided on site at Job Corps centers. Lockerman, "Worthy Project for Young Women Needs Funds"; Jean Tyson, "Volunteers Break Poverty," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 14, 1972.

<sup>46</sup> It is unclear how board members arrived at this number, or what the corresponding statistic was for African American recruits. Minutes of Atlanta WICS board meeting, October 27, 1966, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>47</sup> Minutes of Atlanta WICS board meeting, October 25, 1967, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. The existence of local programs in vocational training and placement for young people, developed by the AUL and funded, in part, by the federal government, may have provided a more appealing path to the workforce for those reluctant to leave home for Job Corps training. This situation was ameliorated somewhat by the opening of a Job Corps training center in Atlanta in 1970.

<sup>48</sup> Judy Klemesrud, "Women in Job Corps—Problems and Benefits," *New York Times*, May 22, 1971.

<sup>49</sup> Jean Thwaite, "Job Corps Centers Train 2,666 From Atlanta Area," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 13, 1968. The board of Atlanta WICS was aware well before the opening of the GATE office that the shortfall in employment opportunities was a major problem. They placed graduates in the Atlanta WICS office when possible as an interim measure and sup-



ported plans to start a Grad Club at the local YWCA. Minutes of executive board meeting, March 1, 1967, 1, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>50</sup> "Annual Report, Community Services, 1970-1971," 7, file "Annual Reports, 1970-71," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>51</sup> "Annual Report—WICS," 1, file "Annual Reports, 1970-71," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. The report also notes with dismay that, until that year, school counselors at local high schools had not been aware of the existence of WICS. This is illustrative of the communicative and bureaucratic gaps that characterized the program.

<sup>52</sup> "Annual Report—WICS," 2, file "Annual Reports, 1970-71," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>53</sup> Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*, 118-21.

<sup>54</sup> "Annual Report—WICS," 1-2, file "Annual Reports, 1970-71," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>55</sup> "Community Services Annual Report, 1968-69," 11, file "Annual Reports 1966-1969," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>56</sup> "Community Services Report, 1969-70," 3, file "Annual Reports 1969-70," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>57</sup> Minutes of Atlanta WICS board meeting, May 12, 1965, file 7, box 10, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>58</sup> "Job Corps Grad Panel at Temple," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 16, 1968.

<sup>59</sup> Eudyce Gordon to Frances Bunzl, February 15, 1968, file 8, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Gene Roberts, "First Women's Job Corps Center Finds Path Difficult in St. Petersburg," *New York Times*, July 11, 1965; Martin Waldron, "Hostility in St. Petersburg Shuts First Women's Job Corps Unit," *New York Times*, July 29, 1966.

<sup>63</sup> Nan Robertson, "Girls at Job Corps Center in West Virginia Are Struggling to Make a Success of Themselves and the Corps," *New York Times*, January 10, 1966.

<sup>64</sup> Klemesrud, "Women in Job Corps"; "Women's Job Center Ordered Shut by U.S.," *New York Times*, March 26, 1974.

<sup>65</sup> Mrs. Marcus [Rosemary] Kilch, "The President's Column," *This Is WICS* 1 (July 1966), 2, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. A local African American newspaper reported that officials in Jefferson County, Georgia, had refused to send recruits to training centers while investigations continued of alleged "beatings, extortion, and sexual indecencies" of young men at various Job Corps centers. "Job Corps Officials Probe Alleged Abuses," *Atlanta Daily World*, January 2, 1968.

<sup>66</sup> Robertson, "Girls at Job Corps Center in West Virginia"; Klemesrud, "Women in Job Corps."

<sup>67</sup> At a meeting of the WICS coalition in summer 1966, for example, attendees were asked to encourage circles within their communities to "adopt" recruits at the various training centers, sending them regular mail and holiday and birthday greetings. Board

meeting minutes contain similar exhortations. See, for example, minutes of Atlanta WICS board meeting, July 28, 1966, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>68</sup> Jean Weaver, "Happy Easter! Happy Easter! Happy Easter!," untitled newsletter (Spring 1967), file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>69</sup> Excerpt of letter from Lois Sellars, *This Is WICS* 1 (July 1966), 4, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>70</sup> Sandra Alley, "11 Georgia Girls Fly to Job Corps Centers," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 24, 1966.

<sup>71</sup> Maxine A. Rock, untitled and undated clipping, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>72</sup> Lockerman, "Worthy Project for Young Women Needs Funds."

<sup>73</sup> Atlanta WICS, "January Newsletter," [1967], file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>74</sup> This emphasis on individual agency rather than structural barriers appears, too, in an article about local WICS, also published in 1967, in which the reporter followed a young applicant through her interview with Atlanta NCJW's Frances Bunzl. Bunzl warned the young woman of behavioral expectations and potential pitfalls and suggested that the ultimate onus for the transition to the Job Corps center rested on the young recruit. Jean Tyson, "Life Rests in Limbo After Baby," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 30, 1968.

<sup>75</sup> See Patterson, *Grand Expectations*, 533–39. Highly influential in domestic policy circles, Michael Harrington's *The Other America* (1962), for example, helped spur the war on poverty. As Patterson points out, however, Harrington was "far to the left of administration liberals" in his analysis of the structural causes of poverty (533).

<sup>76</sup> As Tracey A. Fitzgerald has shown, the staunchly middle-class NCNW stumbled briefly in its initial efforts to make common cause with low-income black women during the voter registration drives in the rural South. Responding to critiques of their bourgeois orientation, the NCNW's representatives quickly moved from "talking about flowers and beautification programs and all this other kind of stuff," as activist Unita Blackwell recalled, to focusing on the more urgent needs of poor, disenfranchised blacks. Fitzgerald, *National Council of Negro Women*, 33–34. See also Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History* (Urbana, IL, 1991); Rogow, *Gone to Another Meeting*; Stephanie J. Shaw, *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do: Black Professional Women Workers During the Jim Crow Era* (Chicago, 1996).

<sup>77</sup> "[Women] in Community Service," *Bulletin* 26 (May 1972).

<sup>78</sup> Before 1964, Rich's had segregated eating and lavatory facilities, and African American women were barred from sitting down to eat there. I'm grateful to Mark Bauman for making this point.

<sup>79</sup> "Annual Report—WICS," 1, file "Annual Reports, 1970–71," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>80</sup> Minutes of Atlanta WICS board meeting, May 20, 1966, 2, file 9, box 22, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>81</sup> Klemesrud, "Women in Job Corps."

<sup>82</sup> "Women at Work," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 20, 1973.

<sup>83</sup> Thwaite, "Job Corps Centers Train 2,666 From Atlanta Area."

<sup>84</sup> WICS annual report [triplicate form], [1969–70], file "Annual and Committee Reports, 1969–70," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>85</sup> Atlanta's public schools ranked as the most segregated in the urban South well into the 1980s. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*, 251.

<sup>86</sup> Bayor describes the modified school choice plan as similar to the strategies of many northern cities in these years. Letson publicly proclaimed his support for gradualist methods in the interest, he claimed, of slowing white flight. Yet, Bayor shows, when interracial community groups presented him with opportunities for real integration at several school sites, he deliberately undermined those efforts and actually speeded white abandonment of those schools. *Ibid.*, 221–51. See also Hornsby, *Black Power in Dixie*, 210–38.

<sup>87</sup> "Save Our Schools" form letter to members, November 1953, file 8, box 23, series II; Rhoda Kaufman, memorandum to the [NCJW] Georgia State Committee on Legislation, September 29, 1954, file 8, box 23, series II; minutes of Atlanta section board meeting, October 18, 1954, file 4, box 9, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. For the Atlanta section's unequivocal rejection of the later attempt by the state to close the public schools, see "Statement by Atlanta Section National Council of Jewish Women on Bills Pertaining to School Opening or Closing," c. 1958, file 8, box 23, series II, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. On Amendment 4—also known as the "Private School Amendment"—see Robert Mickey, *Paths Out of Dixie: The Democratization of Authoritarian Enclaves in America's Deep South, 1944–1972* (Princeton, 2015), 246.

<sup>88</sup> Minutes of Atlanta section board meeting, June 10, 1959, file 6, box 9, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>89</sup> Minutes of Atlanta section board meeting, January 13, 1960, file 6, box 9, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. See also minutes of Atlanta section board meeting, September 9, 1964, file 7, box 10, series I; Community Services annual report, 1964–65, file "Annual Reports, 1960–66," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>90</sup> Minutes of Atlanta section board meeting, May 12, 1965, file 7, box 10, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>91</sup> Minutes of Atlanta section board meeting, September 1, 1965, file 7, box 10, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. The program later expanded to include M. Agnes Jones Elementary School, a majority black school. In 1964 the AUL, in concert with the newly formed Education Committee of the NASH Corporation, a neighborhood body, also implemented a tutoring program for Ware students. Volunteer tutors assisted in one-on-one reading practice after school and brought children on field trips to the public library and art museum. It is unclear how long this program continued. NCJW Youth Project volunteers did not seem to know of it. "Tactical Engagement in War on Poverty," *Atlanta Daily World*, May 17, 1964.

<sup>92</sup> Vicki Pressman, "Youth Project (Testing of Hearing)," file "Annual Reports 1960–66," box 1, series I; "President's Message," *Bulletin* 22 (January 1968).

<sup>93</sup> "Headstart—A Bold Experiment," *Bulletin* 20 (September 1965); Mrs. Milton Deitch, "Youth Project: My Experience," *Bulletin* 20 (November 1965); "Youth Project: Volunteers Needed," *Bulletin* 20 (November 1965); "1965-66 Community Services Report to the President," file "Annual Reports 1960-66," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records; "Ware School Volunteers Having a Ball," *Bulletin* 25 (March 1971).

<sup>94</sup> See, for example, Deitch, "Youth Project: My Experience"; "A Volunteer Speaks Her Mind and Heart," *Bulletin* 23 (October 1968); "Youth Project to Expand," *Bulletin* 22 (April 1968).

<sup>95</sup> "Youth Project to Expand."

<sup>96</sup> Sherry Frank interview, June 16, 1993, 25, Taylor Collection.

<sup>97</sup> See, for example, "Council in the Schools Annual Report, 1969-1970: Ware School Reading Tutors" evaluation form, file "Annual Reports 1969-1970," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>98</sup> Letters of appreciation from the director of volunteer services for Head Start, Lila McDill, are quoted in "Youth Project Needs Volunteers," *Bulletin* 21 (September 1966). See also the report of thanks conveyed by the principals of Ware and Grant Park schools, "Youth Project Expresses Thanks," *Bulletin* 21 (May 1967).

<sup>99</sup> Jarvis Barnes, "The Use of Volunteers Can Promote the Instructional Program," *Research and Development News*, January 12, 1970, file 1, box 11, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. This was the newsletter for the Atlanta public schools. Dr. Barnes served as assistant superintendent for research and development.

<sup>100</sup> Branch, *At Canaan's Edge*, 455-79, 500-22.

<sup>101</sup> For more on the Atlanta Project, as the Vine City Project was generally known, and the neighborhood uprisings, see Grady-Willis, *Challenging U.S. Apartheid*, 133-45.

<sup>102</sup> The Black Panthers were pioneers in this regard, and, in Atlanta, women activists in the movement created a free breakfast initiative for children, a service not provided by the public schools, and implemented after-school programs meant to boost literacy through Afrocentric symbols and themes and to inculcate pride in black achievements. See Grady-Willis, *Challenging U.S. Apartheid*, 176-86. In his work on black political power in Atlanta, however, Alton Hornsby, Jr., describes a more pragmatic, system-wide approach to educational issues among Atlanta's black leadership. As Atlanta's population became increasingly black in the late 1960s and early 1970s, African American power elites turned their attention to political control of the Atlanta school system as the means of redressing unequal access to resources. Hornsby, *Black Power in Dixie*, 226-31.

<sup>103</sup> "National Council Takes a Stand," *Bulletin* 21 (May 1967). One rare explicit reference to the struggle for integration appears in the council's annual report from 1970. As teaching staff were being integrated in the Atlanta public schools, the council in partnership with Volunteer Atlanta coordinated substitute teachers for instructors undergoing "'sensitivity' training." "Community Services Annual Report, 1969-70," file "Annual and Committee Reports, 1969-70," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>104</sup> Statistical facts listed in *Bulletin* 24 (February 1970); Deitch, "Youth Project: My Experience."

<sup>105</sup> See Kathryn L. Nasstrom, "Women, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Politics of Historical Memory in Atlanta, 1946–1973," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, 1993), 210–87.

<sup>106</sup> Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters*, 220. Greenberg provides a comprehensive discussion and analysis of black-Jewish relations during the Black Power years (205–55). For arguments for and against Jewish liberalism that took place within the postwar Jewish community—including struggles to define the ideal role of Jews within the civil rights movement—see Michael E. Staub, *Torn at the Roots: The Crisis of Jewish Liberalism in Postwar America* (New York, 2004), 45–75.

<sup>107</sup> The "culture of poverty" hypothesis, popularized by Daniel Patrick Moynihan's March 1965 report on the status of the black family in America, viewed patterns of departure from white, middle-class family norms (and particularly the high number of poor black families headed by single women) as perpetuating cultural and socioeconomic dysfunction among a vast black underclass. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (Washington, DC, 1965); Patterson, *Grand Expectations*, 586–87; Branch, *At Canaan's Edge*, 371, 399. The *Atlanta Journal* and *Atlanta Constitution* both published pieces on the black family in the wake of the Moynihan report. Nasstrom discusses this press coverage in "Women, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Politics of Historical Memory" 247, 282–83.

<sup>108</sup> "A Volunteer Speaks Her Mind and Heart," *Bulletin* 23 (October 1968); "Youth Project to Expand," *Bulletin* 22 (April 1968).

<sup>109</sup> "Negro Women's Group Set to 'Talk To' Poor Here," *Atlanta Daily World*, March 22, 1968; Hornsby, *Black Power in Dixie*, 123–24.

<sup>110</sup> Although established in 1965, the Urban Laboratory in Education is first mentioned as the council's community partner in *Bulletin* 21 (April 1967).

<sup>111</sup> "Council Youth Project," *Bulletin* 23 (December 1968).

<sup>112</sup> "Annual Report from Community Services, 1967–68," file "Annual Reports 1966–68," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records. Sensitivity training was not viewed as a panacea, however, for preparing volunteers. In an evaluation of the tutoring program at Ware, for example, committee chairs found sensitivity training to be valuable and effective, but also argued that, for pragmatic reasons, training in reading tutoring precede any "community sensitivity training" among volunteers. See "Council in the Schools Annual Report, 1969–1970: Ware School Reading Tutors" evaluation form, file "Annual Reports 1969–1970," box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>113</sup> *Bulletin* 28 (January 1974); Stephen A. Schafer, "An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Green Circle Program in Stimulating and Reinforcing Positive Racial Attitudes in Children" (Ph.D. dissertation, Lehigh University, 1971); One America—Green Circle Program, accessed May 27, 2016, [http://clinton4.nara.gov/Initiatives/OneAmerica/Practices/pp\\_19980806.9190.html/](http://clinton4.nara.gov/Initiatives/OneAmerica/Practices/pp_19980806.9190.html/).

<sup>114</sup> Fanny Jacobson interview, July 28, 1985, Taylor Collection.

<sup>115</sup> Announcement of "Discovery Day" panel discussion, *Bulletin* 23 (December 1968).

<sup>116</sup> "Recap of December Meeting," *Bulletin* 23 (January 1969).

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. The *Bulletin* the following month noted that the meeting “left an indelible impression” on the council members in attendance and expressed regret that more members had not attended. “An Open Letter from the Public Affairs Department,” *Bulletin* 23 (February 1969).

<sup>118</sup> For a particularly forceful call for more volunteers, see “Council in the Schools Annual Report, 1969–1970: Ware School Reading Tutors,” file “Annual Reports 1969–1970,” box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.; “Ware School Volunteers Having a Ball,” *Bulletin* 25 (March 1971).

<sup>120</sup> Marilyn Shubin interview conducted by author, April 22, 2015. The organized fight for de facto desegregation essentially came to a close with the Atlanta Compromise of 1973 and the city-wide integration of school staffs although not student bodies. The council’s Youth Project continued at least through Sherry Frank’s presidency from 1973 to 1975.

<sup>121</sup> Frances Bunzl, “Annual Report Atlanta Section NCJW, 1964–65,” file “Annual Reports 1960–66,” box 1, series I, NCJW Atlanta Section Records.

<sup>122</sup> Sherry Frank interviews, April 21, 1993, 23, and April 27, 1994, 128, Taylor Collection.

<sup>123</sup> In addition to statements by Bunzl, Frank, Jacobson, and Shubin, quoted above, see, Marilyn Shubin, “President’s Message,” *Bulletin* 22 (May 1968) and Julie Cohn, “Let’s Take a Second Look,” *Bulletin* 25 (May 1971).

<sup>124</sup> Susie Elson, “President’s Message,” *Bulletin* 25 (November 1970).

<sup>125</sup> While, for example, Israel appears as an object of some attention in the *Bulletin* of the 1960s, it surfaces with increasing frequency among the presidents’ columns after 1967, especially in terms of the council’s educational initiatives. For a glimpse of the new orientation toward explicitly Jewish matters, see “Forging Our Jewish Future,” an announcement of an upcoming speakers program. In its accompanying graphic on the cover of the March 1972 issue, relevant topics appeared in the six points of a Star of David: “Soviet Jewry,” “State of Israel,” “Jewish Ethics,” “Jewish Mother? Princess?,” “Jewish Tradition,” and “Jewish Education.” “Where Do We Go From Here?” *Bulletin* 26 (March 1972).

<sup>126</sup> In response to the NCJW’s new Task Force on Jewish Affairs, the Atlanta section held a meeting in spring 1971 at which participants discussed Jewish history, values, and identity and recommended means of strengthening the Jewish character of the local community. In an unprecedented incidence of direct action by the group, the council organized a public protest in favor of Soviet Jews in 1973. In an interview, Frank recalled that the protest, by nature of its assertive tone and public visibility, made some longtime members uncomfortable. *Bulletin* 26 (May 1972); “The Soviet Union: It’s a Tough Place to Live, It’s a Tougher Place to Leave,” *Bulletin* 28 (November–December 1973); “‘Frank’ly Speaking,” *Bulletin* 28 (May 1974); Sherry Frank interview, April 21, 1993, Taylor Collection.

<sup>127</sup> For a comprehensive account of the shifting nature of and arguments about Jewish communal priorities during the 1960s, see Staub, *Torn at the Roots*.