WAR AND PEACE OF MIND: THE JEWISH EXPULSION AND THE ELECTION OF PRESIDENT ULYSSES S. GRANT

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Dedication

This undergraduate thesis is dedicated to my grandfather, Nathan Hindes, who was more excited about this topic than me, encourages me to stay connected with my Jewish heritage, and always makes me smile.
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INTRODUCTION

While this project does focus on one instance of anti-Semitism in the Jewish-American experience, it is meant to be more than just an opportunity for scholars to find someone to blame. Nowadays, one can see how ideas have shaped the United States and its political atmosphere, motivating people to run for office, give a speech, or even sacrifice their own lives. A belief means nothing until it is used to justify an action. This undergraduate thesis studies not just an idea, but also how it permeated a country and how it changed the course of American history through its effect on the Election of 1868.

Much research has already been done on General Ulysses S. Grant’s General Orders Number 11, which stipulated the expulsion of merchant Jews from the area in the southern United States over which Grant had control. The order required “The Jews, as a class, violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department, and also Department orders” be expelled from parts of Mississippi, Kentucky, and Tennessee, “Within twenty-four hours from the receipt of this order by Post Commanders.”¹ Despite the work that has already been done on this topic, some questions remain unanswered or have been answered unsatisfactorily. Bertram Wallace Korn most notably wrote an entire chapter on the incident in his book American Jewry and the Civil War, citing numerous documents, newspapers, and even the Congressional Record to show public reaction to the Order. Stephen Ash’s article, “Civil War Exodus: The Jews and Grant’s General Orders No. 11” in The Historian also provides an in-depth look at the causes

¹ “General Orders No. 11,” in The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant: December 9, 1862, -March 31, 1863, vol. 7 of The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), 50. In the original document, it is listed as “General Orders No. 12.” It seems that a “General Orders No. 11” had already been issued in the Department of the Tennessee at La Grange, Tennessee, on November 26, 1862, to announce the results of recent courts-martial. Thus, the number for Grant’s Order was changed in the record books and on the document itself. Meanwhile, this particular document had already been widely publicized as General Orders No. 11, and will be referred to as such for the remainder of this paper. See Figure 4 on page 87.
and the victims of the Order. Various Grant biographers, such as William McFeely, Geoffrey Perret, and Bruce Catton, mention the incident in passing, but do not fully explain what happened. Melissa Ann Pressler’s master’s thesis, *Exile 1862: An Examination of the Causes and Effects of Ulysses S. Grant’s General Orders No. 11 Against the Jews*, is an interesting analysis of the roots of anti-Semitism and its manifestation in this one act. Jonathan Sarna, arguably one of the most important contemporary interpreters of the American Jewish experience, also has a forthcoming book that extensively discusses Grant’s relationship with Jews before, during, and after his presidency, and argues that the general was actually a hero to the Jews since he appointed so many of them to government office.

Yet, it seems that none of these scholars have truly delved into the uproar General Orders Number 11 caused during the Election of 1868, how it changed politics, and how it could have changed the results. In most published sources, the election is more of an afterthought, an event that provided more insight into what Americans thought about the Order and Grant in general than about how this issue could have informed the election results. The purpose of this project is not to call Grant an anti-Semite; it is to show how a “Jewish issue” -- a seemingly impulsive act stemming from frustration with cotton smugglers -- could, even in the nineteenth century, capture the public’s attention, change politics, and prove that the Jews adhered to political and regional loyalties when it came to electing the president.

Additionally, this subject is usually approached as a matter of anti-Jewish sentiment when, in fact, there were a great deal of economic factors intertwined with this Judeophobia. The term “as a class,” used in the text of General Orders Number 11, is an economic term. In this case, Grant practically isolates the Jews as their very own socio-economic class, implying that this Order targets the Jews more than just as Jews. The terms “traders” or “merchants”
became synonymous with “Jews,” and affected the way in which Grant and other members of the Union Army conducted their wartime business. The Order illustrates that most Americans saw Jews as an economic unit, rather than an ethno-religious group.

Ulysses S. Grant came from a middle-class background and worked his way up the socio-economic ladder. He was born Hiram Ulysses Grant on April 27, 1822 in Point Pleasant, Ohio. At the age of 17, his father, Jesse Root Grant, sent Ulysses to the military academy at West Point. Grant fought in the Mexican-American War before trying to live as a civilian. When the Civil War started, Ulysses Grant volunteered to fight for the North, and, after a number of promotions, eventually became the General-in-Chief of the Union Army. This background would guide much of what Grant would do during the war and what he would do as President of the United States.

Through a combination of events during his life, preexisting factors, and his personal beliefs, Grant issued the Order, an action that demonstrated the way in which something seemingly minor could affect so many people. It reached beyond religion and beyond economics to create a political storm that could have changed the course of an election. When Ulysses S. Grant issued General Orders Number 11, he affected not just the Jews or the traders, but also President Lincoln, Congress, the American press, and the general public of the United States of America.
CHAPTER 1: A NATION DIVIDED

It is hoped likewise, that the spirit of party has almost disappeared from amongst us…Of questionable utility even in the political world, its presence proved invariably baleful in literary and charitable Communities, and is directly prejudicial to the best interests of a beneficent Society.¹

Despite the wishes of Benjamin Franklin Peixotto, a Jew, and, during the Grant presidency, American consul to Romania, the people of the United States never heeded the warning of President George Washington in his “Farewell Address” against political parties. Washington wrote that such factions always “distract the public councils and enfeeble the public administration. [The political party] agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms, kindles the animosity of one part against another, foments occasionally riot and insurrection.”² In the mid-nineteenth century, divisive ideals on many topics brought the United States of America to the brink of destruction, and it split, not just on the Mason-Dixon Line, but down political party lines. States’ Rights, economics, and, later, slavery remained on the tip of every person’s tongue as the country entered into the conflict that would become known as the American Civil War.

Beliefs, prejudices, and morals affected every citizen who chose to take a side in the conflict, and the Jews were no different. Though they only made up a very small portion of the American population, they were geographically widespread and highly influential in both business and politics. In 1860, the Jewish population constituted approximately 150,000 souls, including 160 identifiable Jewish communities with synagogues.³ Jews fought for both the Union and the Confederacy. Like most other people living in the country at that time, they too got

caught up with the war, its glories, its disasters, and clung tightly to their regional loyalties. Unlike any other religious group, however, their plight soon became political gold that could have potentially changed an election.

**Jews During the Civil War**

Now it came to pass in the days of Abraham [Lincoln], King of the North, and David [Jefferson Davis], King of the South, who were mighty Kings and Rulers, and who were standing in battle array, one against the other, having slain each other’s thousands and tens of thousands, that the King of the North, even Abraham, spake thus to his warriors, and those that were with him in council.⁴

So wrote Abraham Ephraim “A.E.” Frankland, a Jewish shopkeeper and organizer of the first Jewish congregation in Memphis, Tennessee, in his highly personal account of the American Civil War, *Kronikals of the Times*. This war touched not just Frankland, but the life of every American regardless of race, religion, or political ideals. Jews living in the United States were no exception. According to Simon Wolf, a Jewish lawyer, writer, and, later, government official who became one of Ulysses S. Grant’s biggest supporters, twelve thousand Jews served in the Confederate Army, twenty-four of whom were army officers and eleven of whom were navy officers. Confederate States of America (CSA) Secretary of War James A. Seddon estimated that approximately ten thousand of the Jewish soldiers fought for the South, but most historians believe the correct amount lies between two thousand and three thousand men.⁵ Wolf also claimed that six thousand Israelites, sixteen of whom were officers, served in the Union Army. Six of these men were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.⁶ Additionally,

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⁵ Evans, “The War Between Jewish Brothers in America,” 49. Simon Wolf wrote his 1895 book, *The American Jew as a Patriot, Soldier and Citizen*, in an attempt to fight the charges that Jews were unpatriotic, especially during the American Civil War. It contains more than three hundred pages of lists and biographical data that Wolf put together from interviews with the families of Jewish soldiers. In these pages, he cites memories, names, personal testimony, and more.

⁶ Ibid.
soldiers, from places such as West Point, GA; Macon, GA; Chicago, IL; and Syracuse, NY formed Jewish Companies.\textsuperscript{7}

Of course, Jews on the home front could not escape the horrifying side effects of a civil war. They suffered through the war with all their non-Jewish neighbors, especially in the major cities, such as New Orleans, which often became military targets, valued for their strategic importance.\textsuperscript{8} Those who did not serve in the war continued to live their lives as they had before the conflict began. Other men chose to serve, instead, in the home guard or the local militia.

In the South, most of the Jewish population depended on trade in urban areas and small towns for their livelihood, unlike the majority of gentiles who lived on farms in more rural regions. Though war raged on, most of the Jews continued to sell merchandise as peddlers, or take part in another aspect of the mercantile trade. Others chose to provide additional services through a variety of professions, such as innkeeping, tanning, apothecary, medicine, and teaching, but all remained in the middle class.

Thus, when the Union implemented the “Anaconda Plan,” blockading all Southern ports, Jewish merchants and their families, which made up the majority of the Jewish population in the South, immediately began to suffer economically. General Winfield Scott, a military advisor to President Abraham Lincoln and the author of this plan, proposed that the Union prevent any ships from going to or leaving the Confederacy and seize the Mississippi River from Cairo, Illinois to the Gulf of Mexico. Through this, the North would be able to gradually “strangle” the South (see Figure 1 on page 84). By preventing trade, the Union kept supplies from entering the South, and, by taking the land near the river, the northern army would cut the South in half, severely weakening it. The resulting blockade made life extremely hard for merchants in the

\textsuperscript{7} Evans, “The War Between Jewish Brothers in America,” 50.
\textsuperscript{8} Robert N. Rosen, \textit{The Jewish Confederates}, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2000), 220.
Confederacy, and Jewish traders suffered just as much as their gentile counterparts. They no longer had access to whatever products had been coming by land or by water, and were unsure as whether or not to sell or to buy items, forcing some Southerners to resort to illegal means to make money.

As any desperate person may do in a time of crisis, many Americans, Jew and gentile alike, turned to illegal smuggling in an effort to fill their coffers. By 1861, goods became scarce, and the South, heavily dependent on imports for the necessities of life -- clothing, coffee, tea, manufactured goods and even food -- turned to merchants dealing in the black market. According to Southern Jewish historian Robert N. Rosen, even though some of these traders were Christian immigrants from Germany, all of those who had an accent from the Rhineland were soon painted with the same brush and labeled as German Jews.9 Since Jews were primarily concentrated in urban areas, many Americans, especially those in the Western trans-Mississippi states, had never had any personal experience with Jews. Nonetheless, they developed certain ideas about them.

Economic prejudice towards Jews was prominent among Americans. Such ideas had originated in Europe, where culture was profoundly influenced by Christianity. Christian texts, such as the Bible, portrayed the Jews as the embodiment of avarice and clergy sometimes pointed to Judas’s betrayal of Jesus for thirty pieces of silver as the prime example.10 This view became enhanced in modern times by the dominant role certain Jews played in the economy, especially since many prominent bankers were Jewish. Such ideas traveled across the ocean, and, combined with the lack of experience with Jews, also became widespread in America.

9 Rosen, 266.
Some considered the Jew a greedy and frugal person, and soon the term “Jew” became synonymous with sneaky business dealings. For example, Henry Foote, a representative from Mississippi in the Confederate House of Representatives, proclaimed, “It was notorious that our land has recently deluged with foreign Jews” and “that if the present state of things were to continue to the end of the war would probably find nearly all the property of the Confederacy in the hands of Jewish Shylocks.”

Robert Hilton, the Confederate Representative from Florida, told his peers: “The Jews had swarmed here as the locusts of Egypt. They ate up the substance of the country, they exhausted its supplies, they monopolized its trade.” The Richmond Examiner, a Virginia newspaper, proclaimed that Jews had overrun the Confederacy and “that they were buying up everything worth speculating on.” In 1863, the Examiner charged that the Jews had bought up two thirds of the cotton in Alabama, had seized practically all the mercantile business in Richmond, Virginia, “and that they ‘have chief seats in every Main Street and Broad Street throughout the land’. . . .It was a common saying that one would ‘meet more Jews in Charleston than. . . in Jerusalem,’ gathered there to buy goods that had run the blockade.”

After the war, the press claimed that Jews did not fight, but had just profited from the war. According to Jewish historian Eli N. Evans, if and when the media even acknowledged the presence of Jews in the South during the war, they were portrayed as the cunning merchant who cheated his customers, the speculator, and even the scavenger who was an unpatriotic (and therefore “un-Southern”) outsider feeding off of the troubles of the South during a very difficult

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12 Proceedings of First Confederate Congress, 123. This is an allusion to the book of Exodus in the Bible, when the Israelites have multiplied in Goshen and are perceived as a threat by the Egyptians. I thank my advisor, Dr. Nancy Sinkoff, for this observation.
time.\textsuperscript{14} One writer for the Associated Press in New Orleans composed an article declaring that “the Jews of New Orleans and all the south ought to be exterminated. They run the blockade and are always found at the bottom of every new villainy.”\textsuperscript{15} Thus Jews became economic scapegoats in the South, and, as Evans wrote, “who better than the Jews, who had served such a role for centuries and whose dishonesty and vilification were part of the church preaching on Sundays and holidays.”\textsuperscript{16}

**The Cotton Question**

The blockade of the South created a new front in the War Between the States: an economic war of greed, exploitation, and treachery. In his manuscript, *Kronikals of the Times*, A. E. Frankland wrote of the product that was coveted by all:

> And the fruits of the earth ripened and made their appearance, even the valuable fruit of the bush that grows only in the gardens of the South and which is called by some ‘King Cotton,’ by others, *Baum Woll* [*Baumwalle* is German for cotton]. These things pleased the eye of the foreigners, and it was eagerly sought after.\textsuperscript{17}

Thousands of bales of cotton just sat in fields and warehouses in the southern United States since the trade restrictions prevented merchants from selling it.

This “white gold” soon became a target for speculators, adventurers, and even Yankee (Northern) soldiers who saw the unprotected cotton as an opportunity for a big payday. Factories in Northern cities and in England were desperate for such product, and, eager, greedy men traded gold, silver, and anything else they could get their hands on (merchandise and arms, quinine and surgical supplies, etc) for cotton and other agricultural products from the South. Often, they

\textsuperscript{14} Evans, “The War Between Jewish Brothers in America,” 49.
\textsuperscript{15} Quoted in Evans, “The War Between Jewish Brothers in America,” 62.
\textsuperscript{16} Evans, “The War Between Jewish Brothers in America,” 63.
\textsuperscript{17} Frankland, 93.
found partners among those in the Army who were just as eager to make some money.  

Frankland, who lived in Memphis during the war, wrote, “the foreigners purchased same with virgin gold to send home to their countries, for it had been long since the inhabitants of the North had seen the snowflake [cotton]. It had got so rare at one time as to bring more than its weight in gold.”

The United States government had banned all trading across the border with the Confederacy at the beginning of the war in 1861, but President Abraham Lincoln soon reconsidered his decision. A severe need for cotton existed both in the North and in other parts of the world, and the South had most of it. Southern farmers depended on the sale of all their products to Northern markets to finance the next growing season. Certain Border States, such as Kentucky, wanted to continue trade with the Confederate States of America (CSA), and Lincoln did not want to risk offending them in fear that they too would secede from the Union. Additionally, the Union army lacked the necessary materials to produce uniforms, tents, and other supplies for conducting a war. Lincoln also did not want to risk alienating the English Empire, which seriously considered allying itself with the CSA in an effort to bring more cotton into its factories.

In 1862, President Lincoln and Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase relaxed the land blockade. His August 11 directive allowed limited trade in certain parts of the Confederacy that had been captured by the Union and encouraged his generals to “trade in cotton even at the risk

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19 Frankland, 93.
of permitting gold and silver species to be used as exchange.”

After deciding to “‘let commerce follow the flag,’” the government gradually lifted restrictions so that, by the summer of 1862, they had ordered all military authorities to provide “all possible facilities” for shipping cotton elsewhere. That September alone, merchants shipped fourteen thousand bales worth three million dollars up the Mississippi River. Rather than granting the government a monopoly on all cotton trade, the procedure for dealing in such merchandise allowed the army to issue a limited number of licenses to private individuals, which permitted them to follow the army and trade with military personnel.

This policy only worsened the problems of corruption and bribery within the armed forces. The value of cotton skyrocketed as Union troops marched south, and hopeful buyers flocked to occupied towns. Official regulations regarding trade were quite vague and sometimes contradictory, and no one was sure whether the army or the Treasury Department had the ultimate authority. Treasury Secretary Chase expressed that the “whole problem was ‘exceedingly arduous and perplexing,’ and nearly impossible to resolve satisfactorily.” Reports went out every day describing the immoral men who sought to make a profit from this unusual situation, and Confederate spies even had conclusive proof of the involvement of the army itself in speculation. Official records show that $12,000 could “buy 1,500 pounds of cotton in Mississippi, which could be resold for $500,000 in Kentucky.” Charles A. Dana, a journalist who worked for the War Department during the war, wrote to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton

22 Korn, 174.
23 Salmon P. Chase, quoted in Ash, 506.
24 Ash, 506.
26 Ibid, 507.
28 Evans, Judah P. Benjamin: The Jewish Confederate, 209.
that “‘Every colonel, captain, or quartermaster is in secret partnership with some operator in cotton; every soldier dreams of adding a bale of cotton to his monthly pay.’” 29 One Southerner asserted “cotton made ‘more damn rascals on both sides than everything else’ during the war.” 30 A correspondent for the *New York Times* stationed near the Mississippi River wrote that he had encountered officers “who, six months ago, could scarcely raise sufficient money to buy a clean shirt, but who to-day have a ‘clean’ half million.” 31 The president himself even told a friend “the army itself is diverted from fighting the rebels to speculating in cotton.” 32

Many Union army officers also succumbed to the greed of cotton smugglers. Rear Admiral Porter’s Western gun-boat crews were charged with clearing $100,000,000 during the war, and army officers in Tuscumbia, Alabama, apparently captured $2,000,000 worth of cotton and pocketed the proceeds. 33 In a letter endorsed by President Lincoln and written by General Lewis B. Parsons of the Union Army to Supreme Court Associate Justice David Davis, Parsons asked that the law be upheld regarding charges against Alvin P. Hovey of Illinois and Willis A. Gorman of Indiana, two generals in the Union Army, who were involved in the illegal cotton trade. He wrote: “There ought to be a commission to examine into these *Cotton officers*, to punish the guilty and exonerate the innocent. . . . The pith of the matter is that Government *must* declare itself and the producer the only ones who can own Cotton between the Gulf and the Ohio.” 34 J. Russell Jones, the United States Marshal at Chicago, confessed to Congressman Elihu B. Washburne, a Republican from Illinois who became Secretary of State in 1869, that, while

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29 Charles A. Dana, quoted in Evans, “The War Between Jewish Brothers in America,” 63.
30 Ash, 507.
32 Abraham Lincoln, quoted in Korn, 144.
33 Korn, 144.
34 Lewis B. Parsons to David Davis [With Endorsement by Abraham Lincoln], February 22, 1863 (Endorsed by Davis to Lincoln, March 10, 1861), in *Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress*, Transcribed and Annotated by the Lincoln Studies Center (Galesburg, IL: Knox College), <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mal:@field(DOCID+@lit(d2189800))> The emphasis is in the original.
traveling with the army, he had made just $25,000 and only regretted that he “could have made an eternal, hell-roaring fortune.”\(^{35}\) In his *Kronikals*, Frankland described how “the giants or gorillas, so-called, fell upon the town [of Brownsville, Tennessee] and destroyed many bales of cotton, as was their custom.”\(^{36}\) One correspondent from the *Chicago Tribune*, surprised by what went on at the base of Major General Ulysses S. Grant in Mississippi, wrote: “‘If ever a community were insane, or afflicted with a disgusting moral malady, it is the crowds of speculators and vagrants which have congregated at Holly Springs to deal in cotton—they have ‘cotton’ on the brain ---every one of them.’”\(^{37}\) Some evidence exists that some speculators offered cotton deals to Grant himself, but none that he accepted any of the bribes.\(^{38}\)

**Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, and the Cotton Question**

By this time in 1862, Major General Ulysses S. Grant and his forces had marched down the Mississippi River and taken over parts of the states of Mississippi, Kentucky, and Tennessee. From Grant’s newly established headquarters in Holly Springs, Mississippi, he and William Tecumseh Sherman, a General in the Union Army who served under Grant and eventually became commander of the army once the latter became president, planned their next move: taking the town of Vicksburg, Mississippi. Sherman already began marching south and had hoped to arrive there by Christmas.\(^{39}\) As General Parsons wrote: “Vicksburg is *very* strongly fortified, and [Grant] ought to have a large army and take his own time to do the work, which I fully believe *can* and *must* be done.”\(^{40}\) Unfortunately, their plans would be delayed by

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\(^{35}\) Quoted in Evans, *Judah P. Benjamin: The Jewish Confederate*, 209.
\(^{36}\) Frankland, 95.
\(^{37}\) Quoted in Ash, 507.
\(^{40}\) Parsons. The emphasis is in the original.
“inclement weather, slow troop movements, unsuccessful offensive feints, the ever-present Confederate army dancing out of [Grant’s] reach, and a persistent bureaucratic gadfly: frequent interruptions by cotton speculators.”

Winning the war (and taking Vicksburg in particular) remained the Generals’ main goal, but they soon discovered the need to fight with pen and paper in addition to bayonets and bullets.

Unlike the president, many of the Union leaders saw the great benefits in limiting or even eliminating all trade. With the battle lines so close to the factories, the war inevitably would invade the world of commerce. In September 1861, General Grant wrote, “Everything must be done to prevent the Enemy from receiving supplies,” and, three months later, ordered Colonel Richard Oglesby (who served under Grant and eventually became governor of Illinois) to disrupt “a heavy trade. . .being carried out between points North of Birds Point and Charleston Mo, and South by means of teams. . .taking possession of all teams, loaded with produce, or goods, destined for the south.”

Grant, Sherman, and the other Generals soon became enraged specifically by how the get-rich-quick scheme of selling cotton interfered with their attempts to carry on the war. Speculators seeking permits and transportation for trading cotton overwhelmed General Grant’s Holly Springs headquarters in particular. Even worse, the Union leaders believed that these traders, while traveling back and forth between the North and the South, carried vital military intelligence to the enemy; additionally, they suspected such merchants of passing gold to the

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41 Pressler, 52.
Confederates with which the Southern Army could purchase war supplies abroad.\textsuperscript{44} The *Cincinnati Enquirer*, an Ohio-based newspaper, reported that it was “well known, that in more than one instance, military officers took to themselves a monopoly of the cotton trade in certain portions of the South where they had the command, and made fortunes for themselves and relatives.”\textsuperscript{45} In General Orders Number 64, Major John A. Rawlins, who served under Ulysses S. Grant and later appointed Secretary of War, wrote that he had been

called to the fact of persons within this District, sympathizing with the Rebellion, who have Cotton for sale, refusing to receive U.S. Treasury notes in payment therefor [sic], or any thing other than Gold and Silver, which is paid them by Speculators whose love of gain is greater than their love of Country, and the Gold and Silver thus paid, indirectly affording aid and comfort to the enemy.\textsuperscript{46}

On July 26, General Isaac Ferdinand Quinby telegraphed Grant from Trenton, New Jersey, that the “gold paid out here by cotton buyers finds its way to the Southern army immediately. Hundreds have left for that army in the counties around here lately, carrying every dollar of gold paid for cotton.”\textsuperscript{47} Grant expressed his displeasure that his troops had to protect this trade for such

rapacious and unscrupulous civilians whose “patriotism is measured by dollars \& cents… I will venture that no honest man has made money in West Tennessee in the last year, whilst many fortunes have been made there.”\textsuperscript{48}

Sherman declared “[w]e cannot carry on war and trade with a people at the same time. Of course our lives are nothing in the scales of profit with our commercial people”\textsuperscript{49} and complained that

\textsuperscript{44} Ash, 507-508.
\textsuperscript{45} *Cincinnati Enquirer*, January 3, 1863.
\textsuperscript{47} Isaac Quinby to Ulysses S. Grant [Telegram], July 26, 1862, in John Y. Simon, ed., *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant: April 1-August 31, 1862*, vol. 5 of *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), n239.
\textsuperscript{48} Ash, 508.
\textsuperscript{49} William T. Sherman, quoted in Ash, 508.
“clerks and hands do smuggle everything by which they can make profit. The great profit now made is converting everybody into rascals, and it makes me ashamed of my countrymen every time I have to examine a cotton or horse case.”\(^{50}\) Both Grant and Sherman “considered all traders rotten to the core”\(^{51}\) and were reluctant to admit that any of the traders and merchants that came into the area could have been “law-abiding and honest men, performing a service which was essential to the commercial well-being of the area.”\(^{52}\) Supposedly, Grant even issued an order “that no cotton should be bought for gold, in order to prevent carrying gold across the line,” but his superiors in Washington, D.C. rescinded it.\(^{53}\) It seems that they, too, had agents trading in the same currency and in the same places as those Jews who broke the law.\(^{54}\) When added with Grant’s and other members of the Union Army’s suspicion of the Jews, the line between “profiteers,” “speculators,” and “smugglers,” and Jews soon blurred.

**The Jews as Traders of Cotton and William T. Sherman**

Of course some of the merchants taking part in the cotton trade were Jews; it would have been odd if such peddlers had not taken advantage of business opportunities in which “the Government deliberately and consciously extended to the Northern commercial world.”\(^{55}\) According to Bertram Wallace Korn, the capitalist economy of the United States depended on Jewish merchants. Still, some of these Jews, like some non-Jews, saw an opportunity in this war and took part in the illegal trade of cotton in addition to their regular business. Like members of


\(^{51}\) Korn, 174.

\(^{52}\) Ibid.


\(^{54}\) Wise, “The Mysteries of General Grant’s Order No. 11,” 4.

\(^{55}\) Korn, 176.
the Army, parts of the Jewish community were displeased with the illegal activity occurring on the border.

Certain Jews even spoke out against the smugglers, making sure that other Americans knew that the Jews were not all guilty of smuggling. In a speech given in 1863, Rabbi Maximilian Michelbacher of Richmond, Virginia, defended Confederate Jews, declaring “the Israelite has never failed to defend the soil of his birth, or the land of his adoption.” Even more, “[a]s traders and as merchants, they buy merchandise and sell the same immediately, the merchandise is never put aside, or hoarded to enhance its value, by withdrawing it from the market;” his comment implied that the Jews possessed the same dedication to their country and to following the law as any other person. In the *Israelite*, a nineteenth-century American Jewish newspaper based in Cincinnati, Ohio, one writer concluded that smuggling could not be a Jewish vice, because anti-Semites would have already accused the Jews of that behavior. The journalist wrote: “If ever the Jews had been smugglers, Senator [Henry] Wilson of Massachusetts would not have called us ‘the nation who stoned the prophets and crucified the redeemer,’ he would have called us smugglers, short and sweet.” Further, he pointed out “Christian church members are the foremost in this work; they smuggle on a heavy scale. . . Wealthy Jewish houses do not smuggle, but wealthy Christian houses do, every day and every night.”

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57 Michelbacher, 506.
58 “Smuggling,” *The Israelite*, vol. 8, no. 5, August 2, 1861, 36.
59 Ibid.
This does not mean that every Jew was free from guilt. Even some contemporary Jewish leaders were ashamed that any person in America -- Jew or gentile -- would disobey government laws and regulations during a time of national crisis. Rabbi Simon Tuska of Memphis, Tennessee, called some of the Northern Jews who came to Memphis “greedy birds of prey.”  

The rabbi was so vehement in his accusation that the Philadelphia abolitionist crusader, Rabbi David Einhorn, accused Tuska of being a Confederate sympathizer.  

Jacob Peres, also a rabbi from Memphis, possessed such emotion that, when he wrote to Orthodox rabbi Isaac Lesser in Philadelphia about the situation, he had to use certain Hebrew words to express his sorrow because he did not know how to express the depth of his feelings: “Some time ago, over 200 יהודים [Jews] were in prison for smuggling. It is a great השם חלול [profanation of the name of God]. But חטאנו מ אנחנו [we—how have we sinned?].”  

In his own article published in The Occident, Leeser spoke with shame of the crowd of needy [Jewish] adventurers, who travel or glide rather through the highways and byways of the land in quest of gain, often we fear unlawful, who in their material labors are perfectly indifferent to the duties of their religion, and not rarely conceal it by a pretended conformity.  

Rabbi Einhorn even urged American Jews to “make war also upon the Amalek in our own midst! Let us meet them that bring shame and disgrace upon us and our religious faith [smugglers], with the fullness of our moral indignation.”  

According to him, the Jews were just as guilty as the other speculators, and “little rogues are brought to punishment whereas big ones are allowed to
To him, the crime of smuggling was “far greater when committed by a Jew, because he must know that the whole Jewish community is made accountable for his offense, that his act inflicts shame, disgrace and misfortune upon his fellow believers.”

Even though these rabbis admitted that Jews took part in illegal activity, many non-Jews also broke the law, but, to many people in the Union army, the Jews still represented the worst characteristics of all the speculators. For some, the terms Jew and speculator were synonymous and they believed all Jewish merchants were corrupt. The *Corinth War Eagle*, an army periodical published near Grant’s headquarters, called Jews “sharks, feeding upon the soldiers.— General Grant has determined to rate them a nuisance, and abate it suddenly.”

Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, based in Cincinnati, Ohio and considered the father of American Reform Judaism, complained that certain Cincinnati newspapers blamed all the Jews as smugglers; citing gentile opinion, he wrote, “they sell goods to disloyal men. ‘The people whose ancestors smuggled for eighteen centuries,’ says the reporter of those papers, ‘smuggle yet.’”

In his letter to Associate Justice of the Supreme Court David Davis, General Lewis B. Parsons justified changing the trading regulations by saying, “This will put an end to the demoralization of the Army, and an infinite amount of rascality perpetrated by Cotton thieves and Jews.” On December 30, 1861, Lieutenant Seth Ledyard Phelps of Paducah, Kentucky, wrote to Flag Officer Andrew H. Foote, “There is entirely too much smuggling done between this point and Evansville, and as usual chiefly by Jews.”

A Treasury Department agent, in May of 1862, informed Secretary Chase

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65 David Einhorn, *War With Amalek*, 11-12, quoted in Korn, 180.
66 Ibid.
67 *Corinth War Eagle*, August 7, 1862, quoted in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, vol. 7, n52.
68 “Smuggling.”
69 Parsons.
that the extraordinarily successful cotton business was drawing “swarms of Jews and a good many white men.”71 Brigadier General Leonard Ross wrote to his superior, Major General John McClemand, (later Congressman representing Illinois in the House of Representatives) that

The cotton speculators are quite clamorous for aid in getting their cotton away…and offer to pay liberally for the service. I think I can bring it away with safety, and make it pay to the Government. As some of the Jew owners have as good as stolen the cotton from the planters, I have no conscientious scruples in making them pay liberally for getting it away.72

Even Grant himself, who must have been suspicious of Jewish traders, sent a letter to Brigadier General J. T. Quinby in Columbus, Kentucky, instructing him to “Examine the baggage of all speculators coming South. . . . Jews should receive special attention.”73

Not much evidence exists that would indicate that the majority of the smugglers were Jewish (since officers generally did not note the religion of those breaking the law), but there were a few exceptions. One volume of Special Orders, District of Memphis, which contains over three hundred and fifty orders regarding business and commercial offenses in addition to some ordinary civil suits, specifically lists some Jews and identifies them as people who had broken the law. It lists two as being fined for violating certain liquor ordinances and one was convicted of selling boots without a permit; all of his merchandise -- two dozen pairs of boots -- was confiscated. A third Jew charged a couple of other Jews “with extortion in the guise of U.S. Marshals,” and another was “banished from the city for smuggling while his two Jewish companions, for no stated reason, were permitted to remain.”74

71 W.P. Mellen, quoted in Ash, 508.
72 L.F. Ross to John A. McClemand, July 25, 1862, Bolivar.
73 Ulysses S. Grant, US Grant to J.T. Quinby, Columbus, KY, July 26, 1862, in The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, vol. 5, 238.
74 Korn, 181.
A particular case noted in this book describes three Jews who were arrested and sent to prison at Alton, Illinois, for smuggling on January 12, 1863. All of their goods were confiscated and it was ordered that they be sold for the benefit of the government. Oddly, the men were released on bond on January 27 and ordered to appear before the Provost Marshal, the officer in the armed forces who is in charge of military police. During their trial, which was held on February 9, the court decided “certain drugs and medicine which had been found in their stock did not belong to them, but to a certain John Farley (obviously a non-Jew and otherwise unidentified).” These items were supposed to be confiscated, but the Provost Marshal found the men not guilty and restored all their property to them. When General Stephen A. Hurlbut, serving under General William T. Sherman, reviewed the court’s findings, he rejected the ruling and ordered that the army confiscate certain goods (buttons, pins, tea, coffee, and hats) even though no one ever changed the verdict from “not guilty” to “guilty.” Historian Bertram Wallace Korn believes their only crime was being Jewish. Hurlbut, it seems, was not the only high-ranking officer to think this way.

General William Tecumseh Sherman’s personal writings illustrate that even before the Civil War he had not been fond of the Jewish people. According to him, “the personification of this evil mercenary spirit was the speculator, and the speculator was the Jew.” While stationed in California, he wrote to his wife Ellen, “Individuals may prosper in a failing community such as San Francisco, but they must be Jews, without pity, soul, heart or bowels of compassion.” In another letter, he berated the Jewish people for what, according to Christian belief, they did to

75 Korn, 181-182. The parenthetic comment is Korn’s.
76 Ibid, 182.
“His [Jesus’] claim upon the Jews, to their gratitude, was perfect; and yet not only did they not receive him, but they persecuted, tortured and crucified him. How great their sin! . . . If at this age we reject him, we are far more guilty than the Jews, for we know what we do.”

The fighting that would ensue between the North and the South did not do anything to change Sherman’s ideas about Jews. Early in 1862, he complained to the adjutant general “This cotton order [allowing limited trade] is worse to us than a defeat. The country will swarm with dishonest Jews who will smuggle powder, pistols, percussion caps, etc. in spite of all the guards and precautions we can give.”

Regarding the time he spent in Cincinnati, Ohio, he wrote to his wife that “the Jews and speculators have sent enough gold to get all the cartridges necessary, so the two wants of the army are supplied, a whole year lost to the war, and some Jews and speculators have made ten percent profit.” Sherman also informed his wife that Memphis “was full of Jews & speculators buying cotton for gold silver & treasury notes, the very thing the Confederates wanted, money.”

He wrote to Grant stating that he had found so many Jews & Speculators here [in Memphis] trading in cotton and secessionists had become open in refusing anything but gold that I have found myself bound to stop it. This gold has but one use, the purchase of arms & ammunition. . . . Of course, I have respected all permits by yourself or the Secretary of the Treasury, but in these new cases (swarms of Jews) I have stopped it.

In a letter written directly to Secretary Chase, Sherman warned him, “The flock of Jews had disappeared, but will again overrun us.” Such a fear soon came out through letters and Orders issued by the Army.

The First Offenses and Jesse Root Grant

In November of 1862, General Ulysses S. Grant began his campaign into Mississippi, and soon felt he needed to regulate traders more strictly, with an unusual focus on Jewish merchants. On November 9, 1862, he sent a telegraph to Major General Stephen A. Hurlbut instructing him to “Refuse all permits to come south of Jackson for the present. The Israelites especially should be kept out.”85 The following day, he wrote to Colonel Joseph D. Webster, Chief of Transportation for Army of the Tennessee,

Give orders to all the conductors on the road that no Jews are to be permitted to travel on the Rail Road southward from any point. They may go north and be encouraged in it but they are such an intolerable nuisance. That the Department must be purged for them.86

Since Grant’s forces would regulate the cotton trade, the General provided the instructions that “Buyers should accompany the Army. . .but in consequence of the total disregard and evasion of order by the Jews my policy is to exclude them so far as practicable from the Dept.”87

On December 8, 1862, Colonel John V. D. DuBois, a staff officer of one of Grant’s Corps Commanders, issued his own incendiary order. General Orders Number 2 read:

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84 William T. Sherman to Hon. S.P. Chase, Memphis, August 11, 1862, quoted in Korn, 175.
86 Ulysses S. Grant to Col. Joseph D. Webster, Lagrange, Tennessee, November 10, 1862, in The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, vol. 6, 283.
87 Ulysses S. Grant to Maj. Gen Sherman, Oxford, Mississippi, December 6, 1862, in The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, vol. 6, 394.
Holly Springs, Miss.,
December 8, 1862

General Order.
On account of the scarcity of provisions, All Cotton-Speculators, Jews and other Vagrants having no honest means of support, except trading upon the miseries of their Country, and in general all persons from the North, not connected with the Army, who have no permission from the General Commanding to remain in this town, Will Leave in twenty four hours or they will be sent to duty in the trenches.

By order of Col. Jno. V. DuBois, U.S. Army Com’d’g.

Charles H. Turlu,
1st Lieut., A.A.A. Gen’l.

This particular Order does, indeed, demonstrate an anti-Jewish bias by noting them distinctively and forcing them to leave the town. It exempted Southern gentile citizens, Jewish soldiers in the Union army, those who had “legitimate” reasons to remain in Holly Springs, and expelled non-Jews as well.\(^{89}\) While it seems as though Grant would have agreed with DuBois’s actions to prohibit non-essential, non-military personnel from the camp, the General fired Colonel DuBois because he issued an Order that specifically targeted Jews: “This order was revoked by Gen Grant and I was relieved from my command on account of it.”\(^{90}\) In the Order General Grant wrote revoking General Orders Number 2, he made no mention whether his actions had anything to do with the mention of Jews in DuBois’s order. He merely stated that Washington had already given instructions regarding the process of getting cotton out of the country, and any order DuBois had published “different from this contravenes Dept orders and will have to be rescinded.”\(^{91}\)


\(^{89}\) Pressler, 62.


\(^{91}\) Ulysses S. Grant to John V.D. DuBois, Oxford, Mississippi, December 9, 1862, in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, vol. 7., 8.
Matters soon escalated when Ulysses S. Grant’s father, Jesse Root Grant, became involved. There had always been a kind of tension that existed between the father and his son. Jesse had sent Ulysses to West Point from their home in southern Ohio when a career in the armed forces was the last thing his son had wanted. When the peacetime Army was too much for the younger Grant, Jesse reluctantly gave his son a job in the Galena harness shop, “muttering to his acquaintances that the Army had spoiled his son for business.”92 The father never hesitated to advise his son on any matter, quickly aggravating the Army General. Grant finally wrote to Jesse to keep his opinions to himself.93

When Grant began to gain great fame from his position in the Army, Jesse Grant was quite proud, and, being the businessman that he was, decided to take advantage of the situation. In Cincinnati, the elder Grant formed a partnership with three brothers, Henry, Harmon, and Simon Mack, three Jewish merchants who traded as “Mack, and Brothers.” The purpose of this alliance was to purchase “cotton in the military department commanded by Gen. U. S. Grant.”94 The Mack Brothers were supposed to furnish all the money that “might be required in the said business, and the necessary number of men to purchase and ship the cotton.”95 Jesse R. Grant’s job was to go to his son’s headquarters accompanied by the Macks’ men and “procure a permit for them to purchase cotton, secure transportation and such other facilities as might be consistent with the usages and interests of the army.”96 According to their plan, after Jesse obtained the necessary paperwork, the cotton would have been shipped to New York and sold; the profits

92 Bruce Catton, Grant Moves South, (Toronto: Little, Brown, and Co., 1960), 352.
95 Ibid.
from this venture were to be divided between the partners with three-fourths going to the Macks, and one-fourth to Jesse Grant.

Despite everything Jesse Root Grant and the Mack brothers did, events did not go according to plan. When the elder Grant paid his son a surprise visit at his headquarters in Oxford, Mississippi, Ulysses Grant acted cordially. The army general seemed glad to see his father, and, according to Sylvanus Cadwallader, a journalist from Chicago, Ulysses “showed [Jesse] every possible attention; and enjoyed his society for a few days or two without unpleasant interruption.”97 At first, he did not mind meeting and socializing with businessmen who happened to be good friends with Jesse Grant. The general soon learned the true purpose of the visit: “to obtain special permits and privileges to buy and ship cotton. It seems that playing upon ‘Uncle Jesse’s’ cupidity, these men had entered into a partnership with him for that purpose, they agreeing to furnish all the capital needed, and he to obtain the trade permit from his son.”98 Not only was Grant outraged that these merchants—these Jews—would take advantage of his father in such a manner, he was astonished that his “father could have been so ignorant concerning his own son.”99 According to Cadwallader, Ulysses S. Grant was bitter, indignant, and mortified that his father had been “entrapped…into such an unworthy undertaking.”100 Fueled by emotion, he put both his father and the men from Mack & Brothers on the next train back North to Cincinnati without any permits.101 According to Michael Korda, a Grant biographer, his

97 “Cadwallader,” in Letters from Lloyd Lewis, 24, quoted in Korn, n318.
98 Ibid., n279-280, 63.
99 Ibid., n280, 63.
100 Ibid.
101 Catton, 353. After the plan failed, Jesse placed all the blame on the Mack, brothers and sued them in the Cincinnati Superior Court for breach of contract. Judges George Hoadly and Bellamy Storer presided over the case, and quickly dismissed it on the grounds that, “if Jesse Grant had used his privileged position with his son to get a permit, than such an agreement was illegal and could not be enforced in the court; on the other hand, if Jesse Grant had asked for a permit legally, then the contract was void, for Jesse’s role would not have sufficed to warrant payments” (Isaacs, 8-9).
“volcanic” and “short-lived” temper caused Grant to do what he did next.\textsuperscript{102}

CHAPTER 2: EXODUS

General Orders Number 11

The great clashes between General Ulysses S. Grant, the Jews, and the Union Army would spark an action that would change the lives of many people -- both Jew and gentile -- in the United States. On December 17, 1862, Grant issued General Orders Number 11, which read as follows:

Head Quarters 13th Army Corps,
Department of the Tennessee,

General Orders No. 12

I. The Jews, as a class, violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department, and also Department orders, are hereby expelled from the Department.

II. Within twenty-four hours from the receipt of this order by Post Commanders, they will see that all of this class of people are furnished with passes and required to leave, and any one returning after such notification, will be arrested and held in confinement until an opportunity occurs of sending them out as prisoners unless furnished with permits from these Head Quarters.

III. No Permits will be given these people to visit Head Quarters for the purpose of making personal application for trade permits.

By Order of Maj. Genl. U.S. Grant
Jno. A. Rawlins
Ass’t Adj’t Genl.¹

John A Rawlins, Grant’s Chief of Staff and the very man who issued the Order, related later that he raised objections to its discriminatory content as it was being copied and sent out. Rawlins asserted that Grant remained adamant, telling his subordinate, “they can countermand this from Washington if they like, but we will issue it anyhow.”²

Historians and historical figures alike offer a number of explanations for the Order’s issuance. In 1918, Simon Wolf, a Jewish lawyer and, later, a U.S. diplomat, wrote about a

¹ “General Orders No. 11,” in The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, vol. 7, 50. See Figure 4 on page 87.
² Ulysses S. Grant, quoted in Ash, 511.
conversation he had with Grant a half-century earlier in which the General told Wolf that he “had absolutely nothing whatever to do with the said order. . .that said Order No. 11 had been issued from headquarters upon the report made by General Sherman” regarding the large number of citizens, “notably Jewish, who were violating the rules and laws of war in running the blockade and in purchasing cotton contrary to legislation. . .the order was made by one of the staff officers, but unfortunately bore the name of the General.”

According to Wolf, Grant never set the record straight because he did not want anyone to think “he was seeking public applause.” This is fairly plausible for staff officers often wrote orders, reports, and memoranda to which they would sign their commanding officer’s name. In his book The Presidents I Have Known from 1860-1918, Wolf described how “there were official blanks at the headquarters. . .having the name of the General printed. . .which were used in making orders.”

Some claimed that the name of the particular officer who issued Order No. 11 was well known to hundreds of those who served under Grant, “and that they considered their chieftain a hero for not revealing that name to the indignant public.” A letter written to the Chicago Evening Journal placed responsibility on Colonel John DuBois -- who had previously issued his own expulsion Order -- asserted that he had written Order No. 11 without Grant’s knowledge, and had affixed his superior’s name to it. The informant wrote: “I was with Grant’s army at the time as a staff officer of one of his Corps Commanders, and many a laugh we had around the camp fires over what was then called ‘Johnny DuBois’ order’ . . .it was not dictated by General Grant.” DuBois himself contradicted this accusation, claiming that he would not sell his name for the sake of

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4 Ibid, 71.
5 Ibid, 70-71.
6 Korn, 164.
7 Quoted in Korn, 164.
Grant’s. He claimed he “never saw or heard of the notorious ‘Jew Order’ until it appeared in print. . . . I was never on General Grant’s staff, and never signed an order ‘by order of Gen. Grant.””

Though supported by evidence, this assertion probably is not true. Most historians believe that the Order issued from Grant himself. The same day he issued General Orders Number 11, Grant sent the following letter to Christopher P. Wolcott, First Assistant Secretary of War, about Jewish corruption:

I have long since believed that in spite of all the vigilance that can be infused into Post Commanders that the Specie regulations of the Treasury Dept. have been violated, and that mostly by Jews and other unprincipled traders. So well satisfied of this have I been that I instructed the Commdg Officer at Columbus to refuse all permits to Jews to come south, and frequently have had them expelled from the Dept. But they come in with their Carpet sacks in spite of all that can be done to prevent it. The Jews seem to be a privileged class that can travel anywhere. They will land at any wood yard or landing on the river and make their way through the country. If not permitted to buy Cotton themselves they will act a [sic] Agents for some one else who will be at a Military post, with a Treasury permit to receive Cotton and pay for it in Treasury notes which the Jew will buy up at an agreed rate, paying gold. There is but one way that I know of to reach this case. That is for Government to buy all the Cotton at a fixed rate and send it to Cairo, St Louis or some other point to be sold. Then all traders, they are a curse to the Army, might be expelled.

This particular letter proves that Grant had some deep-seeded anger towards anyone who put financial gain over patriotism and country, with the Jews identified as the primary perpetrators of such an act. It seems that such feelings probably partly motivated the Order’s issuance.

Many historians also point to the incident with Jesse Root Grant and the Mack brothers as the reason for General Orders Number 11. They claim that Ulysses Grant’s anger towards his father for trying to take advantage of the General’s position prompted his actions. John Y. Simon, a Grant historian, wrote there “is reason to believe that this triggered Grant’s action.

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8 Quoted in Korn, 164.
9 Ulysses S. Grant to Christopher P. Wolcott, Oxford, Mississippi, December 17, 1862, in The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, vol. 7, 50. The emphasis is mine.
Considering the relationship between Grant and his father, however, I doubt that it was Grant’s intention to have his father benefit. If possible, he would have preferred exactly the reverse.”

In his *Kronikals*, A.E. Frankland, also blamed Jesse’s deal with the Mack Brothers for what happened:

Next unto the Monks was “David” (Mack of Mack &Brothers) who slew “Golia[t]h,” that is, so to speak. David was strongly fortified. He said but little, but did much. When the “Unclean,” Stinking, “Generallissimo,” U.S.G.[rant] issued his infamous order No. 11 expelling all Jews from his department, David, who was in partnership with U.S. Grant’s father, Jesse, in the cotton business (although [sic] the press of the country everywhere have accused Jesse Grant of stealing, instead of buying, cotton), as soon as U.S.G. issued his order, our friend David received his exemption papers.

In this stanza, “David” represents the Mack Brothers, a few lowly Jews, who, like the biblical David, seemed powerless, but were not. Frankland asserted that, when Grant issued General Orders Number 11, the Macks were exempted, thus benefitting from their partnership with the General’s father. Though the author clearly disliked Grant (he calls him “Unclean,” and “Stinking”), Frankland does not let the Macks off the hook for manipulating their business partnership with Jesse Grant.

Even without a clear reason for the issuance of the Order, a great deal of evidence exists that the General himself composed and distributed it. A man, who signed his letter “Gentile,” wrote to the *Cincinnati Commercial* in January of 1863 claiming that someone in the War Department in Washington, D.C., had ordered Grant to issue the Order:

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10 Quoted in Ira L. Harris to Jacob R. Marcus, Los Angeles, CA, September 29, 1980.
11 Frankland, 104.
On the evening of the 17th of December, I was sitting in the General’s office at Oxford, Miss., when a telegram was handed in which he remarked, was instructions from Washington, and read it, as near as I can recollect, as follows: “We are reliably advised that Jews are buying up the gold in the various cities of the Union, for the purpose of investing in cotton in the South. This should be prevented. You will therefore issue an order expelling from your lines all Jews who cannot give satisfactory evidence of their honesty of intentions.” On this, Gen. Grant issued his order.12

An unsigned manuscript found among the papers of David Eckstein also confirmed the story of “Gentile:"

On the 17th of Dec., 62, I was at Oxford, Mississippi, and saw Gen. Grant receive and open a large number of letters and dispatches that evening received. On opening one of them he remarked: “Here is instructions from Headquarters which I have been expecting,” and read as follows: We are reliably informed that the Jews are in the various cities buying up the gold, to take to the South to invest in Cotton. That will place in the hands of the Rebels additional means to carry on the war. That should be prevented. You will therefore take measures to prevent it in your Department. Upon this instruction the Jew Order No 11 was issued. All Jews then within Gen. Grant’s lines, who could give a satisfactory account of the honesty of their intentions were relieved from the effect of that order.13

Though the manuscript’s author cannot be confirmed, other papers in the family’s possession confirm that Eckstein had been in Oxford at the time the Order was written.

A third witness, John A Rawlins, the officer who countersigned the Order, stated in a letter to the New York Times that the general had received complaints from one of his superiors in Washington, D.C., but the decision to issue General Orders Number 11 was Grant’s own:

[O]n the evening of December 17, 1862, the mail brought from Washington a large number of complaints, officially referred to [Grant] by the General-in-Chief of the army, against this class of persons for violations of the orders. The general felt, on reading them, that some immediate action was demanded of him. He realized to its full extent the critical condition of military affairs, and judged, whether wisely or unwisely, that to meet the exigency action must be immediate, thorough and in a form not to be evaded. The order you refer to was the result. It was written and telegraphed to his subordinates without revision, leaving all persons not justly amenable to its terms to be relieved on their individual application.14

12 Quoted in The Jewish Record, vol. I, no. 21, January 30, 1863, 2, in Korn, 166.
13 Quoted in Korn, 166.
However, this letter was written years after Grant issued the Order, which makes one question its credibility. Though Rawlins himself was present when the general issued General Orders Number 11, it is hard to tell if Rawlins’s own recollection was hazy, if he was trying to help the General win the Election of 1868, or if his memory was completely accurate.

Jesse Root Grant, who claimed that he did not leave Oxford, Mississippi, until January 5, which contradicts the testimony that his son put him on the first train out of town after the incident with the Macks, also provided an account of what occurred. In a letter he wrote to his friend Congressman Elihu B. Washburne, a Republican from Illinois, on January 20, 1863, the elder Grant remarked, “The Jew order so harped on in congress [sic] was issued on express instructions from Washington.”\(^{15}\) Convincing though this may be, there is no consistency regarding Jesse’s location at this time, and the possibility exists that he was not even with his son on the night the Order was issued.

The fifth witness made no claim that he had intimate knowledge of who issued the Order or its origins, but he took it as a matter of general knowledge that instructions had come to General Grant from someone in Washington. Eight months later, an unidentified correspondent for the *New York World* in Vicksburg wrote the following: “It seems to be the policy of this department to effect what he was instructed by the department at Washington to attempt six months ago, namely, the expulsion of the ‘Jews.’”\(^{16}\)

In *The Israelite*, Isaac Mayer Wise agrees with the assertion that Grant received orders from a Cabinet member in Washington, D.C. They supposedly “accused him of mal-administration, maintaining that most of the smuggling was done in his department, and even

\(^{15}\) *Letters from Lloyd Lewis*, quoted in Korn, 167.

maintained that he did not care exactly to stop it.”

According to Wise, on the evening of December 17, 1862, one of the members of Lincoln’s Cabinet sent instructions to Grant to prevent Jews from buying gold and investing in cotton. Wise believed that the governmental official who sent this letter was either Secretary of War Stanton or Treasury Secretary Chase.

Though these testimonies support the claim that Grant issued General Order Number 11 on orders from a superior in Washington, D.C., there is no hard evidence that such dispatches or messages exist -- or have ever existed -- or the identification of the official who supposedly ordered Grant to do so. Additionally, communications from Grant sent to Washington were usually copied and then entered in the register of letters received by the Department of the Tennessee, or copied into letterbooks, books into which all letters and orders were transcribed. Such telegrams were also copied by the War Department itself in addition to Grant’s own headquarters. According to John Y. Simon, “Records at both ends are so complete that actual messages almost always show up in both places, and no orders authorizing or encouraging General Orders No. 11 have been found.” This makes it unlikely that General Orders Number 11 was issued at the behest of a government official in Washington D.C.

General Orders Number 11 may have also had its roots in economic competition and greed. Many members of the army took part in the illegal trade of cotton and made their fortunes while their comrades lay dying on the battlefield. Certain contemporary writers suspected that Grant had expelled the Jews to help influential cotton buyers and their officer-partners make more money for themselves. The Cincinnati Enquirer asserted that Grant

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17 The Israelite, December 3, 1868, 4.
18 Ibid.
19 Isaac Mayer Wise, The Israelite, vol. 9, no. 30, January 30, 1863, 236.
20 The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, vol. 7, n51.
21 Korn, 183.
was imposed upon by malicious misrepresentations of interested parties. . .with whose arrangements for speculating in cotton certain Israelites, engaged in the same business, interfered. It is well-known, that in more than one instance, military officers took to themselves a monopoly of the cotton trade. . .and made fortunes for themselves and relatives. . .It may be that the Israelites at Memphis and other points, have been purchasing cotton without any regard for the nice little percentage which it is expected cotton traders should pay for the protection of Federal bayonets and the use of Government transportation.22

Isaac Mayer Wise pointed out that the price of cotton in Tennessee had dropped from 40 cents a pound to 25 cents only after the Jews were expelled while the price in the North remained high. He wrote bitterly in the *Israelite* that “The Jews bought cotton planters at 40 cents a pound; the military authorities with their business partners, agents, clerks, portiers, &c., intend to buy that staple at twenty-five cents a pound.” Wise then pointed out that “[t]hey could sell it in Eastern cities just as high as the next man—and the Jews must leave because they interfere with a branch of military business.”23 Regardless of who may or may not have been at fault, the Order’s affects went beyond just officials in the Union Army.

The Victims of the Order

While General Orders Number 11 was meant to expel the Jews “as a class,” very few were immediately affected by the Order. Many commanders ignored the Order, or, like General Jeremiah Sullivan of Jackson, Tennessee, protested its legality.24 Others wrote back with questions about the details of the Order, and seemed more confused than obedient.25 Brigadier General Grenville M. Dodge sent a telegram asking if the Order applied to Jewish sutlers (the nineteenth-century term for army provisioners) and Colonel Robert C. Murphy sent a similar message inquiring if he did the right thing by expelling sutlers. Colonel James B. Weaver wrote

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22 Quoted in Korn, 183.
23 Quoted in Korn, 183.
24 Ash, n513.
25 Pressler, 64.
to Grant’s headquarters asking that L.S. Flersham [Florsheim?] and his brother, who were Jews, be allowed to continue as sutlers.  

Some commanders did not even receive notice that Ulysses S. Grant had issued an order. As was the custom, Grant intended to send the Order via telegram to all of his subordinates commanding troops in the Department of the Tennessee. Not long after General Orders Number 11 was issued, a Confederate cavalry unit commanded by General Earl Van Dorn attacked Holly Springs, Mississippi, “capturing the troops, stores, etc;,” and cutting all lines of communication. According to Julia Dent Grant, the wife of Ulysses S. Grant, “2,000 of our troops had surrendered [at Holly Springs]; hospital, and hospital and commissary stores burned. . .Van Dorn paroled the prisoners, thus rendering them useless for the present, and then dashed on to do further mischief.”

It was more than a week before General Grant could “communicate with the authorities at Washington” again because the railroads had also been damaged during this surprise attack. Colonel B.C. Murphy had been in charge of the headquarters at Holly Springs during the attack, and supposedly was so drunk that he did not take any “steps to protect the place” or notify “a single officer of his command of the approaching danger, although he himself had received warning.” By January, Murphy was discharged for “his cowardly and disgraceful conduct.”

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26 Robert C. Murphy to John A. Rawlins [Telegram], Holly Springs, Mississippi, December 19, 1862, in The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, vol. 7, n53.
29 Ulysses S. Grant, U.S. Grant to Col. J.C. Kelton [Telegram], Holly Springs, Mississippi, December 25, 1862, in The War of the Rebellion, 477.
30 Ulysses S. Grant, U.S. Grant to Col. J.C. Kelton [Telegram], Holly Springs, Mississippi, December 25, 1862, in The War of the Rebellion, 477.
Though Murphy’s mistake led to the inability for General Orders Number 11 to go out to most towns, some Jews still became the victims of its harsh instructions.

The order Julia Grant called “that obnoxious order expelling the Jews” was executed in Holly Springs, Mississippi; Oxford, Mississippi; and Paducah, Kentucky. Since Grant’s troops were stationed in Holly Springs and Oxford, Jews were denied entry there. Three northern men and the fiancée of one, who had been caught in the Confederacy and were finally able to leave, were arrested by Colonel Charles Carroll Marsh upon their arrival at Oxford on December 18, 1862. Their horse, buggy, and luggage were all confiscated; they were then taken to Holly Springs by train, then to Bolivar, Jackson, and finally to Cairo, IL, where they were freed and ordered to stay out of the Department of the Tennessee for the duration of the war. When they were finally told why they had to endure such abuse, the answer was: “Because you are Jews, and are neither a benefit to the Union or Confederacy.” A party of Jewish agents for firms in Northern cities were denied rail transportation in Holly Springs and had to walk to Memphis. At first, they did not believe that they had been expelled for being Jews. When one of the men, Lazarus Silberman of Chicago, tried to telegraph Grant’s headquarters to confirm the order, he was arrested, jailed, and forced to stay there overnight. Once the men arrived in Memphis, they learned that, indeed, their departure had resulted from the Order. Even some legitimate residents were sent off with the rest.

Though other places were affected by the Order, the stories of the Jews from Paducah, Kentucky, seem to have become the most well known. Provost Marshal L.J. Wardell did not receive General Orders Number 11 until late December. Unlike other officials who may have

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33 Quoted, in Korn, 146.
34 Ash, 512.
35 Korn, 146.
just ignored the Order and allowed Jewish speculators to continue to do business, Wardell, determined to uphold the letter of the law, executed General Orders Number 11 to the fullest extent.\footnote{Ash, 513-514.} Though, by issuing the Order, Grant had only meant to expel Jewish cotton speculators, Wardell made it his mission to remove every single Jewish man, woman, and child in the town. Thirty families quickly locked up their homes and businesses, and boarded a steamer heading north to Cincinnati.\footnote{Ash, 514.} Wardell permitted two women lying ill to stay behind, but forced two army veterans to go north with the others,\footnote{John Simon, “That Obnoxious Order,” in \textit{Civil War Times}, vol. xxiii, no 6, October 1984, 16-17.} and someone almost left a baby behind.\footnote{Korn, 145.}

Though Wardell may have just been attempting to carry out his superior’s order to the best of his ability, some suspect that other motives existed which explained why army officials had specifically targeted Paducah’s Jewry. While Kentucky did not secede from the Union, it remained a slave state and the war had caused a rift among its residents. Political strife soon led to economic discord, and, to make matters worse, Paducah had a growing presence of runaway slaves. As a result, everyone in town suspected each other of being traitors, and began to turn against one another. Unfortunately, as tensions rose, the Jews in Paducah soon became the focus of much the hatred and mistrust in the city. Certain townspeople thought Paducah’s Jews were universally disloyal. Many believe that Wardell’s carrying out the instructions of General Orders Number 11 to the fullest extent resulted from these attitudes.\footnote{Ash, 514-517.}
Lincoln Rescinds the Order

Members of the Jewish community in Paducah contested the Order. Before leaving for Cincinnati, several of the leading merchants in the town sent a telegram to President Abraham Lincoln, protesting General Orders Number 11 and asking that it be rescinded:

Paducah, Ky., December 29, 1862.
Hon. Abraham Lincoln,
President of the United States

General Orders, No. 11, issued by General Grant at Oxford, Miss., December the 17th, commands all post commanders to expel all Jews, without distinction, within twenty-four hours, from his entire department. The undersigned, good and loyal citizens of the United States and residents of this town for many years, engaged in legitimate business as merchants, feel greatly insulted and outraged by this inhuman order, the carrying out of which would be the grossest violation of the Constitution and our rights as good citizens under it, and would place us, besides a large number of other Jewish families of this town, as outlaws before the whole world. We respectfully ask your immediate attention to this enormous outrage on all law and humanity, and pray for your effectual and immediate interposition. We would respectfully refer you to the post commander and post adjutant as to our loyalty, and to all respectable citizens of this community as to our standing as citizens and merchants. We respectfully ask for immediate instructions to be sent to the commander of this post.

D. Wolff & Bros.
C[esar]. J. Kaskell.
J.W. Kaskell

In this letter, the Wolffs and the Kaskells, businessmen and residents of Paducah, appealed to the president as “good and loyal citizens of the United States.” Believing that they had not done anything wrong, they proclaimed that Grant’s order had violated their constitutional rights, and that the most humane and just thing for President Lincoln to do would be to rescind General Orders Number 11.

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42 Ibid.
While this telegram reached Washington, D.C., -- it was endorsed by General Halleck on December 31-- it seems that the government initially ignored it. 43 Cesar Kaskell, while on the boat to Cincinnati, took the time to write letters and telegrams to leading members of the Jewish community and to Jewish publications44 in which he complained that he had been driven from his home, “[his] business, and all that is dear to me, at the short notice of twenty-four hours; not for any crime committed, but simply because I was born of Jewish parents.”45 After staying in Cincinnati briefly, only to confer with leaders of the Jewish community and to inform them of what had happened, he immediately left for Washington, D.C.

Kaskell arrived on January 3, 1863, taking with him letters from Max Lilienthal, a rabbi and educator in Cincinnati, and Daniel Wolf, an important merchant of the same city, and met with some prominent, influential legislators in Washington. After meeting with and explaining to Republican Congressman John A. Gurly of Ohio what had occurred, the two men went to the Presidential Mansion (known today as the White House) where Kaskell explained to President Lincoln the circumstances of their visit. Apparently, the President had no knowledge of what had occurred in Paducah and supposedly (for there is no proof that such a conversation took place, only anecdotal evidence) remarked, “And so the children of Israel were driven from the happy land of Canaan?” To which Kaskell replied, “Yes, and that is why we have come unto Father Abraham’s bosom, asking protection.” Lincoln responded, “And this protection they shall have at once.”46 Whether motivated by justice or just plain politics -- this cry of injustice

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44 Korn, 147.
45 “Expulsion Of Jews from General Grant’s Department—The Circumstances Stated and Documents Quoted,” Cincinnati Commercial, December 30, 1862.
could limit Jewish financing of the Union war effort -- the President instantly sent a note to General-in-Chief of the Army Henry W. Halleck instructing him to cancel the Order. He then told his guests that they could “leave for home at once if you wish, and before you reach there Grant’s order will have been revoked.”

On January 4, 1863, Major General Henry W. Halleck sent the following telegraph to General Ulysses S. Grant: “A paper purporting to be a Genl Order No. 11 issued by you Dec 17th has been presented here. By its terms it expels all Jews from your Dept. If such an order has been issued, it will be immediately revoked.”

When General Grant did not recall the Order right away, Halleck sent another telegram telling Grant,

It may be proper to give you some explanation of the revocation of your order expelling all Jews from your Dept. The President has no objection to your expelling traders & Jew pedlars [sic], which I suppose was the object of your order; but as it in terms prescribed an entire religious class, some of whom are fighting in our ranks, the President deemed it necessary to revoke it.

Three days later -- just three weeks after it had been issued -- Grant’s office transmitted the order of recall.

**Congress and General Orders Number 11**

While Grant may have revoked General Orders Number 11, the members of Congress had not yet had their say in the matter. On January 6, 1863, Representative George H. Pendleton, one of the Peace Democrats from Ohio, proposed a resolution in the House of Representatives declaring that the “order deserves the sternest condemnation of the House, and of the President, as Commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy.”

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47 Markins, 13.
48 Henry Halleck to U.S. Grant [Telegram], January 4, 1863, in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, vol. 7, n53.
49 Henry Halleck to U.S. Grant [Telegram], January 21, 1863, in *The Papers of Ulysses S Grant*, vol. 7, n54.
50 Korn, 149.
51 A group of Democrats who had opposed the Civil War and would have negotiated peace that would have resulted in an independent Confederacy
concerned with protecting their favorite, and, thus far most successful, general, did not want to look into the circumstances of the event. Representative Elihu B. Washburne, a Republican from Illinois, motioned that they table the resolution because it “censures one of our best generals without a hearing.”\textsuperscript{53} This is not surprising considering Washburne’s close relationship with Grant and Jesse Root Grant. Additionally, the Representative from Illinois wrote to Lincoln calling Order Number 11 “the wisest order yet made by a Military Command, and. . . necessary.”\textsuperscript{54} Two days later, he wrote to his friend, Ulysses S. Grant, assuring him that if he “would only express precisely in your order what you meant (as he [Halleck] supposed) to exclude these Jew traders it would be all right. . . All the democrats were fierce to censure your action.”\textsuperscript{55} As a result of Washburne’s efforts, the House of Representatives tabled the resolution by a close vote of 56 to 53, with the division based mostly on political affiliation.

On January 5, 1863, Senator Lazarus Powell, a Democrat from Kentucky, offered a similar resolution in the Senate, calling the Order “illegal, tyrannical, cruel, and unjust.”\textsuperscript{56} It seems that Powell had cultivated an image as “a sort of Democratic watchdog of civil rights,” and, in this case, the violation of civil rights had directly affected his own constituents.\textsuperscript{57} In a speech he gave on the Senate floor on January 9, Powell declared,

\begin{quote}
[I]f we tamely submit to allow the military power thus to encroach on the rights of the citizen, we shall be setting a bad and most pernicious example to those in command of our Army. . . . General Grant may just as well expel the Baptists, or the Methodists, or the Episcopalians, or the Catholics, as a class, as to expel the Jews.\textsuperscript{58}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{53} Washburne, quoted in Korn, 150.
\textsuperscript{54} Elihu B. Washburne to Abraham Lincoln, Washington, D.C., January 6, 1863, \texttt{<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mal:@field(DOCID+@lit(d2102600))>}. \\
\textsuperscript{55} Elihu B. Washburne to Ulysses S. Grant, January 8, 1863, in The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, vol. 7, n55-56. \\
\textsuperscript{56} Congressional Globe, 37th Cong., 3rd sess., January 5, 1863, pt. 1: 184. \\
\textsuperscript{57} Ash, 522. \\
\textsuperscript{58} Congressional Globe, 37th Cong., 3rd sess., January 9, 1863, pt. 1: 245.
He told the others, “there is no excuse for General Grant for issuing the order,” and it was “incumbent on this Senate. . .to pass the resolution, and let General Grant and all other military commanders know that they are not to encroach upon the rights and privileges of the peaceable loyal citizens of this country.” Republican Senators Daniel Clark of New Hampshire, Henry B Anthony of Rhode Island, Henry Wilson of Massachusetts, and John P. Hale of New Hampshire then made sure that Powell would not succeed. Clark moved that the resolution be “indefinitely postponed,” and Wilson, though he did not approve of the order, seemed satisfied that Lincoln had rescinded it: “[T]here it seems to me the matter may rest,” he wrote. In the end, the Senate, like the House of Representatives, tabled the resolution by a large margin of 30 to 7, and punted the issue to the press.

**Opposition to and Support of the Order’s Revocation**

Jewish periodicals also reacted to the discrimination of General Orders Number 11 even after Lincoln had revoked it and permitted the Jews of the affected areas to return home. Writers to *The Occident* had much to say about the Congressional proceedings regarding the censure of General Grant. Some Jews remained angry that Congress had placed the needs of the military over the injustice that had occurred. Isaac Leeser, the editor of *The Occident*, asked if the Jews deserved to be treated with medieval cruelty and banished at the pleasure of an irresponsible military despot? Irresponsible we say, because neither the Senate nor House of Representatives will even censure him, as though the safety of the country depended on the retention of the general of the Thirteenth Army Corps.”

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Others felt that the violation of civil liberties and the way in which certain members of Congress had used the Jews for political gain had done more to hurt the country than the effect the censure would have had on Grant’s military successes. The *Jewish Record* made very clear that the issue was not “how much or how little Gen. Grant is worth to the Union cause; but it is, how much civil and religious liberty are worth to the republic. If the military services of a general are to outweigh the privileges accorded to us by the Constitution and the Laws, it is time that we knew it.”\(^62\) A writer in the *Jewish Messenger* even warned his fellow Jews that they were “being *used by designing politicians* for partisan, unpatriotic ends. . .shall we, the loyal Israelites of the United States, permit ourselves to be made tools of -- we mean what we say -- by men who have no love for us, no love for the Union, no respect for constitutional government?”\(^63\) Others addressed the actions of Grant himself. Businessman W.B. Hackenburg of Philadelphia, also writing in *The Occident*, declared that the “order shows upon its face the biased opinions of General Grant.”\(^64\) One editorial in the *Jewish Messenger* went as far as to call Grant “a marked man,”\(^65\) and another asked if Jews should “permit ourselves to be made tools of. . .by men who have no love for us, no love for the Union, no respect for constitutional government?”\(^66\) The *Jewish Record* even called Grant, “the lineal descent of Haman.”\(^67\) Angry, the *Jewish Chronicle and Hebrew Observer*, a London-based paper, declared that many of the Jews had come to the United States to escape the very treatment to which Grant had just subjected them:

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\(^{62}\) “The President and General Grant: What is the Jewish Vote Worth?,” *Jewish Record*, no. 19, January 16, 1863, 2.

\(^{63}\) “Grant’s Order,” *Jewish Messenger*, vol. XIII, no. 3, January 16, 1863, 20. Emphasis is in the original.


\(^{65}\) “Grant’s Order.”

\(^{66}\) Quoted in Korn 157.

\(^{67}\) “Congress and the ‘Jew,’” *Jewish Record*, no. 20, January 23, 1863, 2. According to the Book of Esther in the Bible, Haman tried to have all the Jews in Persia killed.
The United States is about the only country of the civilised [sic] globe where they [the Jews] have never experienced political oppression. It is to be hoped we shall not be being now. . . . The Jews have been treated by Christian nations in so unchristian a manner that in Europe, as is asserted of them, they have acquired the habit of thinking it right to retaliate by fraud against oppressive power. But in this country, in proportion as they have been conceded equal rights, they have become increasingly reliable. There are some of the most highly intelligent, educated, conscientious, and patriotic men among them to be found anywhere.  

A Jew, writing in the Cincinnati Daily Commercial, declared that Grant had violated the principle of equality and that he should only have punished the guilty:

Placed, by the fortune of war, at the head of a department, General Grant exiles a whole people for the crimes of a part. If the General finds any Christian Infidel, or Jew infringing on the orders or laws of his department, let him hang them, but in the name of justice, humanity and our country, in the name of every sect and sex, let him spare the innocent. There is some slight excuse for General Grant, and that is, the conduct of some Hebrews who have disgraced their country, their manhood and their religion by their disregard for orders, either military or civil, and such let him hang; a few examples would exercise a beneficial influence over others who would follow in the footsteps of those gone before.

Clearly, in their minds, the implications of General Orders Number 11 were more than just something that concerned only the Jews.

The general press also expressed outrage. It, like some of its Jewish counterparts, believed that the army should have only punished the people who had broken the law. An anonymous writer to the Philadelphia Public Ledger who signed his letter “An Indignant Israelite” expressed that “the innocent should not have been confounded with the guilty, and the edict of expulsion was therefore both unjust and irrational. . . .not to mention its being contrary to the laws of the country, which has clothes U.S. Grant with an authority of which he makes so unworthy a use.”  

The Cincinnati Commercial, a newspaper widely known to be pro-

68 Quoted in Pressler, 69.
Republican, went as far as to call the expulsion a “persecution,” and the *Louisville Journal* surmised that if this incident had been “reported to us from Turkey, Russia, Austria, or Morocco [it] would excite the indignation of every liberal man in this free land.” In this way, the *Journal* compared Grant to the leaders of Europe who had discriminated against and forced Jews out of their countries en masse. Another paper, the *Louisville Democrat*, felt that the Order was “certainly the most extraordinary, unwarrantable order we have ever heard of.” The *Mobile Advertiser and Register* compared the Jews to northern Yankees. The Southerners considered their northern counterparts to be greedy, mean, and lacking consideration for the needs of others. If even the Yankees, the paragons of rapacious and nasty people, could not stand the Jews, then, according to the *Register*, the Jews must have truly done something wrong:

> The chosen people of God. . .have been forced. . .to endure many indignities as well as oppressions; but to be treated as unworthy [of] the companionship of Yankees, is the crowning insult of all. If they can surpass the Yankees in avarice and meanness [sic], they have found a lower deep of greed and extortion than any other race under the sun. But it is a foul wrong place to place them on the same level in any respect. . .And so far as their religious creed is concerned, it is as much better than the infidelity of Yankeedom as light is to darkness.

In an almost comic way, *The New York Times* objected first to the Order’s “atrocious disregard of the simplest rules of English composition. To be dealt harshly with is bad enough, but to be vilified in execrable English is cruel, if not unusual, punishment,” before declaring that what Grant did was “contrary to common sense and common justice.” Then the *Times* bemoaned that a country like the United States, supposedly the place one goes to find freedom, had stooped to this level. The author writes that it is “a humiliating reflection that after the progress of liberal

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71 Quoted in Korn, 154.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
74 “General Grant and the Jews,” *Mobile Advertiser and Register*, January 25, 1863, column 4, 3.
ideas even in the most despotic countries has restored the Jews to civil and social rights, as members of a common humanity, it remained for the freest Government on earth to witness a momentary revival of the spirit of medieval ages.”

In an article in The Enquirer, a Cincinnati-based newspaper, the author believed that the “offense must have been a very grave one to have justified General Grant in issuing a mandate whose effect is to set apart a whole class of citizens for opprobrium and insult.” To The Enquirer, there existed “no offense [that] can be committed by individuals which will justify the singling out of a whole class, thousands of whom are honored and esteemed citizens, for condemnation and disgrace.”

Some went beyond just writing articles or letters in newspapers and other publications. The St. Louis chapter of B’nai B’rith, a national Jewish philanthropic organization, sent President Lincoln a resolution they had drawn up protesting General Orders Number 11. Written in “the name of that Class of loyal citizens. . .in the name of hundreds, who have been driven from their homes, deprived of their liberty and injured in their property without having violated any law or regulation,” it asked that the President “annul [sic]” the Order and to “protect the liberties even of your humblest Constituents.”

The Board of Delegates of American Israelites similarly condemned Ulysses S. Grant’s actions in a formal resolution. In it, they “protest[ed] against this illegal unjust and tyrannical mandate,” and declared that it was “the highest degree obnoxious to them, as it must be to all fair minded American Citizens, for the general body to be made accountable for acts of particular persons supposed to belong to their denomination, but. . .

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78 Henry Kuttner and Morris Hoffman, St. Louis B’nai B’rith to Abraham Lincoln, St. Louis, Missouri, January 5, 1863, in Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress, transcribed and Annotated by the Lincoln Studies Center, (Galesburg, IL: Knox College), <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mao:@field(DOCID+@lit(d2099300))>. The emphasis is in the original.
.really professing other creeds.” Captain Philip Trounstine, of the 5th Ohio Cavalry, even resigned his commission in protest against General Orders Number 11. In his letter of resignation, he wrote, “whether fortunately or unfortunately born of Jewish parents. . .my feelings. . .were both deeply hurt and wounded” as a result of the Order. He proclaimed that he cannot help feeling, that as I owe filial affection to my parents, Devotion to my Religion, and a deep regard for the opinion of my friends and feeling that I can no longer, bear the Taunts and malice, of those to whom my religious opinions are known, brought on by the effect that, that order has instilled into their minds.

Though the message of Trounstine and the other Jews that had spoken out in the press was perfectly clear, other opinions circulated among the American masses.

In fact, the issuance of General Orders Number 11 allowed the people to voice indigenous anti-Jewish sentiment. As among some members of Congress, Grant had the support of many people in the country. Methodist minister William G. “Fighting Parson” Brownlow, the editor of the Whig, a periodical that based in Knoxville, Tennessee, proclaimed that it was “useless to disguise the fact that nineteen out of every twenty cases brought to light of all this smuggling turns out to be the work of certain circumcised Hebrews.” Brownlow seems to have vehemently supported Grant’s decision not just because of the economic benefits, but also because of some of the parson’s personal prejudices. An article in the Washington Chronicle, published by John W. Forney, Secretary of the Senate, blamed the Jews for what had happened. Calling the Jews “scavengers and pioneers of commerce,” the author declared that “[w]henever great risk promises great profit a Jew will venture.” He wrote that

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79 Myer J. Isaacs, Board of Delegates of American Israelites to Abraham Lincoln, January 8, 1863, in Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress, transcribed and Annotated by the Lincoln Studies Center, (Galesburg, IL: Knox College), <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mal:@field(DOCID+@lit(d2108900))>.  
81 Quoted in Evans, Judah P. Benjamin, 208.  
82 Korn, 152.
it is the universal opinion of army correspondents and all who had opportunities for extensive observation, that the Jewish peddlers who set up independent travelling sutlers’ stalls in every town and village where the army makes a halt, and scour the country, both within and without the pickets, with their wares, purchase immunity and toleration from each side, by giving all the information the [sic] possess about military movements on the other.  

The author even admitted that he was “glad to see that [the Order] has been rescinded. . .but it is right that the people should understand that, if there was no good reason, there was, at least, some excuse for its promulgation.” The Democratic Enquirer castigated its Jewish readers for “the vicious character of their politics,” and that “they are mostly of the party that has Lincoln of its leader,” before quickly adding that the expulsion was “a wrong and cruelty which military and civil despotism can alone be guilty of.” The Washington Chronicle portrayed General Grant as infallible. They wrote that they believed “that in this, as in every other military act, he has consulted his better genius, which has thus far outstripped all the calculations of military science.” To them, Grant was “worth more to the cause than the votes of the whole Jewish nation resident in our midst.” Grant’s importance to the cause soon became apparent when the Republican Party nominated Ulysses S. Grant for the Presidency, and this debate became more than just a fight for rights; it became a fight for the White House itself.

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84 Ibid.
85 Quoted in Korn, 154.
86 Quoted in Korn, 152.
CHAPTER 3: REPUBLICANS, DEMOCRATS, AND JEWS

The Election of 1868 and Ulysses S. Grant’s Jewish Opposition

Though the Civil War had ended in 1865, the political parties continued to face off not just regarding economic issues, but also over those concerning the war and Reconstruction\(^1\). During the Election of 1868, the Republican platform supported giving blacks the right to vote in the South, but agreed to allow northern states to decide for themselves whether to do so as well. Democrats wanted all the states to be able to regulate suffrage, rather than just the northern states. The Republican Party opposed using greenbacks, or paper money, to redeem U.S. bonds, while the Democratic platform supported it. Republicans also favored a Radical Reconstruction policy, while the Democrats wanted to restore the Southern states to their condition from before the war and amnesty for any past offenses.\(^2\) Additionally, since Abraham Lincoln had been a Republican, his party was perceived as the one that won the war and reunited the country. Such an argument left the Democratic candidate at a great disadvantage for he seemed disloyal and unpatriotic by going up against the victorious party of the North. These issues all played a key role in deciding who would win the election, but they were not the only ones to cause some debate among voters.

The controversy surrounding the issuance of General Orders Number 11 resurfaced in 1868 when Ulysses S. Grant ran for President. The idea that a “Jewish vote” existed for which candidates could compete made an appearance just as it had during the previous election. Los Angeles, California, which had a significant Jewish population at that time (according to the Los

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\(^1\) The rebuilding of the economic and social structures of the southern United States under the rule of the U.S. Army.

Angeles Census of 1870, almost six percent of the population was Jewish, turned into a hotbed of competition between Republican candidate Ulysses S. Grant and his opponent, Democratic Governor Horatio Seymour of New York. According to historian and writer Norton B. Stern, the majority of regional newspapers sided with the Jews in the general public discussion of General Orders Number 11, and that “not one of them [in the West] has defended General Grant as far as heard from.”

When, during the Election of 1868, many Jews called for their co-brethren to vote for Seymour, the local Republican press tried to influence Los Angeles Jewry to vote for Grant and the Republicans. This implies that the Republicans had some sense that the Jews did not speak with one voice when it came to electoral politics and saw an opportunity to recruit more Jewish voters. In August of 1868, the Los Angeles Republican charged that

the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, whose composition was strongly Democratic, acting as a board of equalization, had reassessed the property belonging to Los Angeles Jews, assigning higher valuations to that property, so that Jews would have to pay higher taxes; and, conversely, that the reassessments of non-Jewish citizens were increased at a lesser rate.

In this manner, the Republicans made the Democrats seem as though they discriminated against Jews by making them pay higher taxes. As a result of this apparent injustice, the Republicans hoped that the Jews would not vote for their supposedly bigoted opponents. The Los Angeles News contradicted the Republican’s charge, calling it “senseless as well as false,” and noted, if the supervisors had, in fact, tried to manipulate the voters in this manner, that they had tainted “their souls with perjury for the purpose of oppressing one portion of the community and

5 Ibid, 181.
favoring another.”

Despite such harsh language, the News continued to maintain that the charges had no factual basis:

For example Abel Stearns [a prominent Anglo and one of the largest landowners in Southern California] of this city, was raised near $70,000 over and above his property valuation as the same stood upon the assessment roll, being a much larger sum than the aggregate of the amount augmented upon the list of every Hebrew in the county. Every large land owner in the county had his property valuation augmented by the board of equalization, among whom we find the names of Abel Stearns, Hon. John G. Downey, John Rolland, Frank Temple, Henry Dalton, Emanuel Dominguez, Mr. Bixby [all prominent, well known gentiles] and others.

The next day, Herman W. Hellman, a businessman in Los Angeles and an important member of the Jewish community, responded in an editorial in the Star:

Friend Hamilton: In the last issue of the Los Angeles Republican, I find an editorial speaking against the present Board of supervisors in regard to taxing Jewish business houses more than any other class. Allow me to say, as one of those alluded to in the Republican, the article was entirely uncalled for; the editor of the Republican thinking thereby to get Jewish merchants of this place to go for his pet, Gen. Grant. But you may be rest assured that I, for one, the Republican did not change; and be assured again, there are a good many more like me.

It seems that certain Jews knew that the Republicans tried to trick them into voting for Grant, and would not change their minds when they went to vote on Election Day. While a “Jewish vote” likely did not exist, politicians on both sides of the aisle clearly tried to persuade as many Jews as possible to support their respective party.

This battle continued on in newspapers and periodicals, many of which advocated for Seymour or told its readers why they should not vote for the Republicans, and, most of all, to avoid supporting Ulysses S. Grant. According to the Jewish Chronicle, 300,000 Jewish votes were up for grabs, and Democrats wanted to get as much support as possible.

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6 Quoted in Stern, 181-182.
7 Quoted in Stern, 182.
8 Ibid.
9 Joakim Isaacs, 7.
opinionated Isaac Mayer Wise did not hesitate to publish his beliefs. Before Grant even became the Republican nominee, Wise, a rabbi and leader in the Jewish community, wrote that he considered it “our [the Jews’] duty to oppose him and the party nominating him,” and that “Worse than General Grant none in this nineteenth century in civilized countries has abused and outraged the Jews, officially, in broad daylight and most barbarously.”

He felt that

As a Jew, we can not and will not vote for a man who has done us a more shameless injustice than any man in power, in this century, has done us in any civilized country. Therefore we hope and expect the entire Jewish press will come out boldly and justly against the movement to nominate General Grant as President of the United States. Again, as a citizen who loves his country and her free institutions who considers it his solemn duty to protect justice and freedom as much as it may be in his power, we can not and must not entrust the banner of justice and freedom to the hands of a man who, when possessing the brief power of a commander of a volunteer army (and among them thousands of Jews) abused it so outrageously and trampled upon his fellow-citizens because they were too weak to resist. That man, in our estimation, is unfit to be the chief of a republic whose citizens claim equal justice and equal freedom.

To Wise, the question was “how many honest, liberty and justice-loving citizens will cast their votes for a man who has proved that by that act [issuing General Orders No. 11] that he respected not the rights of the citizens, the demands of justice and humanity, when he was clad even with brief and limited power.” While Wise normally remained neutral during elections by not endorsing any candidate, he told his readers that the Israelite could not do so in this situation and denounced the nomination of Grant:

Having left our home and position in Europe, because we longed after freedom, we can not and will not yield to a man who has outraged us before the world, without having done all in our power to defeat the man who, in our estimation, is unfit to stand at the head of the republic, because he proved how little regard he paid to justice and republicanism.

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11 Wise, “Brevities,” February, 28, 1868, 4. The parenthetic comment is in the original.
Wise believed that “General Grant had no more right to issue that sweeping order, and is no more justifiable than the Mayor of Cincinnati would be, in proposing to banish all the Roman Catholics from this city, because he found some offender charged before the courts of justice belonging to that denomination.”\textsuperscript{14}

Another Jew, going only by the name P. H. von Bort, published a pamphlet entitled “General Grant and the Jews” (See Figure 5 on page 88) in which he scolds Grant for his actions, and tells others why he would not make a good president. Though qualified militarily and viewed as a hero for overthrowing “the rebellion,” Bort claimed that the General provided no other evidence of his capabilities leaving only General Orders Number 11 to serve “as the real expression of your innermost nature, as the true reflection of your soul.”\textsuperscript{15} He confessed that he was “at a loss for expressions properly to characterize your conduct in this affair, and we do not know whether to be more astounded at the ignorance, the injustice or the cruelty which manifests itself in your edict of 17\textsuperscript{th} December, 1862.”\textsuperscript{16} Clearly enraged by what Grant did, Bort, invoking the idea that the Jews will all vote as one, wrote, “As a CLASS, you have stigmatized and expelled us! As a CLASS, we rise up and vote against you, like one man!”\textsuperscript{17} Threatening the Republican candidate, he declared, “We are numerous, we are influential, we are wealthy, we are diffused over the whole continent, we are as one family; wherever our influence reaches, every Jew -- no matter of what political party -- every Jew, with the votes he can command, will endeavor to defeat, and with God’s blessing, will defeat you!”\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{14} “The General Grant Question,” \textit{The Israelite}, vol. 14, no. 49, 4.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, 11.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid, 16.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 11. The emphasis is in the original.
Jewish newspapers, such as the *Hebrew Leader* of New York and the *Hebrew Observer* of San Francisco, voiced their own concerns about candidate Grant. The *Leader* declared that the Jews could not “ignore the importance which attaches to the political actions of so large a body of citizens of this country as is comprised in the Hebrew brotherhood and for the balance of power held by us we are to account to future ages.”\(^{19}\) They, “as American citizens, loyal patriotic and devoted ‘to the death’ to the preservation of our great Magna Charter -- the Constitution. . .have judged Gen. Grant and the Republican party, and the verdict is, ‘found wanting.’”\(^{20}\) According to these newspapers, it would have been foolish for Grant to ignore the complaints of the Jews, and, as a result, he lacked the necessary qualifications to be president.

After the election, the *Leader* assured its readers that it could not have ignored the issue:

> Had we kept aloof from the contest we would not have expressed the sentiments of our co-religionists, and our silence as the leading journal on this continent, devoted to the interests of American Israelites, would have led the country to imagine that the Hebrews did not look upon Grant as the Torquemada of the 18\(^{th}\) century, but that they sanctioned and approved his “General Order.”\(^{21}\)

The *Observer* completely rejected Ulysses S. Grant and called on their readers to support his opponent. A writer then proclaimed, “Had the order affected the Presbyterians or the Roman Catholics, we would have expected the members of all other denominations, not as members of different churches, but as citizens, to oppose the election of such a man.”\(^{22}\)

A similar sentiment appeared in some secular newspapers in articles written by Jews and non-Jews alike. In January of 1868, the *New York Herald*, a leading Democratic newspaper, stated that one thing was certain: “that against General Grant every influence of money and votes

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\(^{19}\) “A Political Suggestion,” *Hebrew Leader*, September 4, 1868, 4.


\(^{21}\) “A Word After the Fight,” *Hebrew Leader*, November 13, 1868, 4. Tomás de Torquemada was an inquisitor of the Spanish Inquisition known for his campaign against the Jews and Muslims who had continued to secretly practice their religion despite “converting” to Catholicism.

\(^{22}\) “That No. 11 Order,” *Hebrew Observer*, July 24, 1868, 4.
that can be controlled by the Hebrew race in the United States will be put forth with acrimonious activity; and their power is by no means to be despised.”

The *Hinds County Gazette* of Mississippi warned, “The Israelites are a powerful element, and an influential class in this country; nor will ‘the chosen people’ be likely to forget the would-be Dictator [Grant], in his present efforts to establish a congressional oligarchy and military despotism over the people.”

A large group of Jews even wrote a letter to the *St. Louis Republican* protesting the election of Ulysses S. Grant. Signed by Sol. Marx, L. M. Hellman, M. Langedorf, S. Caro, Joseph Davis, J. Meyberg, Wm. Keller, A. Samuels, M. J. Steinberg, M. Woerner, and two hundred others, the supplicants asked only for equal rights under the law for all citizens. They understood that some Jews did break the law, but did not think it right to punish an entire group of people for the crimes of a few of them:

> but to officially brand with disgrace and infamy a whole nation on account of the transgressions of a few single persons -- transgressions that had almost ceased to be considered a sin, because practiced on the largest scale by both civil and military officers, and to designate the Israelites as “a class,” to be arrested unceremoniously wherever found, whether violators of law or not -- this will appear to us as if the semi-barbarian middle ages were about to be inaugurated again under the suspicions[ sic] of General Grant. . . .there will be as few Israelite votes cast for General Grant next November as he had occasion to make arrests under his infamous order.

Another letter of protest in the same newspaper presented the idea that these Jews were “not speaking from a party point of view, because some of us [Jews] belong to the Radical, some to the Conservative, and again some to the Democratic party.” These writers claim that they “all agree that the doctrine of equal rights for all citizens, and general, perfect and unlimited freedom of conscience should be kept sacred by all, and that, moreover, a man who aspires for the Chief

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23 Quoted in “Candidate Grant and the Jews,” 7.
24 “In December, 1862. . .,” *Hinds County Gazette*, issue 25, March 20, 1868, column B.
Magistracy of the United States should be far, far above suspicion regarding it.”  

While all Jews did not necessarily hold the same political beliefs, they believed in the same values that had Grant violated when he issued the Order. The New York World called General Orders Number 11 “the brutal order which expelled hundreds of inoffensive Jewish citizens who were peacefully attending to their own affairs miles away from the scene of the conflict” and called on the Jews and all Americans to act against Grant. The Cincinnati Enquirer and Examiner declared that they did not oppose the former General for political reasons, but because he was “a man who has destroyed one of the foundations of religious liberty. . . .we are determined to stand up like men for the true principles of a free government, even against the subjugator of the Southern armies.”

Some newspapers tried to come up with reasons for why Ulysses S. Grant disliked the Jews enough to have issued the Order. The Tri-Weekly Charleston Courier and the Chicago Tribune both alluded to an incident in which a Jew cheated Grant. In the Courier, this supposed merchant dealt in cotton, and the Tribune cited a man named Rosenthal who dealt in pork. Regardless of the business, the two accounts agree that the merchant cheated Grant, “[a]nd this is undoubtedly the whole cause of the expulsion of the Jews from his camp.” The Courier even went as far as to say “that he [Grant] within that hour [of realizing he had been duped] issued the

26 St. Louis Republican, quoted in “General Grant and the Israelites,” The Daily News and Herald (Savannah, Georgia), vol. 4, no. 142, June 18, 1868, column A.
27 New York World, quoted in “Candidate Grant and the Jews,” 7.
28 To the Israelites of the United States,” Enquirer and Examiner, July 31, 1868.
29 “Why Grant Issued His Orders Against the Jews—He Thought One-Eighth Was Greater Than One-Fourth,” Charleston Courier, January 28, 1868, column D.
30 Chicago Tribune, quoted in “Why Grant Dislikes the Jews,” Daily Arkansas Gazette, vol. 49, no. 155, June 10, 1868, column B.
31 “Why Grant Dislikes the Jews.”
order expelling all Jews from the lines, and to this day has never forgiven the entire race for his own stupidity.”

The Democratic press even got creative and published the following poem with their version of the facts. In it, they blamed Jesse Root Grant’s dealings with the Mack Brothers for the expulsion:

Who drove the Hebrews from his Camp  
Into the Alligator swamp  
Where everything was dark and damp?  
Ulysses  
Who wrothy at those faithless Jews  
Who kept “pa’s” share of Cotton dues,  
All further permits did refuse?  
Ulysses  
Who licensed chaps that would divide  
With father Jesse, Argus-eyed,  
Who claimed the hair and eke the hide?  
Ulysses

While some may have believed that Grant disliked Jews because one cheated him, poems such as this perpetuated the idea that he had issued the Order to hurt his father.

A few Jewish groups met with the intention of denouncing the Republican candidate and supporting Seymour. In June of 1868, about two hundred “prominent and influential” Jews in St. Louis, Missouri, published “a strong protest against the election of Gen. Grant. Israelites of all parties, Democrats, Conservatives, and Republicans, join in it.” The following month, “a large and enthusiastic meeting of the Israelites of Memphis” took place for the purpose of issuing a resolution declaring Grant “unfit for the high position to which he aspires, and incapable of

32 “Why Grant Issued His Orders…”
34 “Gen. Grant and the Israelites,” *Hinds County Gazette* [Mississippi], vol. 24, no. 41, July 10, 1868, column G.
administering the laws to all classes with impartiality and without prejudice.”

Similarly, the Jews in Nashville gathered together and issued their own resolution stating that they would “not support U.S. Grant, the man who, when in brief authority, sought to degrade us, and thereby bearing insults on a people who have always been law-abiding and an honor to their adopted country,” and then “ask all Israelites in the State, be they Democrats or Republicans, to cast their vote for Seymour and [Francis Preston] Blair [Seymour’s running mate], and thereby assist the great Democratic party to defeat our enemy, the ‘valiant captain.’”

### Republican Allies and Election Results

Yet, Ulysses S. Grant and the Republicans had their own friends helping them out during the Election of 1868, including some notable Jews. In June of 1868, Francis Lieber, a jurist and political philosopher, wrote to Grant encouraging him by notifying him “[t]he German Republicans are very earnest, very active, and very liberal, in the present election movement. . .the President [of the German Republicans] Dr Jacobi, is a Jew, and I believe Dr Schuetz, the Charim of Ex Com. is also one. Whether he is a Jew or not, he is a most excellent man and ardent Republican.”

Simon Wolf, an author and a lawyer, was also “one of the warmest and ablest supporters of President Grant.” In a letter he wrote to the Boston Transcript, Wolf defended the Civil War General and his issuance of General Orders Number 11: “the order was ill-worded, but that is no reason why American citizens should be betrayed from their allegiance

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to principles, and turn to a party that advocates the reverse of what is right and true.” He claimed,

I know General Grant and his motives, have corresponded with him on this very subject, and assert unhesitatingly that he never intended to insult any honorable Jew; that he never thought of their religion; that the order was simple directed “against certain evil-designing persons, who respected neither law nor order, and who were endangering the morale of the army”. . . . the order never harmed me -- never harmed any-one, not even in thought, except those whom we as Jews despise and hold in contempt.39

In a letter to a newspaper, Benjamin G. Goldberg of New York City also asked that other Jews support Grant. He justified that the General, “whilst he was manfully fighting for his country, made one mistake, and now that mistake, that single fault, is seized upon by the enemies of peace and friends of rebellion, to prejudice the Israelites against him and the great party he now leads.” Goldberg pleaded that the Jews “look beyond this single act, and weigh the good deeds of this man and his party against this single fault. . . . Who amongst us, is perfect? He that is without a fault let him speak.”40 Mr. Isidor Bush of New York, also a Jew and a Republican, ultimately decided to vote for Grant, but regretted that “the Republican party did not nominate some other good man for the Presidency, but his attachment to principles, his love of country, and his regard for future peace and happiness are far greater than his resentment of the insult by that order.”41 David Eckstein, also a Grant supporter, wrote that he felt “confident that a reaction in favor of the General would eventually take place, especially on the part of all Jews who have formerly been and still remain republicans.” After hearing an explanation of General Orders Number 11 directly from Grant himself, Eckstein believed that it was

39 Wolf, 69-70. The emphasis is in the original.
41 “A Vote for Grant,” Hebrew Observer, October 13, 1868, 1.
sufficient to remove and obliterate every vestige of objection against him on the part of every fair-minded and reasonable Israelite, and would impel them to a still more hearty support of the party which put the General in nomination, unless he were an Israelite who never acted and does not now sympathize with the republican party and its principles.  

Though the Democratic press tried their hardest to appeal to the Jews as a whole, Eckstein clearly agreed with the idea that voting would occur as it had in the past: along party lines.

Non-Jewish Republicans also wrote articles encouraging Jews and other Americans to vote for Grant. The Cleveland Daily Herald called the Democrats’ version of the story “slander,” and accused them of “carefully” suppressing the facts “to create a prejudice against General Grant in the minds of our fellow citizens of Hebrew descent.” In another article, the Herald quotes the Jewish Messenger, proclaiming that the Jews had minds of their own, and would vote for the best candidate rather than the one who Isaac Mayer Wise, i.e. a minister or rabbi, hand-picked:

> Israelis are too intelligent and too self-asserting to be driven or led by their ministers, especially in matters that have no connection with religion. Much less can they be influenced as a body by aspiring politicians, who care for them only as so many votes secured, or as so much capital made for man rather than for principles.

A man named S. Straus wrote to the Pittsburgh Gazette with a similar idea: “every honorable, honest and loyal Israelite will work heart and soul for the success of the Republican ticket, as we do not vote for men, but for principle.”

A few vocal Jews contributed their own beliefs in favor of Ulysses S. Grant for the sake of the country. For these men, being an American and doing what was best for the United States

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43 “General Grant and the Jews,” Cleveland Daily Herald, no. 135, June 5, 1868, column C.
44 “Grant and the Israelites,” Jewish (N.J.) Messenger, June 5, 1868, quoted in Cleveland Daily Herald, no. 140, June 11, 1868, column F. The emphasis is in the original.
45 “The Israelites and General Grant,” Pittsburgh Gazette, June 15, 1868, quoted in Cleveland Daily Herald, no. 151, June 24, 1868, column F.
after the country had almost fallen to pieces was more important than a single incident that had been quickly resolved. One Jewish man wrote a piece in the *Illinois State Zeitung* informing the public that he held his religion sacred and followed all the traditions, “But it is different when I take a ballot in order to exercise my rights as a citizen. Then I am not a Jew, but I feel and act as a citizen of the republic.” While he did not go as far as to say that Grant has done nothing wrong (“If anyone insults or maltreats me, I do not take it quietly like a sheep”), this writer proclaimed that Grant

is the best man for the Americans, he is the best man for us Israelites despite General Order No. 11. . .it is natural that the Israelite should be in the field again during the present campaign. But it should display the old Democratic flag, the American national one, and not a foreign one, the banner of Juda.46

Josiah Cohen, a part-time rabbi from Pittsburgh, wrote to the *Pittsburgh Chronicle* that he had always agreed with the Republican platform and believed its policies were the best for the country. While he called the Order “unjust,” he wrote that “it sinks into atomic insignificance when compared with the life of this Government. . . .I shall, therefore, vote the Republican ticket. . .however much I may object to the leader of the banner of those principles by virtue of the prejudice shown to the Jews in his peculiar order.”47 Noah Green, called by the *New York Herald*, “a leading Israelite of Keokuk Iowa,” also spoke up for the Republican Party. In his letter to the paper, he asked patriotic Jews not “to love Grant, but to love their race; to vote for Grant, not for his sake, but for the triumph of the idea of justice. For my part, if a man had spit into my face publicly, if he had kicked me, if I afterwards by voting for him could serve liberty and justice, I would do it.”48

46 “Grant and the Israelites,” *Illinois State Zeitung*, July 13, 1868, quoted in *Milwaukee Sentinel*, August 7, 1868, column D.
47 Quoted in Korn, 161.
48 Quoted in Korn, 161.
Myer S. Isaacs, editor of the *Jewish Messenger*, insisted that no “Jewish vote” existed, and that Jews would vote based on their ideals and beliefs as Americans, not Jews. In his periodical, he proclaimed that “The Hebrew citizens of this republic are not to be dragooned or made tools of for political uses. They are not a compact body, for political purposes.” Isaacs assured his readers, in addition to the American public, that “There is no national Hebrew vote. . . . Hebrews will work, and talk, and vote, precisely according to their convictions as citizens, and in no respect will their political action be dependent upon their religious character as a body.” He wrote, “If Israelites are disinclined to support a candidate like Grant, they exercise their suffrages as American citizens and not as Hebrews. . . . Judaism has nothing in common with partisan politics.”

Though not a large portion of the population, the Jews seemed to be a significant voting bloc during the election, regardless of the candidate for whom they would vote. The *New York Times* claimed that Illinois had “not less than 30,000 Jewish voters and Indiana at least 15,000.” In Washington, D.C., the *Daily National Intelligencer* predicted the Jewish vote in Pennsylvania to not “less than twenty thousand. In Indiana, it is ten thousand; in Ohio, fifteen thousand.” Based on their estimates and assuming that there would be a regular increase in turnout, they predicted that the Democrats would win 10,000 votes in Pennsylvania, 5,000 in Indiana, and 7,000 in Ohio if the minimum number of Jews came out to vote. However, if just one-third of those who had voted Republican now rejected Grant in the upcoming election, the

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49 “Hebrew Politics,” *Jewish Messenger*, May 15, 1868, 4. Emphasis is in the original.
50 “Grant and the Israelites,” *Jewish Messenger*, June 5, 1868, 4. Emphasis is in the original.
52 “General Grant and the Jewish Element,” *Daily National Intelligencer* [Washington, D.C.], vol. 68, no. 17,524, October 26, 1868, column D.
53 “General Grant and the Jewish Element.”
same newspaper predicted that even more Jews would support Seymour; that he would get 20,000 Jewish votes in Pennsylvania, 14,000 in Indiana, and 15,000 in Ohio.\(^{54}\)

Though the Democrats seemed certain they would win, Republican candidate Ulysses S. Grant would become the next President of the United States. Grant won the electoral vote in a landslide with 214 to Seymour’s 80. In the popular vote, the Republican won a little more than 3,000,000, about 450,000 of which were “Negro votes.” Estimates put Seymour’s “Negro votes” at around 50,000, indicating that the popular majority was heavily dependent on “Negro suffrage,” and that Grant would not have won if the former slaves had not been permitted to vote.\(^{55}\)

It is impossible to know for whom the Jews voted in the Election of 1868, but the evidence indicates that they did not vote as a bloc. Historian Norton B. Stern believes that most of the Jews in Los Angeles supported Seymour based on the well-known Democratic orientation of most Jewish residents. Specifically in Los Angeles County, Seymour received 1,236 votes to 748 for Grant, and, in the city of Los Angeles, 590 for Seymour and 444 for Grant.\(^{56}\) However, since the former general won nearly every state in the Union, it is safe to assume that there was no unanimity in Jewish voting patterns. Jews probably voted along party and regional: the Jews who identified as Democrats, mostly from the south, probably voted for the Democratic

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\(^{54}\) “General Grant and the Jewish Element.”

\(^{55}\) Malone, 285. Democrats had wanted each state to have the right to decide how to regulate suffrage, while the Republicans only wanted to permit the northern, or “loyal,” states to have this right. The issue became moot after the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which prohibits denial of suffrage based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude, making “negro” suffrage irrevocable.

\(^{56}\) Stern, 184-185.
candidates, and the Jews who identified as Republicans, mostly from the north, probably voted for the Republican candidates.\textsuperscript{57}

\textbf{After the Election}

After the Election of 1868, the newspapers published Ulysses S. Grant’s own explanation of the events surrounding the issuance of General Orders Number 11. Responding to a letter from a disgruntled Jew named I. N. Morris, Grant declared,

\textit{I do not pretend to sustain the order}. At the time of its publication I was, incensed by a reprimand received from Washington for permitting acts which Jews within my lines were engaged in. There were many other persons within my lines equally bad with the worst of them, but the difference was that the Jews could pass with impunity from one army to the other, and gold, in violation of orders, was being smuggled through the lines, at least so it was reported. The order was issued and sent without any reflection and without thinking of the Jews as a sect or race to themselves, but simply as persons who had successfully (I say successfully, instead of persistently, because there were plenty of others within my lines who envied their success) violated an order, which greatly inured to the help of the rebels… I have no prejudice against sect or race, but want each individual to be judged by his own merit. Order No. 11 does not sustain this statement, I admit, but then I do not sustain that order. It never would have been issued if it had not been telegraphed the moment it was penned, and without reflection.\textsuperscript{58}

While General Orders Number 11 came up again during the Election of 1872 when Grant ran for reelection, he did not mention the Order again, not even in his memoirs. His son, after asking his father why he did not include this Order in his memoirs, claims that Ulysses S Grant “replied that that was a matter long past and best not referred to.”\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{57} Certain states, such as Texas, Mississippi, and Virginia, were still under martial rule (Reconstruction) from when the Civil War ended in 1865. As such, the residents of these states were not permitted to participate in the election.  
\textsuperscript{58} “Gen Grant’s Jew Order,” \textit{New York Times}, November 30, 1868, 2. The emphasis is in the original.  
\textsuperscript{59} Frederick D. Grant to Isaac Markens, Governor’s Island, New York, December 8, 1907, quoted in Markens, 16.
CHAPTER 4: ULYSSES S. GRANT: FRIEND OR FOE?

While other anti-Jewish incidents occurred in the country during the Civil War era, General Orders Number 11 stands out in the history of the United States. It does not really matter now what Ulysses S. Grant believed about the Jews, the perception of many Jews, Congressmen, journalists, and voters had an impact on an election, and had the potential to change the results. The examination of the evidence of whether this man, soldier, and politician disliked Jews provides a deeper look not just into Grant himself, but the ways in which the public’s perception of him shaped governing and the country at large.

Grant: A Hero Among Jews

While General Orders Number 11 appears to be blatantly anti-Jewish, this does not automatically implicate Ulysses S. Grant as an anti-Semite. Primarily, the Order targets Jews “as a class,” which is an economic classification.\(^1\) In this way, it affirms that in the nineteenth century, the image of the Jew was an economic one. Religion played almost no role in the Order, nor did race, which would become the central feature of late nineteenth-century and twentieth-century European anti-Jewish hatred. According to historian Derek J. Penslar, this kind of prejudice has its roots in theology, but grew out of specific social realities. Economic themes have gradually worked their way into anti-Semitic discourse, particularly in the rhetoric of the modern state, its ruling elites, and its acolytes. Various social and political forces pushed Jews into middle-class occupations, usually those having something to do with trade or commerce, which, in turn, resulted in certain stereotypes.\(^2\) As a result, it is possible that Grant did not

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\(^1\) Pressler, 81.
\(^2\) Penslar, 12-15.
entirely realize that he was being discriminatory by issuing the Order since it was based on an economic classification rather than an ethnic, racial, or religious one.

Additionally, as pointed out by American Jewish historian Jonathan Sarna in his upcoming book *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, Grant did a great deal for the Jews once he became President of the United States. While one may question whether he did this because the appointments made sense logically, whether they were motivated by politics and power, or whether he was trying to atone for what he had done, the fact remains that he appointed many Jews to government positions that they probably would not have held under different circumstances. President Grant nominated Simon Wolf, his loyal and enthusiastic supporter, for the position of “Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia.” Though disappointed that the president had not granted him a position in the Foreign Service (for which he had hoped), Wolf accepted the appointment and dutifully went to work “recording and preserving ‘all deeds, contracts, and other instruments in writing affecting the title or ownership of any real estate or personal property’ in the District of Columbia.” Additionally, Wolf became the primary advisor to Grant on Jewish affairs, and often intervened with the president on behalf of individual Jewish office-seekers as well as causes important to the Jewish community. No president before Grant had ever placed a Jew in such a high position of trust.

At Wolf’s request, the president appointed many more Jews to other governmental offices. David Eckstein, also an ardent supporter of Grant’s during the election, became consul at Victoria, Canada, and Nathan Newitter received a similar appointment at Osaka, Japan. President Grant appointed Charles Mayer as District Attorney for the Middle District of

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3 Jonathan Sarna, “Chapter 4,” *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, (Forthcoming), 5.
Alabama, and Jacob Sterne, a Confederate veteran, as Deputy Postmaster in Jefferson, Texas. Edward S. Salomon, Wolf’s longtime friend, was appointed governor of Washington Territory, becoming the first “identifying American Jew” to sit as governor (Salomon was forced to resign in January of 1872 as a result of a scandal in which he “borrowed” public funds). Grant also appointed Dr. Herman Bendell to be Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Arizona Territory, an ironic decision since the government maintained a Christian-based Indian policy. According to Simon Wolf, “more than fifty appointments were made by President Grant at his [Wolf’s] request.”

Grant also tried unsuccessfully to put certain Jews in positions of power. After the president’s first choice nominee got in trouble with the law, he invited banker Joseph Seligman to become Secretary of the Treasury, a position that would have made him the first Jewish cabinet member in United States history. According to Seligman’s son, “the bank needed him [Joseoph Seligman], and his brothers begged him to let politics and public office alone,” and Seligman declined the appointment. Grant offered Washington D. C. publisher and bookstore owner Adolphus S. Solomons the position of “Governor” of the District of Columbia, during the brief period when it was governed like a territory. Like Seligman, Solomons declined the position explaining that, as a religiously observant Jew, he felt “that his observance of the seventh day Sabbath would be incompatible with the duties of his office.”

5 Sarna, “4,” 8.
6 Ibid, 11. David Emanuel, who was the Governor of Georgia in 1801, never identified himself as a Jew.
7 Ibid, 12.
8 Quoted in Sarna, “4,” 8.
9 Quoted in Sarna, “4”, 7.
10 In 1906, Oscar S. Straus became the first Jew to serve in an American presidential cabinet as Secretary of Commerce and Labor.
11 Quoted in Sarna, “4,” 7.
President Ulysses S. Grant also did a great deal for the Jews suffering during the pogroms in late nineteenth-century Russia. When the New York Times reported that Russia had revived “an old law limiting the residence of Jews” and that two thousand Jews were being “removed from the Bessarabian frontier” to the Russian interior, Grant was encouraged to take a stand. Powerful Jews in Western Europe, such as England’s Sir Moses Montefiore, rushed to the defense of the Jews facing expulsion, while American Jews “cheered from afar.” Simon Wolf and other Jews met with the president and begged him to help Russian Jews. They asked that he “represent to the Russian Government that this subject has been brought to the notice of the President of the United States,” and try and use his influence to have the decision to expel the Jews “revoked or modified.” Though it may not have been the best decision from a foreign policy standpoint, Grant chose to take action. The president never appealed to the Russians directly, but his ardent support of Jewish groups and strong belief in human rights clearly made an impact. While Grant’s decision to speak out probably was not the main reason, Russian authorities did postpone and then revoke their expulsion order.

President Grant also took action on behalf of Romanian Jews who faced persecution and massacres. A new conservative regime took power in 1866, which had introduced or restored measures that legalized discrimination against the Jews, encouraged mob violence, and forcibly deported thousands of Jews. Then, in 1870, pogroms broke out in Romania with renewed violence. The San Francisco Bulletin estimated “a thousand men, women, and children” had

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12 Sarna, “4,” 17.
13 Ibid.
14 Quoted in Sarna, “4,” 18.
15 Sarna, “4,” 20.
16 Ibid, 22.
been murdered,\textsuperscript{17} and the French \textit{Alliance Israelite} sent hundreds of telegrams to Jewish communities around the world asking for support for the victims of persecution in Romania.\textsuperscript{18} Once again, Simon Wolf and other leading Jews from around the country contacted their representatives and approached Grant on behalf of their Romanian co-brethren. The president paid a personal visit to the State Department and instructed Secretary of State Hamilton Fish “to obtain full and reliable information in relation to this alleged massacre, and in the meantime to do all in his power to have the [neighboring] Turkish government stop such persecution.”\textsuperscript{19} Fish did this by deciding to appoint an envoy to Eastern Europe to provide such intelligence. In 1870, thirty-five year old Benjamin Franklin Peixotto volunteered to be consul in Bucharest, a position that would have no salary, and, after getting Congressional approval, paid his own way to Romania.\textsuperscript{20} While there, Peixotto engaged in

“missionary work” for the benefit of Jews “laboring under severe oppression,” and he furthered the then novel idea in American diplomacy that the “United States knowing no distinction of her own citizens on account of religion or nativity naturally believe in a civilization the world over which will secure the same universal liberal views.”\textsuperscript{21}

When Americans had the chance to go to the polls during the Election of 1872, the Democrats did not fail to forget what had happened to the Jews under General Orders Number 11 (See Figure 6 on page 89), but some Jews had come to terms with it. Even Isaac Mayer Wise admitted that Grant had “made sufficient atonement” for the Order “had been adequately punished right after having issued it,” and that the Jews had “long ago forgiven him that blunder.”\textsuperscript{22} Similarly, the \textit{Jewish Messenger} observed that many Jews had “long forgiven the

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{17}] Quoted in Sarna, “4,” 23.
\item[\textsuperscript{18}] Sarna, “4,” 23.
\item[\textsuperscript{19}] Quoted in Sarna, “4,” 23.
\item[\textsuperscript{20}] Sarna, “4,” 30.
\item[\textsuperscript{21}] Ibid, 36.
\item[\textsuperscript{22}] Isaac Mayer Wise, \textit{The Israelite}, July 12, 1872, 8.
\end{itemize}
offender,” and had “buried their private feelings in consideration of the eminent public services of the General.”

A Jew, who signed his letter as “Abrahamite,” wrote to the *Little Rock Republican* about the Jews and how they ought to treat Grant. He wrote, “The Jews are a *thinking* people; they . . . care not what this or that partisan or partisan organ may say to bias them.” While this particular Jew did not seek to excuse what Grant had done, he proclaimed, “The Jewish creed does not encourage vendettas,” that Grant had shown impartiality as president through his “evident desire to treat all classes, all denominations, all creeds alike,” and that the president should be forgiven. Additionally, a straw poll of 53 Southern Jewish delegates to a B’nai B’rith convention found that most of them -- 45 people -- supported Grant in the Election of 1872, while only 8 supported Horace Greely, the Democratic candidate. In the end, Grant won in a landslide with the support of much of the Jewish community.

Grant also went out of his way to show his support for the Jewish community when he visited a synagogue. In the 1870s, Christian evangelicals had begun a massive campaign to “rechristianize America.” They tried doing this in multiple ways, including their advocacy of school prayer, the reading of the King James Version of the Bible, mandatory Sunday closings of businesses, and even changing the Constitution. Among evangelicals, a movement existed that promoted changing the preamble to read:

> We, the people of the United States, humbly acknowledging Almighty God as the source of all authority and power in the civil government, the Lord Jesus Christ as the Rule among nations, his revealed will as the supreme law of the land, in order to constitute a Christian government.

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24 Abrahamite, “Grant and the Jews,” *Little Rock Republican*, vol. 6, no. 138, September 14, 1872, column B.
27 Ibid.
Despite all this, in 1876 (the last year of Grant’s second term), the president attended the consecration of Adas Israel, a traditional synagogue in Washington, D.C. By doing this, by sitting in the pews with other Jews, the president made a statement about Judaism as an acceptable part of “the American religious mosaic.”

Regardless of Grant’s motivations behind these many services to the Jewish community, it seems as though he changed what many people thought of him. He made it appear as though he cared deeply for the Jews of the United States, even though the evidence indicates that he harbored certain anti-Semitic feelings. This new vision of Ulysses S. Grant came to the forefront when he died on July 23, 1885. Some Jews seemed saddened by the loss of who they thought was a great man. The Philadelphia *Jewish Record* declared, “None will mourn his loss more sincerely than the Hebrew and...every Jewish synagogue and temple in the land” would solemnly commemorate the former president, “with fitting eulogy and prayer.” Very few rabbis addressed the issue of General Orders Number 11 in their remembrances, possibly so not to remind their congregants of what had happened and besmirch the name of a man who had helped advance members of the Jewish community so much, and also because it had not made a real impact on the experiences of Jews in America. Isaac Mayer Wise, unlike some of his contemporaries, mentioned the Order, but only to declare that the Jews had “long ago forgiven him that act of injustice, and he has often repented it; and although we know that the wise also fail,” admitting that Grant had made a mistake, but also that the president was human and even the greatest of men are not perfect.

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28 Diner, 163.
29 *Jewish Record*, quoted in Jonathan Sarna, “Chapter 5,” *When Grant Expelled the Jews*, (Forthcoming), 12.
Grant: A Nativist and Anti-Semite

While Ulysses S Grant did many things for Jews as President of the United States, these only created a public image that he held no prejudices towards Jews or other people who were different from white Anglo-Saxon Protestants (such as Catholics and immigrants). It seems that to issue something with the religious undertones contained in this apparently economic Order would require something more than just a spontaneous decision. Singling out a group as Grant did, whether it was an economic or ethno-religious unit, must have originated not just in policy, but also in the personal beliefs of the man who composed the Order.

Even though Isaac Mayer Wise claimed that the Jews had forgiven Grant’s actions by the Election of 1872, certain Jews still spoke out against their president regarding what they perceived to be the anti-Semitic beliefs behind General Orders Number 11. In the Daily Arkansas Gazette, Moses Landsberg called Grant and his running mate, Senator Henry Wilson, “enemies to the Jews,” and criticized the former General for helping his father trade cotton during the Civil War. He wrote, “to remain silent is to proclaim ourselves impotent for good to those sufferers in foreign parts [Romania] who with outstretched arms cry aloud for help which we can by our suffrages in this contest in a measure tender them.” In this way, Landsberg proclaimed that if the Jews did not speak out regarding their own persecution under General Orders Number 11, then they did not truly have the capabilities to help their co-brethren who were suffering in Eastern Europe. It would have been hypocritical, according to Landsberg, to

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31 Tyler Anbinder, “Ulysses S. Grant, Nativist,” Civil War History, 43, 2 (June 1997), 120-122. Grant made certain derogatory comments about Catholics throughout his life, including the idea that the American population was “degraded” by their presence. Additionally, he did not perceive anyone who was not born in the United States as an American. Anbinder refers to an incident in which Grant complained that a foreign monopoly existed in St. Louis since half of the county officers had been born outside of the United States.


33 Landsberg.
help the Romanians, but, at the same time, ignore what had happened in their own country. Another writer, on the topic of General Orders Number 11, declared, “In the history of the terrible persecutions through which the Jews have passed, there is no chapter that records a wickeder outrage than this, for it strikes at the whole race, leaving out not one.”34 In addition to what Grant had done, this article pointed out that Wilson (the Vice Presidential candidate) had not been kind to the Jews either. While discussing Judah P. Benjamin, who, at the time, was a Senator from Louisiana, Wilson criticized Benjamin for trying to overthrow the government, and, as a Jew, for killing Jesus Christ:

His [Benjamin’s] bearing, the tone of his voice, his words, all gave evidence that the spark of patriotism, if it ever existed, was extinct in his bosom; that his heart was in this foul and wicked plot to dismember the union, to overthrow the government of his adopted country, which gives equality of rights even to that race that stoned the prophets and crucified the Redeemer of the world.35

He finished with the statement: “The Jews now have an opportunity to slay both the defamers of their race [Grant and Wilson] with one ballot.”36

Though not as obsessive as some of his contemporaries, Grant was truly a nativist who sometimes expressed resentment of immigrants and showed animus towards Catholics, in addition to Jews. In the 1850s, he joined the Order of the Star Spangled banner, an anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant group which was part of the American party, known informally as the “Know-Nothing” party. Above all, the Know-Nothings believed in restricting immigrant suffrage -- through literacy tests or increasing the waiting period before newcomers could vote to twenty-one years -- resisting Catholic demands for the establishment of state-sponsored parochial schools, the transfer of Catholic church property to the lay people “in order to avoid ‘dangerous’

34 “Wilson and Grant vs. The Jews,” The Daily Gazette [Little Rock, Arkansas], August 27, 1872, column D.
35 Ibid. The emphasis is in the original.
36 Ibid.
concentrations of wealth,” reform of naturalization laws to prevent voter fraud, and temperance.\(^{37}\)

While some politicians tried to hide their affiliation with the Know-Nothing Party years later, Grant had no problem admitting that he had been a member.\(^ {38}\) He recalled the first meeting he had attended, and, without shame, declared that he had “no apologies to make for having been one week a member of the American party; for I still think that native-born citizens of the United States should have as much protection, as many privileges in their native country, as those who voluntarily select it for a home.”\(^ {39}\) This revealed that Grant believed in the core idea of the Know-Nothing Party: that the federal government granted immigrants (many of whom were Jewish) special privileges to which native-born Americans did not have access.

While Grant may have only been a member of the Know-Nothing Party for a week, he seemed to have carried some of these beliefs with him. These ideas came to the surface again when he served as President of the United States. A group of Catholics complained that students in the public schools read from the Protestant King James Bible, sang Protestant hymns, and used textbooks tinged with anti-Catholicism. They asked that the state also finance schools for Catholics that equally reflected their values and religious practices. Protestant Americans rejected the request outright, claiming that if they had to make an exception for Catholics they would soon have to do the same for Jews, Muslims, atheists, and other religions. Rather than try to diffuse the situation, Ulysses S. Grant made matters worse by making anti-Catholic comments of his own. At a reunion of the Army of the Tennessee in Des Moines, IA, in September 1875,

\(^{37}\) Anbinder, 121. The Know-Nothing Party was staunchly anti-Catholic and wanted to avoid giving the Catholic Church too much power.

\(^{38}\) Ibid.

he asked that the North and the South work together to guard “against every enemy threatening the perpetuity of free republican institutions” and proclaimed that, if another conflict arose, the division would occur “between patriotism and intelligence on the one side, and superstition, ambition and ignorance on the other.”

He continued, resolving that the State would “support institutions of learning sufficient to afford to every child growing up in the land of opportunity a good, common school education, unmixed with sectarian, pagan or atheistical tenets.”

Then, in his state-of-the-union address in December 1875, the president reiterated his beliefs regarding public schools and warned of the dangers of “the accumulation of vast amounts of untaxed church property.”

By issuing General Orders Number 11, Ulysses S. Grant once again implicated himself as a nativist. Since the Order only affected the one religious group, it acts as evidence of Grant’s belief in nativist ideology. Additionally, the Order only targeted the Jews, and revealed Grant’s inherent bias against them. Even if he really meant merchants, his economic anti-Semitism surfaced and he isolated the Jews, not just as a religious group, but as a socio-economic class. Many historians often point to the incident with Jesse Root Grant and the Mack Brothers as the event that motivated Grant to issue the Order in the first place. They argue that he was angry at his father for trying to take advantage of the General’s position, and took his emotions out on Jesse’s partners. Again, by identifying the Macks as Jews and by targeting them as Jews, he took anti-Jewish action.

After examining what Ulysses S. Grant did for the Jews as President of the United States, it seems that he held nativist and anti-Semitic feelings, but, being a politician, he tried (not

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40 Such terms had been used by anti-Catholic zealots to describe the Catholic Church and its adherents for centuries.
41 Quoted in Anbinder, 130-131.
42 Quoted in Anbinder, 133.
always successfully) to keep them from the prying eyes of the American public. While historian Tyler Anbinder pointed out that “Grant’s words and deeds lacked the fanaticism of the period’s most ardent nativists and instead reflected the moderate but deeply ingrained nativism found throughout the United States in the Civil War era.” Anbinder still maintained that Grant was a nativist nonetheless and that his membership in the Know-Nothing Party only supports this claim. It is true that certain nativist tendencies were common among other Americans during that time (as demonstrated by the letters and writings of other men in the Union army, some of which have already been presented), but not all of them proudly admitted to being members of a party that encouraged such ideas and tried to implement them into everyday life as Grant did.

While such sentiments may have been common among some people, not all Americans felt this way. This was evident when many of the commanders serving under General Grant defied their commander and did not carry out General Orders Number 11. Also, many southern farmers of that era were far more likely to blame “big business” for their woes than the Jews. Even members of the Ku Klux Klan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries focused their anger on “the distant Jew of the Northern urban centers and felt ‘guilty and ashamed at picking on the Jews whom they had known as good neighbors all their lives.’” Such sentiments may have even paved the way for Jewish success more than Grant’s actions during his two terms as president.

Despite the evidence against the existence of a Jewish vote, the appointments and favors Ulysses S. Grant did for Jews while serving as Commander in Chief may have had political motivations. A few of the Jewish men he appointed were his friends, but many more of them

43 Anbinder, 139.
45 Forman, 5.
were his ardent supporters throughout his political career. Simon Wolf and David Eckstein both
defended Grant and his actions during the Election of 1868, and the president rewarded both of them with governmental positions. Additionally, Grant sought out wealthy Jews, such as banker Joseph Seligman, to serve their country. While president, he directed a great deal of business towards the Seligmans, and they gave Grant a job after he left office.\(^\text{46}\)

Though one could assume that the former general adhered to the classic “Spoils System” and put his friends (who happened to be Jewish) in positions in government or even that he logically chose those men who were best suited for those jobs, Grant more likely had political motivations. After raising so many Jewish men to higher statuses and helping out the Jews suffering in Eastern Europe, Grant earned the support of members of the Jewish community who had opposed him in 1868. By the time he ran for reelection in 1872, Isaac Mayer Wise, who had declared that “Worse than General Grant none in this nineteenth century in civilized countries has abused and outraged the Jews,” turned around and forgave him for General Orders Number 11.\(^\text{47}\) It may have been possible that such support would not have made a large difference in the election itself, but the Jews certainly provided financial support and were a political asset.

**A Modern Retrospective**

Modern historians have their own perspective on Ulysses S. Grant, his presidency, and his beliefs. Though beloved by many when he passed away (evident by the size of his tomb, see Figure 7 on page 90), Grant has come under attack in the twentieth century diminishing his earlier reputation and placing him among the worst of this country’s presidents. Regardless of what he did to American Jews, southerners have criticized him for his benevolent policy towards

\(^{46}\) Sarna, “5,” 2.

African Americans, others have condemned him for his manner of waging total war, and still others attacked him for his methods of restoring peace. Historians blame him for the high death rates in the Civil War, the failures of the Reconstruction period, corruption in the government, and other personal failings.

Though many failed to mention it at Grant’s funeral, historians have not overlooked General Orders Number 11 or the dark cloud that hung over him as a result of it. In his standard book of American Jewish history, Rufus Learsi [Israel Goldberg] devoted three pages to the Order, and wrote: “Although Grant gave assurances that he regretted the Order, those attempts at exculpation. . .were not convincing: the devil’s tail of politics bulged out of them only too plainly.” Even the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* confirms that, among Jews, “Grant’s name has been linked irrevocable with anti-Jewish prejudice.”

Modern Grant biographers also have their own ideas about whether or not General Ulysses S. Grant was Judeophobic. William S. McFeely concluded, “rather than attack the entire voracious horde. . .Grant singled out the Jews. . .once again a frustrated man chose the age-old scapegoat.” Similarly, Michael Korda affirmed:

Grant suffered from the subliminal anti-Semitism of most American Anglo-Saxons of his day where business affairs were concerned, and that when he lost his temper he attacked the Jews rather than his father and his in-laws -- a process we would now call “scapegoating.”

Edward Longacre vehemently claimed that the General’s anti-Semitism and xenophobia were at fault since “[i]t seems unlikely that he [Grant] ever rid himself of the notion that certain ethnic

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48 Quoted in Sarna, “5,” 23.
49 Ibid.
51 Korda, *Ulysses S. Grant*, 81.
groups tended to less than respectable behavior and were more likely than others to engage in illegal acts for personal gain.”

Still, not every historian questions Grant or his feelings towards the Jews. Some biographers have given Grant the benefit of the doubt. In his book, Grant, Jean Edward Smith wrote that the “sentiment expressed in General Orders No. 11 is consistent with a streak of nativism that ran deep in Grant,” and that “Xenophobia and anti-Semitism were prevalent throughout the United States in the 1860s, particularly in the army, and Grant shared the prevailing prejudices.” In his own book, Brooks D. Simpson even proclaimed that “Grant’s anti-Semitism, however much it may have shaped the wording of his order, did not induce him to issue it, nor was he alone in explicitly mentioning Jews in complaints about the cotton trade.” Simpson believed that the Jews’ higher rate of success that may have swayed the General to single them out.

Jonathan Sarna argues in Grant’s favor in his forthcoming study. While this respected Jewish historian understood why this man would become another villain in the Jewish saga, Sarna claimed that Grant “proved highly sensitive, even hyper-sensitive, to Jewish concerns.” While president, “[h]e came to appreciate the diversity of Jews” and “appointed more Jews to public office than any of his predecessors.” Additionally, he tried to “bring Jews (as well as Blacks) into the mainstream of American political life” and “acted to promote human rights for Jews around the world. Grant’s years in the White House, indeed, proved something of a golden age for American Jews.”

53 Smith, 226
54 Simpson, 164.
55 Sarna, “5,” 23.
While the opinions of historians mean a great deal in the study of history, in this case the examination of Ulysses S. Grant’s actions and personal papers tell a much more accurate story. Grant may have had a change of heart upon being elected President of the United States, but his earlier commitment to the Know-Nothing Party and actions as an army general point to him being a nativist and an anti-Semite. Most of the evidence lies in personal letters that he wrote assuming they would never be publicized, implying that he kept these beliefs private in an effort to preserve his public image. No one really knows the reason behind his issuance of General Orders Number 11, but the evidence of Grant’s nativist beliefs only support the notion that it was not entirely logical. Historians may never discover the true motivation, the missing piece that baffles them all. Yet the portions of the puzzle that exist show a man that wanted to win a war for his country, and did what he could to protect its interests, whether by stopping smugglers or by detaining Jews who he thought were just as dangerous.
CONCLUSION

Ulysses S. Grant was a nativist and an anti-Semite who did not publicly espouse these beliefs because of his political ambitions. His issuance of General Orders Number 11 was one time he failed to hide his real views, and it nearly threatened his career. Based on the evidence, it seems that stopping the smuggling of cotton was Ulysses S. Grant’s main motivation for issuing this order, and he had no malicious intentions at first. Merchants, soldiers, Jews, and gentiles all went back and forth across the border, illegally bringing cotton north for the factories and gold south, which the Confederate troops used to buy weapons. Additionally, Grant and other Union officials feared that vital intelligence also went north with the cotton and south with the gold, possibly giving the Confederates an advantage in the effort to fight the war. As a general in the Union army, and even more so as someone fighting for the United States, Grant only wished to prevent his enemy from obtaining the supplies they sorely needed and important information that could make defeating the Confederacy that much harder. Originally, he only wanted to do what he thought would further the Union’s cause.

Unfortunately for the victims of General Orders Number 11, Ulysses S. Grant’s underlying nativist and anti-Semitic beliefs colored his actions when he wrote the Order. Grant, who usually was more careful, failed to control his emotions regarding these cotton smugglers, and allowed his perception of the Jews as a middle class group of traders -- his economic anti-Semitism -- to guide his decision. As a result, his xenophobic beliefs became public knowledge, and his reputation became flawed both in the eyes of Jews and many other Americans.

The general eventually realized his mistake, and spent the rest of his political career trying to change the Jews’ image of him through various means. During the Election of 1868, he had a great deal of support from northern Republican Jews, most of whom seem to have been
willing to forget Grant’s wartime error in favor of Republican policies toward the contemporary national issues facing the country. Upon becoming President of the United States, Grant appointed Jewish men to a variety of governmental positions, appearing almost as a hero to the Jewish people regardless of his actual motivations for the appointments. He even visited the consecration of a synagogue, appearing to support American Jews.

In the end, this was not just about Jews; it was about politics and public perception. During the war, when the issue of the expulsion order was brought before Congress in January 1863, the Republican majority was more concerned with protecting its most successful general by not smearing his name rather than the injustice that had occurred. During the Election of 1868, the Democrats saw this particular event as an opportunity to emphasize Grant’s tarnished past and possibly convince some people not to vote for him. While some were swayed, most Jews remained faithful to their regional and political ideals. These loyalties and more pressing matters, such as Reconstruction, seem to have guided the election more than the debate over Grant’s personal beliefs.

Though General Orders Number 11 only lasted three weeks, its effects were felt beyond the Jews who had to leave their homes. It created an opportunity for powerful men to try to manipulate an election through the public’s -- and especially the Jews’ -- image of Ulysses S. Grant. For what was apparently the first time in American history, the issues of anti-Semitism and its condemnation had been raised in a presidential campaign. Although subsequently ignored in the dominant historical narrative of the nation, Grant’s noxious order and the political controversy around it during and after the Civil War should not be forgotten.
PICTURES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1.

An illustration of General Winfield Scott’s Anaconda Plan.


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Figure 2.

General U.S. Grant, three-quarter length portrait, standing, facing right, in uniform.

Figure 3.

Photographs of Ulysses S. Grant (center) and his staff: Captain Lagow (upper left), Captain Hillyer (bottom left), John A. Rawlins (upper right), and Dr. Simons (bottom right).

Figure 4.

A copy of General Orders No. 11.

Figure 5.

P.H. von Bort’s pamphlet *General Grant and the Jews*.

Figure 6.

A political cartoon from the Election of 1872 portraying Ulysses S Grant as the Merchant of Venice with the noble Shylock.

Source: Jonathan Sarna, “Chapter 4,” When Grant Expelled the Jews, (Forthcoming), 38.
Figure 7.

Military ceremonies taking place at the tomb of Ulysses S. Grant on the 100\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary of his birth; April 1922.

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