



South of the South: Jewish Activists and the Civil Rights Movement in Miami, 1945-1960 (Southern Dissent)

Raymond A. Mohl

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Using unusual and revealing primary materials from the careers of two remarkable Jewish women, Raymond Mohl offers an original interpretation of the role of Jewish civil rights activists in promoting racial change in post-World War II Miami. He describes the city's political climate after the war as characterized by segregation, aggressive anti-Semitism, and a powerful strain of cold war McCarthyism. In this hostile environment the dynamic leadership of two northern newcomers, Matilda "Bobbi" Graff and Shirley M. Zoloth, played a critical role in the city's campaign for racial reform. This analysis of the movement between 1945 and 1960 substantiates a new but now dominant interpretation of civil rights history that sees grassroots action as the powerful engine that drove racial change. It emphasizes the major role played by women in the cause and documents the variety of civil rights experiences of Jews who migrated to Miami in large numbers during the mid-century decades. Committed to social justice, they built activist organizations, challenged segregationists and anti-Semites, and worked with black activists to break down Jim Crow barriers.

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