

other things, the Crusades, the Inquisition, the exile from Spain, and much later, the cooperation of the Catholic Church with Mussolini and Hitler before and during World War II. Obviously, these had a very clear negative influence on Israel's position vis-à-vis the church. Bialer rightly notes that beyond the highly hostile emotional attitudes toward the Catholic Church, there were also some Israeli instrumental considerations, such as the imbalance between the various churches with regard to their attitudes toward Israel, the unfriendly attitudes that they adopted publicly in the international arena, and the internal challenges that they posed for Israel. All these emotional and cognitive factors "helped foster an Israeli attitude of political fatalism toward the Christian world, particularly the Catholic Church, which explains why Israel neglected to collect and process information about the Church for most of the period discussed in this book" (191). However, one must add here that not all Israeli senior politicians shared these views. For example, Moshe Sharet, Israel's first minister of foreign affairs and second prime minister, held a different view in this respect. He visited the pope, tried to pursue a more moderate policy toward the church, and attempted to protect the Christians, their churches, and lands in Israel during the period discussed in this book.

Bialer's book is different from other publications in this sphere. Whereas most of the literature has focused on the theological perspectives and on the attitudes and policies of the various churches toward Israel, Bialer's book concentrates on the Israeli political perspective. Indeed, it offers a new perspective and explanation of Israeli relations with Christianity, and especially with the Catholic Church. According to Bialer, "the confrontation between Israel and the Catholic Church was a clash between two complex and unique systems, which undoubtedly made it difficult for the Vatican to initiate attempts at rapprochement. The newly opened files in the Israeli State archives provide, however, resounding proof that Israel also found it difficult, though to a lesser degree" (192).

All the aspects of this complex phenomenon that are discussed in this book make it an original publication dealing in a highly scholarly and clear fashion with an important dimension of Israeli foreign policy during the two first decades after the establishment of Israel. It is highly recommended to the general public, politicians, and religious leaders and to students of these issues during that period.

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Eric Goldstein. *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006. xii, 307pp.
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Numerous discussions of the Jewish encounter with race in America have emerged in the last ten to fifteen years, most of them falling into two camps.

Book Reviews

The first camp, comprising books on black–Jewish relations (or what Adam Zachary Newton refers to as “blackjewishrelations” in *Facing Black and Jew*, 1999), is largely written by Jewish scholars about the Jewish encounter with black America, focusing on the putative “alliance” between the two groups and generally lamenting the breakdown of relations in the past twenty-five years. The second camp, including books on issues of whiteness, immigration, and assimilation, argues that in becoming Americans, Jews also became white (or vice versa). Most eloquently articulated by Matthew Jacobson in *Whiteness of a Different Color*,¹ this narrative asserts that Jewish immigrants, like other immigrants from eastern and southern Europe, were stigmatized as “dark” at the turn of the century, but as the legitimacy of the racial science on which this designation was based gradually eroded in the 1930s and 1940s, Jews found themselves included with other “white” Americans as “Caucasians.” Eric Goldstein’s *The Price of Whiteness* builds on the arguments of both camps, offering a superb overview of the history of Jews and race in America that takes into account the subtleties and nuances of this highly complex subject in ways only hinted at in earlier studies.

Early in the book, Goldstein takes issue with the too-simple conclusions of many works on whiteness, which argue that Jews wholeheartedly embraced whiteness, at the expense of both black Americans and their own ethnic/racial (or what he generally calls “tribal”) identity, in order to achieve socioeconomic success in America. Instead, he prefers to explore “how Jews *negotiated* their place in a complex racial world where Jewishness, whiteness, and blackness have all made significant claims on them” (5). The book resists the notion that the “whitening” of immigrants was simply “a power play from below,” arguing that native-born whites, “bent on preserving a stable and optimistic vision of their national culture” (5), also had a strong stake in seeing Jews as white. Likewise, the book refuses to view American Jews as monolithic group. *The Price of Whiteness* pays careful attention to gender, national background (nineteenth-century immigrants from Germany had a different relationship to racial issues than early twentieth-century immigrants from eastern Europe), and especially regional differences, distinguishing among the often radically disparate responses of southern and northern Jews to shifts in racial attitudes.

The Price of Whiteness is meticulously researched, bringing to light valuable primary sources on Jewish attitudes toward race, such as southern Jewish newspapers, that rarely find their way into broader works on whiteness. The early chapters and the final epilogue offer the most exciting new material and original readings of well-known sources. Though essential to the story, much of the detailed material in the middle chapters, especially in Part III, “Confronting Jewish Difference, 1919–1935,” rehearses analyses already offered elsewhere. The opening chapter on late nineteenth-century Jewish self-definition offers a surprising and counterintuitive take on Jewish tribalism and racial identity in the nineteenth century. The chapter uses a wealth of evidence to show how, as long as race was not necessarily

1. Matthew Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

a negative category, Jews embraced and even benefited from racial self-definitions. This argument also sets up a crucial narrative thread for the entire book: This is not a book about the move from race to ethnicity but rather a story about the waxing and waning over the course of the twentieth century of race as an important category of self-definition for Jews. In the epilogue, Goldstein offers a bold and refreshing analysis of contemporary debates over multiculturalism and intermarriage. He takes to task scholars who insist on an oversimplified understanding of black–Jewish relations in the 1960s, showing how the different historical and economic conditions of the two groups have always made mutual cooperation a complicated undertaking. And the book concludes with a convincing demonstration of the tenacity of race as a marker of identity for Jews, using examples as disparate as the increased interest in genetic testing of Jews (both prenatal testing and testing to establish the genetic origins of historical Jewish groups) and the recent success of *Heeb* magazine, which celebrates Jewish physical distinctiveness—body shapes, hairstyles, and so on. With its refreshing arguments and careful attention to detail, *The Price of Whiteness* is essential reading for anyone interested in the complexity of Jewish racial identity in America.

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Tamar Katriel. *Dialogic Moments: From Soul Talks to Talk Radio in Israeli Culture*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2004. viii, 384 pp.
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Tamar Katriel’s scholarship has already left a mark on the young but rapidly developing field of the study of Israeli culture. Focusing on linguistic expressions, communicative patterns, and ritualized behavior, with attention to their structure and meaning, broader cultural context, and historical development, she has helped open new doors to an interdisciplinary approach to the study of culture. Her latest publication, *Dialogic Moments: From Soul Talks to Talk Radio in Israeli Culture*, is yet another piece of original scholarship that displays Katriel’s unique ability to identify Israeli cultural phenomena that we often take for granted or simply ignore and turn them into worthy subjects of academic inquiry.

Dialogic Moments addresses three case studies that might appear at the outset to have little in common: a ritual of confessional talks among early Zionist settlers of the Bitania commune in the 1920s; the cultural style of *dugri* (straight) talk that emerged in the Sabra culture in following decades; and radio call-in shows in which listeners seek help for personal problems during the 1980s and 1990s. Though each of these moments could be the subject of a study in its own right, *Dialogic Moments* weaves these cases into a single analytical framework that explores the preoccupation with the notion of authenticity and the desire to engage in dialogic relations. As Katriel observes, in an age that