

# Nazi Students Offend Maryland's Old Tradition of Religious Freedom

By Herbert Rosen

Almost three hundred years ago Lord Baltimore, the Catholic founder of Maryland, quashed a "blasphemy" trial against Dr. Jacob Lumbrozo, a Jew, because it conflicted with Maryland's traditions of civil and religious liberty.

Four days ago a band of youths in a Baltimore junior high school, who had succumbed to the democracy-hating incitation of the Father Coughlins, knifed the letter "H" into the neck of Melvyn Bridge, a 14-year-old Jewish boy.

The action of Lord Baltimore was in line with the historic struggle of America for freedom of religious belief; the misdeed of the Baltimore rowdies, who boastfully inked swastikas on their arms, exemplifies the danger which hangs over American democracy today—fascism.

Dr. Lumbrozo not only was reinsured in his religious freedom, but he was granted full rights of citizenship, and five years afterwards we read that he was chosen to

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sit on a provincial jury.

A Jew was among the first 200 settlers of Maryland who came to its shores in 1634 to seek a refuge from religious strife in England. He was Mathias da Sousa.

Da Sousa played a prominent role in the life of the early Maryland community. He attended the Provincial Assembly in 1641, only seven years after the founding of the colony, and later received appointments to office.

Other early Jewish colonists, many of whose descendants live in Maryland to this day, were Richard Abrahall, Cornelius Abraham, Isaac Abrahams, Solimon Barbaral, Hester Cordea, Mathias da Costa, Ansel Israels, Solomon Lazear, Jacob Leah and Philip Salomon.

Religious liberty was a keynote of life in the colony, and Maryland was, in many degrees, more advanced even than Rhode Island. Though the colony was founded by Catholics, Protestant worship was

protected by the courts.

Lord Baltimore, in the first item of his instructions to the settlers who came in 1634 aboard the "Ark" and the "Dove," enjoined: "His Lordship requires his said Governor and Commissioners that in their voyage to Mary Land that they be very careful to preserve unity and peace amongst all the passengers

on Shipboard, and that they suffer no scandal nor offense to be given any of the Protestants. . . . And this to be observed at Land as well as at Sea."

The Act of 1649 concerning religion, though it still continued a few restrictions, was applied in practice with the greatest liberality. The oath required of the Maryland governor read: "I will make no differences of persons in conferring offices, favors or rewards for or in respect of religion, but merely as they shall be found faithful and well deserving and endowed with moral virtues and abilities. . . . My aim shall be public unity."

"Public unity" such as the Maryland governor vowed to defend is necessary more than ever today to protect the democratic achievements of the American people—in the first rank of which is religious liberty—against the onslaughts of the fascist-minded bigots who seek to implant a new and bloody inquisition against progress in America.

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