

Jewish Bank, Newspaper Control Myth Continues

First of two articles
By Stephen Isaacs

Washington Post Staff Writer

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The notion that Jews control the banks and newspapers of this country is among the most enduring of myths.

That was the notion put forward by Gen. George S. Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in a public talk recently, for which he later apologized.

The Jews, he said in a question-and-answer session following prepared remarks, "own, you know, the banks in this country, the newspapers."

Sen. James Abourezk (D-S.D.), the only

senator of Arab descent and an ardent opponent of pro-Israel lobbying on Capitol Hill, called Gen. Brown's articulation of the notion "very stupid." "That's the kind of stuff anti-Semites are very fond of popping out," he said.

Although Brown subsequently said he regretted his remarks, saying "they were both unfortunate and ill-considered and certainly do not represent my convictions," his words raised the idea anew.

The most recent survey of American banks was undertaken last year by the American Jewish Committee. Twenty-five of the nation's largest banks outside New York City were studied.

Jews are rarely found in banks' management, so ownership control of large banks in America is almost totally non-Jewish. In the ADL survey, for instance, the eight banks' boards of directors together had 197 members. Of those, three were Jewish.

In a 1965 survey of mutual savings banks in New York, the American Jewish Committee found that fewer than 2.5 per cent of the key officers were Jews. And, again, as to control—fewer than 3.5 per cent of the savings banks' trustees were Jewish.

Jews have played a larger role in investment banking—organizations that help companies find financing. German-Jewish investment firms played a role in the United States in the mid and late-1800s during the industrial revolution.

Old firms included names like Kuhn, Loeb, J. & W. Seligman & Co., and Goldman,

Those banks employed 377 persons in senior management positions. Of those, one was a Jew.

Of the 3,027 persons in middle management positions, 38 were Jewish.

Of the 491 nonofficers, 26 were Jews.

In a 1966 study of the 50 largest banks in the United States, 45 had no Jews in senior management jobs.

Of the 50 banks, 38 had no Jews in middle management.

In the country as a whole, Jews make up about 8 per cent of college graduates each year—the pool from which potential bank em-

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what the origin.

An example of the breaking down of the barriers is the Lehman Brothers firm, which now includes among its partners former State Department official George W. Ball and retired Gen. Lucius D. Clay.

A further indication of the elimination of the barriers is the fact that two of the most recent chairmen of the New York Stock Exchange have been Jewish—Bernard J. Lasker of Lasker, Stone & Stern and Gustave L. Levy of Goldman, Sachs. Furthermore, Lasker's successor as chairman was Ralph D. DeNunzio of Kidder, Peabody & Co., the first Stock Exchange chairman of Italian descent.

Despite the facts, the myth persists that Jews control banking. The perpetuation of that myth, Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, president of the American Jewish Congress, told President Ford in a letter asking for

the old stock bankers of America—with names like Chase or Morgan—have somehow escaped being stigmatized. The source for the Jewish stereotype, he says, lies deeper.

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employees normally would be hired. And Jews make up 15 per cent of the graduates of business and professional schools, the likely pool of people trained for executive jobs.

In heavily Jewish New York City, the same pattern persists. A 1967 study of New York banking executives showed 4.4 per cent to be Jewish. About half of all college graduates in New York are Jews.

In 1961, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith, a Jewish service organization, examined employment in the eight largest New York City banks and found that, of the 844 officers with the rank of vice president or above, 30 were Jewish.

Of those, 22 were concentrated in two banks and

seven in a third. Four of the eight banks had no Jewish executives.

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Sen. Brown, "astical aspect or a century. It was... backbone of the propaganda poured out by Joseph Goebbels for Hitler."

George Salomon of the American Jewish Committee, in analyzing the durability of the myth, notes that in the Middle Ages, Jews were "small-time lenders" but the big financiers were "the German and Italian financiers of the Renaissance, who created the modern banking system (but who) have not left Germans and Italians with a reputation for special financial power or caninness."

Further, said Salomon, "the old stock bankers of America—with names like Chase or Morgan—have somehow escaped being stigmatized. The source for the Jewish stereotype, he says, lies deeper. He noted that Catholic scholar Clabre Hunter-Bishop found that the image of Jews as money men "stems

in large part from the early Christian teaching that Jews are materialists—that they must be such, for why else would they reject the spiritual riches of Christianity?"

Salomon summarizes Mrs. Bishop's thinking by pointing out that this "becomes self-fulfilling prophecy." In the Middle Ages, Jews were forced into being economic middle-men because Christians were forbidden to lend money for interest. Money-lending was necessary, however, and as Salomon puts it, "since the Jews were already assumed to be materialists, they were the obvious candidates to fill the role."

As for Jewish ownership

of newspapers, survey conducted by this reporter for a recent book showed that, of the 1,748 daily newspapers in the United States in 1972, 3.1 per cent were owned by Jews (who make up about 3 per cent of the American population). Those newspapers published 8 per cent of all the newspapers printed each day in the country.

The survey found that most of the newspaper owners who were Jewish generally leaned over backward to be "non-Jewish" and most made sure that Jews were not hired as chief editors.

Over half of the 8 per cent circulation comes from the Newhouse chain of newspapers, which outside of the immediate Newhouse family—employs no Jews as top editors. When Newhouse in 1951 was seeking an editor for his newspaper in Harrisburg, Pa., the recruiter specifically said that a Jew would not be suitable.

On the other hand, all three of the national commercial television networks were created principally by Jews—NBC by David Sarnoff, CBS by William Paley, ABC by Leonard Goldenson.

And there is a considerable presence of Jews in the reporting trade; Jews are disproportionately involved in the media as middle-level editors and reporters.

But none of the networks has ever put forward a "Jewish" face in their key, evening news anchor positions and few of the nation's top newspaper editors are Jews. Of the more than 800 members of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, which limits membership to directing editors of

newspapers, fewer than 20 are Jewish.

"It is interesting to note," said Bertram Gold, executive vice president of the American Jewish Committee, "that charges of undue Jewish influence continue to be raised whenever there are periods of economic or political tension."

Gold has been warning for the last year or so that Jews must be wary of a possible increase of anti-Semitism with the growing economic malaise in the world. Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) struck the same note when he said "I'm always afraid of latent anti-Semitism and there are groups in this country that make a profession out of finding fault with the Jewish people. It's always something that's in the back of my mind."

Other data are available about Jewish influence in some key industries. In a 1970 article, Business Week magazine noted that only two-thirds of 1 per cent of all white-collar jobs at the three major automobile companies were held by Jews.

That article noted that, in Hartford, Conn., and its busy insurance industry, only 1.2 per cent of the insurance firms' managers were Jews, despite the fact that 10 per cent of Hartford's population is Jewish.

The percentages of Jews were even lower in the shipping, oil, chemical and electronics industries, according to that article. It added that a 1960 study of 1,500 American corporations found only .5 per cent of all managers to be Jews.

Next: The Jewish Lobby