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“Only in America”: Harry Golden and the Origins of the Civil Rights Movement, 1944-1957

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School desegregation weighed heavily on the mind of North Carolina Governor Luther B. Hodges in 1956 as he prepared to call a special session of the legislature to introduce his latest solution to this volatile issue. Articles on school desegregation ran in the newspapers throughout the state. Meanwhile, Harry Golden offered his plan to desegregate the state's public schools in Charlotte, North Carolina. Golden printed his proposal on the front page of his paper; it was called the “Vertical Negro Plan.” At the outset of his proposal, he noted that “Vertical Segregation” had been eliminated. “The white and Negro,” he insisted, “stand at the same grocery store and supermarket counters; deposit money at all the same bank teller windows; pay phone and light bills to the same clerk...and stand at the same drug-store counters.” Drawing attention to the contradictions in Jim Crow, he continued, “It's only when the Negro sits that fur begins to fly.” Golden now proceeded to offer his solution, the “Vertical Negro Plan”: “All the next session needs to do is pass one small amendment which would provide only desks in all the public schools of our state--no seats. The desks should be those standing-up jobs, like the old-fashioned bookkeeping desk. Since no one in the South pays the slightest attention to a Vertical Negro, this will completely solve our problem.” Directed toward the state's moderates and businesspeople, whom Golden believed would support desegregation, the “Vertical Negro Plan” mocked segregationists who asserted that desegregation would destroy the southern way of life. The humorous message of the plan was simple. Desegregation was already happening. Blacks and whites stood together at banks and stores, so why should they not sit together in schools?⁵¹

News of the Vertical Negro Plan spread around the country, bolstering Golden's popularity. Throughout the South, the press covered the plan, and national magazines, like *Time*, *Ebony*, and *Life*, featured articles about the outspoken editor of the *Carolina Israelite*.⁵² A series of similarly Swiftian proposals soon followed the Vertical Negro Plan and as Golden's subscribers grew in number so too did his popularity. In 1958, only two years after the Vertical Negro Plan first appeared, World Publishing compiled a collection of Golden's articles into a book titled *Only in America*. Combining Golden's reminiscences about life on New York's Lower East Side with Golden's humorous plans for integration, the book topped the New York Times's bestseller list. It cemented Golden's status as a civil rights humorist.⁵³

Few would have expected such acclaim from Harry Golden, a Galician immigrant and ex-convict, when he first arrived in Charlotte in 1941. Six years later, unlike the Freedom Riders who traveled South to challenge segregation in interstate bus travel, Golden did not come to North Carolina poised for civil rights activism.⁵⁴ Rather, Golden's journey to movement activism paralleled that of other white liberals who had been active in other social causes. For Golden, this cause was opposing anti-Semitism. Recognizing a connection between his resistance to anti-Semitism and his support of desegregation, Golden began to advocate for integration. However, civil rights activism was not easy for black and white activists in the 1950s; racial violence and economic reprisals threatened those who challenged segregation in the South.

Turning to humor, Golden sought to avoid violent retaliation. Drawing on a tradition of Jewish humor, he pulled back the curtain on southern Segregation and exposed its inconsistencies to the light of day. Born Herschel Goldhurst in Mikulintsky, Galicia, in 1903, the man who would later be known as Harry Golden immigrated to the United States with his family in 1905.⁵⁵ The Goldhursts lived on Manhattan's Lower East Side, a neighborhood populated by European immigrants. "The immigrants of the Lower East Side of New York created happiness for themselves," Golden reminisced later. "There were parties galore—weddings, engagements, and bar mitzvahs among the Jews; festivals among the Italians; long and happy processions among the Poles; and lots of band music and beer among the Germans."⁵⁶ Growing up on the Lower East Side, Herschel Goldhurst longed to become American. As he prepared to enter high school, he expressed this desire by choosing a more American-sounding name on his last day in elementary school. Describing this moment, he wrote, "Mr. Ryan, whom we called Our Irishman, was the teacher of 8B, the graduating class of Public School 20. Near the end of the term, we filled out our slips determining the high school each of us would attend. Mr. Ryan solemnly and judiciously, said, 'This is your last chance. Those of you who are Itzak and want to be Irving, put that down. Those who are Moishe and want to Maurice, this is your moment... On this day I went from Herschel to Harry.'"⁵⁷

Harry Goldhurst graduated from Public School 20 in 1917; he went to high school in the evening and worked during the day. After finishing high school three years later, he attended City College in New York for two years before dropping out to work full-time. Goldhurst held a series of odd jobs before he went to work at his sister Carla's brokerage firm. There, he met Genevieve Gallagher, the daughter of first-generation Irish Catholics. The two dated for a short time and later married in 1926. This was another expression of Goldhurst's desire to be more American. Inter-marriage, the practice of marrying someone who was not Jewish, increased the possibility that future children would not be reared in a traditional Jewish home.

Harry Goldhurst's success as a stockbroker led him to open his firm with a silent partner in the late 1920s. The firm was initially successful, but when it fell on challenging times, Goldhurst began a practice called bucketing. Rather than purchase a client's stock when the client first gave him money, he waited before buying the stock. When selling stock for clients, he did the reverse—he waited for the price to rise. This allowed Goldhurst to make a little more money on each transaction. Waiting too long on one occasion, he watched as the stock price soared until he could no longer purchase it for his investors. His miscalculation sent the firm into bankruptcy. Attempting to conceal the truth from his clients, Goldhurst told them they had credit in the now-bankrupt firm, but his clients retaliated by filing a lawsuit. Goldhurst was convicted of mail fraud and sentenced to five years in prison.⁵⁸

Harry Goldhurst spent nearly four years at the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary and was released in 1933. Like many incarcerated, Goldhurst was determined to start a new life once released. This meant leaving the stock market behind and finding a new career. Goldhurst decided to take up journalism as his new career but starting over proved difficult. Genevieve Gallagher expected him to help support their family. Complicating matters further, the country was deep in a depression, making employment opportunities scarcer. Insufficient income placed excessive pressure on Goldhurst's marriage, which his prison term had already strained. The couple soon decided to separate; Genevieve Gallagher and the couple's children moved in with her family. This was a low point in Harry Goldhurst's life. Finally, the Norfolk Times-Advocate offered him a job in 1941, which involved selling advertisements. "When it came time for me to leave for the South," he recalled, "I went with the dreaded knowledge that I had failed as a man, a father, and a husband."⁵⁹ Goldhurst's initial efforts to rebuild his life after his release from prison were unsuccessful, but he remained determined undeterred. Goldhurst marked his new beginning when he moved to Virginia by changing his last name to Golden. His new surname offered the promise of a new life. He would put his previous troubles behind him and begin anew in the South.

Employed with the Norfolk *Times-Advocate* for eight months, Harry Golden left Norfolk for a job further south in Charlotte, North Carolina, with the *Charlotte Labor Journal*. Yet, Golden still dreamed of working as a journalist. In 1944, this dream became a reality when he started his newspaper, the *Carolina Israelite*. To secure the money for the paper, Golden turned to wealthy Jewish businesspeople in Charlotte, such as I.D. Blumenthal and Herman E. Cohen. Convinced by Golden of the need for a Jewish paper in Charlotte, these men gave Golden the necessary funds to start his paper.⁶⁰ The first issue of the paper appeared in February 1944.

Golden sent free copies of the paper to 800 potential subscribers nationwide with a note explaining the cost for a yearly subscription, which included six issues, was two dollars. By the end of 1944, the *Carolina Israelite* had 800 subscribers, including writer Carl Sandburg and politician Adlai Stevenson.⁶¹ The *Carolina Israelite* was not a typical Jewish paper. Unlike the *Southern Israelite*, a Jewish newspaper printed in Atlanta, the *Carolina Israelite* was uniquely designed to promote better relations between Southern whites and Jews. Thus, Golden printed the paper's mission on the front page of every issue. The paper aimed "to break down walls of misunderstanding and to build bridges of goodwill."⁶² Early in its history, Golden established the *Carolina Israelite* as a forum for opponents against bigotry and anti-Semitism. He did this both by writing his articles that attacked anti-Semitism and by reprinting articles that offered a similar message.⁶³

The early years of the *Carolina Israelite* highlight Golden's commitment to fighting intolerance. Writing in opposition to anti-Semitism, Harry Golden built a space for social activism within the *Carolina Israelite*. In a front-page article by Golden in 1946, he linked opposition to anti-Semitism with America's political tradition and suggested that continued resistance was necessary for American democracy to flourish. "We must throw the problem [of anti-Semitism] into the laps of Washington, Jefferson, and Madison...They gave birth to the greatest Phenomenon in all History—American democracy. It is inconceivable that Americans themselves would be a party to its destruction."⁶⁴ Comparable articles appeared in the *Carolina Israelite* throughout the 1940s, establishing a tradition of socialization and resistance to discrimination, which he could later use to support the civil rights movement. Foreshadowing his future treatment of segregation in 1948, Golden offered a humorous solution to the problem of anti-Semitism. He wrote, "I believe if we gave each anti-Semite an onion roll with lox and cream cheese; some chopped chicken liver with nice radish, and a good piece of brisket of beef with a few potato pancakes, he'd soon give up all this nonsense."⁶⁵ Passages like these were an early example of Golden's use of humor to address serious social concerns.

Helping to organize a Charlotte chapter of the National Conference on Christians and Jews (NCCJ) in 1944, Harry Golden further demonstrated his commitment to fighting intolerance. Writing about the Charlotte branch of the NCCJ in the *Carolina Israelite*, Golden commended the organization for its achievements. "I am proud," he wrote, "to see the local chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews make such fine progress." Golden went on to explain his role in establishing the organization in Charlotte. He affirmed, "Naturally, I am interested because of the time and the effort I put into organizing the Charlotte branch of this national organization; I also footed all the expenses out of the funds of the *Carolina Israelite* to put this civic project across originally."⁶⁶ The NCCJ was a national organization designed to encourage better relations between Jews and Christians by promoting communication between the two groups. The chief vehicle for these dialogues was an annual event known as Brotherhood Week. During this week, members of the NCCJ designed local forums to promote exchanges between prominent Jewish citizens and Christian whites. Harry Golden routinely donated print space to advertise this event, demonstrating his support for Brotherhood Week.

Additionally, Golden sponsored the *Carolina Israelite* Medal for Interfaith Service, which was given annually at a banquet to local and national leaders who promoted better relations between Christians and Jews. Its recipients included Dr. Clyde Milner, Bernard M. Baruch, Dr. Frank Porter Graham, Judge John J. Parker, and others.⁶⁷ Thus, Harry Golden demonstrated his early commitment to promoting tolerance through newspaper articles and advocating dialogues. These strategies would be redeployed in the 1950s when Golden focused on civil rights.

In the late 1940s, Harry Golden linked his awareness of anti-Semitism to a broader concern for equal rights. This transition to a more encompassing definition of equality allowed Golden to connect his opposition to anti-Semitism to the civil rights movement in the 1950s. "This is a Land of Freedom," he wrote in the *Carolina Israelite* in 1947. He continued, "But...if we deny any of our fellow citizens their equality in rights and privileges, legal or social, we are thereby denying them their freedom."⁶⁸ Golden's words challenged his readers to provide political and social equality to all Americans regardless of their status; this appeal parallels those made by activists in the civil rights movement.

Despite his eventual support for civil rights in the 1950s, in the late 1940s, Harry Golden remained committed to opposing anti-Semitism locally and nationally. When the United States Congress began debating the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1948, Golden printed several articles in the *Carolina Israelite* in opposition to this bill. He affirmed, "Political freedom is a comparatively new concept in this world...as far as it has gone in the United States, it represents the greatest miracle of all time. But to implement [legislation] for the benefit of any group or class would present some danger...One day, it may be implemented to the detriment of a particular group or class."⁶⁹ Golden's words highlight that his transition to civil rights advocacy was a process.

In 1948, he was still more clearly concerned with defending against anti-Semitism than opposing racial bias. Thus, he feared that civil rights legislation might be used to discriminate against Jews.

A belief in equality eventually led Harry Golden to advocate civil rights, but in the 1940s, Golden did not write about race relations in the *Carolina Israelite*. Racism was a volatile issue in the South in this era, in contrast to anti-Semitism, which became a marginally safer issue after World War II. The public scorn of Southern liberal Lillian Smith illustrates how explosive this issue was. In 1939, Lillian Smith, a Southern white woman from Georgia, published *Killers of the Dream*, which caused a furor in the South because she dared to talk about segregation and interracial sex, two taboo topics.⁷⁰ Perhaps aware that the costs of speaking out could have meant the loss of financial support from white Southern advertisers, Golden refrained from publishing articles about race relations in the 1940s. However, this does not mean that he was not beginning to think seriously about civil rights.⁷¹ In the late 1940s, Harry Golden began attending local meetings of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Charlotte. While Golden transitioned to civil rights advocacy privately, he publicly limited his writings in the late 1940s to broader calls for equality.

In 1954, only a few months before the United States Supreme Court ruled in the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, case, which struck down segregation in public schools, Golden began to write publicly about race relations in the *Carolina Israelite*. His first article, “Massa in de cold, cold ground,” captured his belief that race relations in the South were changing. The article told a story passed on to him by southern novelist James Street. A prominent New York publisher traveled to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, to visit Street. The publisher, who was visiting the South for the first time, accompanied Street to the home of an acquaintance. Arriving at this home, the publisher was greeted by the sight of black contractors landscaping the yard. As they worked, the men sang, “‘Massa’s in de cold, cold ground...Heave ho...Throw that barge!’” Then Golden delivered the punch line. “As [visitors] went into the house,” Golden wrote, “the host to keep it in the mood, began to prepare mint juleps; all the time worrying like hell about that dollar and a half he was paying those landscapers out there. The prank was overtime—time and a half.”⁷² Golden’s story played with the reader’s imagination by conjuring visions of a bygone South, complete with singing blacks and mint juleps, but there was a twist. Not only were African Americans paid fairly for their labor, but they received overtime, too. The story affirmed Golden’s belief that while vestiges of the Old South remained, a change was coming. “Massa in de cold, cold ground” marked Golden’s move from writing vaguely about equal rights to a more open discussion of race.

The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision sent the South into upheaval. Historian Michael Klarman argues that the *Brown* decision created a political backlash reverberating throughout the South.⁷³ Increasingly, white supremacists turned to violence to discourage opposition to segregation. In the 1950s, the Carolinas witnessed a series of bombings only miles from Charlotte. In Gaffney, South Carolina, members of the Ku Klux Klan bombed the home of Claudia Sanders in 1957 after she published a small booklet in favor of gradual school desegregation. In Charlotte, North Carolina, in the same month as Sanders’ home was bombed, Klansmen attempted to bomb Charlotte’s Temple Beth El. 24 A year later, another synagogue was nearly attacked in Gastonia, North Carolina, eighteen miles from Charlotte. Sixty sticks of dynamite were discovered, and the fuse burned within inches of igniting the explosion.⁷⁴ Although there was some public support among Southern Jews for desegregation, in general, Southern Jews did not speak out publicly for an end to Jim Crow. The bombing attempts appear to have been motivated by the belief that Jews were to blame for the growing civil rights movement. The involvement of Northern Jews in the civil rights movement motivated this misconception among Southern white supremacists. Realizing the potential for guilt by association, Harry Golden attempted to use the two bombing attempts in North Carolina to provoke Jews in the Carolinas and throughout the South to support civil rights. “As I have told Jews time and time again,” he wrote, “Gurnisht helffen—nothing helps, you’ll get the ‘rap’ for it anyway so we might as well be humanitarians.”⁷⁵

Golden strategically used humor in his civil rights advocacy to avoid violent reprisals. His decision to use humor was based on his close friend, Carl Sandburg, who avoided arrest during World War I. Golden wrote, “One of the reasons the United States government never tried Carl Sandburg during World War I, when the government jailed all the other Socialists, was that Sandburg was a poet and a humorist.”⁷⁶ Taking this as his example, Golden routinely employed humor to challenge segregation. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in Golden’s trademark plans to end segregation.

The popularity of the Vertical Negro Plan was enormous, and word of it spread quickly. Not only did newspapers throughout the South re-print it, but it also appeared in national magazines like *Ebony*. *Ebony*, an African American periodical started in 1945, devoted its October 1956 “Photo Editorial” to Golden’s Vertical Negro Plan. Titled “Can’t Sit Down,” the article commended Golden for offering a solution to the highly debated topic of school desegregation. Concurring with Golden’s argument that segregation began when African Americans sat down, the author of the editorial offered examples from Atlanta and Virginia to prove this point. In Atlanta, Negroes may stand at the airport lunch counter...but they cannot sit down in the airport restaurant.... Virginia Negroes may stand at the desk at the state library and get book, but to sit down and read, they are directed to a special table.” However, the Vertical Negro Plan did not escape criticism. *Ebony* treated Golden’s proposal more seriously than it was intended, but the magazine’s criticism underscored the human side of segregation: “The Negro is tired of standing. He is tired of standing up at lunch counters, and he is tired of walking through white waiting rooms to reach his seat in Jim Crow sections. When his feet ache and his back is weary, he wants a chair not a plan.”⁷⁷ *Ebony*’s editorial made it clear that Golden’s humor was not aimed at African Americans, which he freely admitted years later. “The Carolina Israelite,” he affirmed, “never aimed for a Negro audience nor did it ever find one.”⁷⁸ Despite *Ebony*’s criticism, the Vertical Negro Plan was soon followed by another.

“The Golden Out-of-Order Plan,” Golden’s next proposal, appeared in the *Carolina Israelite* in 1957. In this article, Golden suggested that store managers throughout the South hang out-of-order signs on “white only” water fountains. Although there might be some initial objections, he believed eventually, thirsty whites would use the colored fountain--provided they still had their drinking fountain, even if it were out of order. Offering proof that the proposal would work, Golden informed readers that the Out-of-Order Plan had been personally tested at a department store in downtown Charlotte. “The key to my plan,” he wrote, “is to keep the ‘Out-of-Order’ sign up for at least two years. We must do this thing gradually.”⁷⁹ However, not everyone was driven to laughter by Golden’s latest plan. The literal-minded *Citizen’s Council*, the national organ of the White Citizen’s Council, cautioned readers of their newsletter to test all water fountains to ensure they were out of order.⁸⁰ As in the case of the Vertical Negro Plan, underneath Golden’s humor was a veiled message about desegregation. The Out-of-Order plan underscored Golden’s belief that desegregation would require sacrifices from both blacks and whites. For Southern whites, this would mean giving up their perceived status as racial superiors. At the same time, African Americans would have to be willing to wait for some of the benefits of integration.

Harry Golden called his next proposal to end segregation “The White Baby Plan;” it too appeared in 1957. Southern segregation barred African Americans from going to movie theaters unless they sat in the balcony or the back of the theater if there was no balcony. Conversely, when black housekeepers brought white children to the theater, they were allowed to sit anywhere the child desired. Golden’s next plan aimed at this practice suggested that black couples take white babies to the movies. Not only would the black couples not have to sit in the balcony as Southern racial practice dictated, but they would also be given the nicest seats. “This would solve the babysitting problem for thousands and thousands of ‘white’ working mothers,” he wrote. “There can be a mutual exchange of references, then the people can sort of pool their children at a central point in each neighborhood, and every time a Negro wants to go to the movies, all she need do is pick up a child and go. Eventually, the Negro community could set up a factory and manufacture white babies made of plastic. When they want to go to the opera or a concert, all they need do is carry that plastic doll in their arms.”⁸¹ This Swiftian proposal revealed the vulnerability of segregation, showing how it could easily be undermined with white baby dolls, but more importantly, Harry Golden’s plan sought to show that segregation was vulnerable. Like the Out-of-Order plan, this plan suggested that segregation could easily be subverted by pointing out that it was inconsistent and ridiculous.

By allowing both supporters and opponents of segregation to laugh, Harry Golden’s comedy had a broad appeal. Even some self-proclaimed segregationists looked to him for humor. “I am a segregationist,” wrote subscriber Mary Bell in a confidential letter not intended for publication. “I am wishing that you would write some more gently humorous accounts of this pitiful school situation. I feel we all need it. A little humor can go a long way toward calming folks down.”⁸² And indeed, Harry Golden’s next plan did address school desegregation. It developed in response to the 1957 Little Rock, Arkansas school crisis.

Determined to stave off integration in Little Rock’s public schools, Governor Orval Faubus stationed the National Guard in front of Central High School to prevent nine black youths from entering the school. To broker a solution, President Dwight Eisenhower met with Faubus to convince him to desegregate Central High School. When these talks failed to bring a resolution,

President Eisenhower called in federal troops to escort the nine African American students into Central High School and, thus, integrate Little Rock's public schools.⁸³

Golden's "The Golden Carry the Book Plan" offered a scheme designed to assuage Southern white anxieties about desegregation by appealing to the deference practiced by black housekeepers:

The Negro parents of the South should make this proposition to their local school boards; that they will allow their children to carry the books for their 'white' classmates. A system can easily be worked out whereby the Negro boy, (going to an integrated school), can meet a 'white' classmate at a convenient corner...and carry the "white" boy's books in the school building...The Negro girls would not have to participate in this "Golden Carry the Book Plan." The girls should wear a sort of miniature apron over their street dresses, and this would settle everything once and for all...I know I am calling on the Negroes to make a considerable sacrifice, but it is worth it because this would settle the matter even for the most outspoken 'white supremacists.'⁸⁴

The Carry-the-Book Plan was like Golden's Out-of-Order Plan. Each reflected his belief that status anxiety was at the heart of segregation. The reluctance of whites to give up their imagined superiority was a serious obstacle on the road to integration. The Vertical Negro Plan and the Out of Order Plan sought to convince readers that segregation was a solvable problem. Thus, in the Vertical Negro Plan, Golden's solution for school desegregation was swapping desks.

Similarly, in the Out-of-Order Plan, a sign held the key for desegregating water fountains. Both plans challenged the practice of Jim Crow in public accommodations, and they suggested that African Americans deserved equal access to these resources. Conversely, the White Baby Plan and the Carry the Books plan required African Americans make concessions to white vanity. Thus, in the White Baby Plan, Golden called on African Americans to carry white baby dolls to negotiate segregation in movie theaters. In a similar vein, the Carry the Books Plan required African American boys to carry books and black girl to wear aprons to circumvent Jim Crow. The White Baby Plan and the Carry the Books Plan did not overtly challenge the South's system of racial caste, rather they sought to undermine its continued practice by showing the absurd lengths that had to be taken to maintain segregation.

Although humor was Golden's strategy to avoid retaliation, it also had a bonus of turning Golden into a celebrity. The popularity of Golden's proposals led the World Publishing Company to approach him about producing a book of his collected articles. Golden agreed, and in the summer of 1958 *Only in America*, his first major book, was published. William Du Bois of the New York Times wrote a glowing review praising the book and its author. "If there is," Du Bois affirmed, "such a thing as a cracker-barrel philosopher left in our century, Mr. Golden has earned the title." Du Bois predicted that the book would "go a long way toward restoring one's faith in the human race."⁸⁵ The success of *Only in America* was rooted not only in Golden's witty observations about the Lower East Side, Tammany Hall, and the "Evil Eye," but also in his homespun observations on race. As America reeled from the impact of the civil rights movement, Golden provided a needed dose of humor that allowed white Americans to begin thinking in new ways about race relations. As Maurice Dolbeir, of the *New York Tribune* commented, "Harry Golden makes us think about things that we know but have avoided thinking about."⁸⁶

Harry Golden's civil rights activism was informed by his earlier opposition to anti-Semitism. Building on his early political advocacy, Harry Golden created a space for resistance to bigotry and bias within the *Carolina Israelite* and he used his paper to oppose anti-Semitism and to support the civil rights movement. Strategically employing humor to avoid reprisal, Harry Golden became a civil rights celebrity and continued to remain active in the civil rights movement. Harry Golden, however, did not limit his civil rights advocacy to the pages of the *Carolina Israelite*. Just as he sought to build bridges between Christians and Jews, Golden also worked to promote interracial cooperation. Assigning himself the task of bringing whites and blacks in North Carolina together, Harry Golden worked as a mediator to facilitate dialogues between white and black leaders.

Public Moderate, Private Liberal: Harry Golden and the Dilemma of Southern Liberalism

Formed in the winter of 1955, the Union County Council on Human Relations (UCCHR) was an interracial group of black and white citizens who devoted themselves to "promoting equal opportunity for all citizens in employment, education, recreation and all other phases of community life."⁸⁷

Among those involved in the UCCHR were African American leaders such as Robert Williams and Dr. Albert Perry as well as white liberals like J. Raymond Shute and frequent visitor Harry Golden. Lasting only a few years; the organization began to fall apart in the summer of 1957. The central issue leading to the coalition's demise involved an attempt by Perry and Williams to integrate the county's local swimming pool. Black youth were prohibited from swimming here, and they swam in local lakes and dangerous ponds. Earlier that summer, a young boy drowned while swimming in a quarry. Led by Dr. Albert Perry and Robert Williams, the black members of the UCCHR wanted the organization to push for separate or integrated swimming facilities. By contrast, white members like Harry Golden argued that the organization should work to integrate the county's public schools since the swimming pool issue had the potential to ignite racial hostilities by pushing Southern taboos on interracial relationships. But the death of a young boy and the dangers faced by Monroe's children who lacked a safe place to swim led Williams and Perry to question the emphasis on school desegregation.

The demise of the UCCHR sheds light on the challenges faced by black and white liberals who sought to work together to ease racial discord. The swimming pool issue showed that even the faintest mention of the interracial sex taboo doomed any prospects for an interracial alliance between white liberals and black organizers. Despite the challenges, liberals like Harry Golden remained committed to promoting dialogues between white and black leaders. To bring this to fruition Golden worked as a mediator between the races. Forging alliances with influential whites like Governor Luther Hodges and black leaders like state NAACP head Kelly Alexander and Harry Golden worked to promote communication between these two groups to foster social change. As a mediator, Golden faced serious challenges from black activists like Robert Williams, who questioned his tactics. Further, Golden had to negotiate the taboo of interracial sex while working for a compromise that could please both his black and white allies. The trial, later called the Kissing Case, highlights Golden's role as liaison. His role as a mediator met with mixed success, but his actions shed an essential light on the dynamic relationships between black and white civil rights proponents.

Communication was an important concern for Harry Golden, who believed that desegregation could be negotiated through bargaining with political authorities. Testifying before North Carolina's State Advisory Education Committee in July of 1956, Harry Golden asserted that the failure of school desegregation was due to an absence of communication between black and white leaders. "The State leadership," he affirmed, "has failed to open a line of communication with the leaders of the Negro race; to sit down with them and to work together with them."⁸⁸ The lack of communication between black and white leaders led Golden to position himself as a liaison between the two groups to promote a dialogue.

Harry Golden was uniquely suited for this role because he had already established himself as both an ally to blacks and a friend to the governor. Describing Harry Golden's involvement in North Carolina's racial politics, local activist Robert Williams affirmed, "[He] became a kind of political midwife in the realm of state race relations... [He] even had a pass to the back door of the governor's mansion."⁸⁹ Golden's role as mediator was like that played by other Southern moderates. During the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Thomas Thrasher, an Episcopal priest, worked as a liaison between the city's blacks and whites. When the city officials refused to meet with members of the Montgomery Improvement Association, Thrasher set up the initial meeting, which brought both sides together.⁹⁰

Harry Golden's commitment to supporting interracial alliances was an outgrowth of his involvement with the Southern Regional Council (SRC). The SRC was founded in 1944 as an organization committed to promoting interracial cooperation. The Southern Regional Council enjoyed the support of white Southern moderates such as Atlanta journalist Ralph McGill and lynching opponent and suffragist Jesse Daniel Ames; however, not all liberal white Southerners supported the organization. Notably, Lillian Smith was critical of the organization because it did not take a firm stand against segregation. Writing about the SRC in 1944, she affirmed, "Not much is going to be done to bring about racial democracy by this group until its leaders accept and acknowledge publicly the basic truth that segregation is injuring us on every level of life."⁹¹ When the Southern Regional Council took a stand against segregation in 1951, many of its members left the organization in protest. During the 1950s, the SRC promoted human relations councils like the one in Union County to encourage dialogues between black and white leaders on the issue of desegregation.⁹²

In the winter of 1955 executive members of the Southern Regional Council elected Golden to its Board of Directors. He served for four years on the Council's Board of Directors.⁹³ Golden's affiliation with the SRC affected his role as mediator and his support of school desegregation.

Not only did Golden share the SRC's commitment to promoting dialogue between the races, but he also supported the Council's preference for quiet resolutions to racial problems whenever possible.⁹⁴ Finally, Golden shared the SRC's commitment to fighting for school desegregation, and this allowed him to build an alliance with black leaders like Kelly Alexander.⁹⁵

Harry Golden worked to establish himself as an ally to Charlotte's African American community by supporting school desegregation. In the wake of the 1954 Brown decision, Golden warned readers of the *Carolina Israelite* that African Americans planned litigation if the state did not move to desegregate public schools. The article appeared on the front page of the *Israelite*, and it subtly hinted at Golden's own support for school desegregation. "Since no one asked me to keep it a secret," he wrote, "I would like to report that Negro lawyers are preparing two cases to bring North Carolina into court IF no definite plans are formulated before the end of the year to bring about integration, in accordance with the recent Supreme Court decision."⁹⁶

In 1955 Golden made his support for school desegregation more widely known after North Carolina passed the Pupil Assignment Plan.⁹⁷ Placing his editorial response on the front page of the *Carolina Israelite*, Golden criticized the governors of the South for failing to support desegregation and for encouraging a backlash. Arguing that the clergy and the press in the South had nearly created a favorable climate for acceptance of the Brown decision, Golden asserted that this evaporated when Southern governors formally announced their opposition to the Supreme Court's ruling. "What the clergy and the Press had almost succeeded in doing," he wrote, "was to establish a favorable atmosphere for the acceptance of the most momentous change in the social structure of the South since the abolition of slavery itself. But the Governors struck the blow that changed the entire picture."⁹⁸ This article highlights Golden's belief in political authorities and their ability to promote or impede social change. Naively believing that desegregation was simply a matter of obeying the Supreme Court's decision, Golden's faith in the power of political authority and his preference for quiet resolutions to race problems led him to argue that schools in Charlotte, like the public library, could be calmly desegregated.

The fact that the Governors guessed wrong is based on further evidence. For instance, in Charlotte, N.C., they are completing a new two-million-dollar public library. One day, several months ago, a small item appeared at the bottom of page 24 of the daily press in which the directors announced that the new library would be open to all the citizens of Charlotte regardless of race, creed, or color. This was the voice of duly constituted authority and responsibility, and that was all there was to it.⁹⁹ Despite the above criticism by Golden, he remained committed to the idea that political authorities, like the governor, could promote social change. This is why he was careful to keep Governor Luther Hodges's name out of his editorial.

It is difficult to know the exact cause of Harry Golden's zeal for school desegregation. It may have sprung from his involvement with the Southern Regional Council, but it also may have been inspired by his friendship with Kelly Alexander. Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, Kelly Alexander was the son of a Charlotte City Councilman and State senator, Zechariah Alexander. Attending Tuskegee Institute, an historically black college founded by renowned racial accommodationist Booker T. Washington, Alexander returned to Charlotte after graduating and he began working at the family's funeral home. Reviving Charlotte's inactive chapter of the NAACP, he eventually became president in 1948 and he went on to become President of the NAACP's North Carolina State Conference.

In no small measure, the friendship between Harry Golden and Kelly Alexander affected Golden's involvement in civil rights. These two men first met in the late 1940s when Golden began attending NAACP meetings in Charlotte and by the early 1950s, they were such good friends that they celebrated the Brown decision together. It is likely that Alexander's friendship with Harry Golden led the latter to become involved with the NAACP. Golden learned a great deal about school desegregation through his association with the NAACP.¹⁰⁰ While building an alliance with black leaders in Charlotte, Golden also sought to foster a relationship with North Carolina Governor Luther Hodges.

Harry Golden's earliest efforts as a mediator involved him writing to Governor Luther Hodges to encourage him to support school desegregation. Golden and Hodges first met while Hodges was campaigning for Lieutenant Governor in 1952. Working for Luther Hodges's campaign, Golden formed a relationship with him that lasted until Hodges left office in 1961 to go and work in President John F. Kennedy's administration. Harry Golden's line of communication with the governor was an essential part of his role as liaison. In the fall of 1957, Governor Hodges traveled to Washington, D.C., for the Southern Governor's Conference. Aware that Hodges was chairperson of the conference, Harry Golden drafted a speech for him.

The speech carefully outlined Golden's opinions on desegregation and represented his attempt to win the Governor over to integration. Golden's speech first sought to show that desegregation was unavoidable. He stressed the South's long tradition of abiding by the law and asserted that the Supreme Court would not reverse its decision. Once he established that desegregation was obligatory, Golden sought to show that integration could be accomplished in a practical manner. For example, in some cases, African American schools might first need to be brought up to higher standards before integration would be possible. In other cases, desegregation could be accomplished more quickly without federal intervention. However, Golden's speech made clear that both blacks and whites would have to make sacrifices if desegregation were to be accomplished. Although Governor Hodges politely dismissed Golden's speech, it highlights Golden's early efforts to influence white powerbrokers.

Harry Golden carefully nurtured his relationship with Governor Luther Hodges. In the winter of 1957, Golden wrote a letter thanking him for granting Golden the title of Ambassador of Good Will for North Carolina. Closing his letter, Golden confided in the governor that he would stand with North Carolina if forced to choose between the race issue and supporting the state. "Despite my more liberal views on the race question," Golden wrote, "if it was a matter of defending North Carolina, that would come first." Harry Golden's comment in this letter reveals the basis of his relationship with Governor Hodges; moreover, his words show how Golden strategically positioned himself as a racial moderate. In his communication with the governor, Golden carefully positioned himself as a friend of the state. Using his line of communication with the Governor, Harry Golden worked to garner broader support for school desegregation, but an innocent kissing game in Monroe would soon frustrate his efforts on behalf of school desegregation. As Golden would soon discover fears about desegregation were tied closely to concerns about interracial sex in the minds of many white Southerners.

Interracial sex has historically been a volatile issue in the South. During the 1950s, as African Americans increasingly advocated for civil rights, the topic of interracial sex received more attention. It was common for segregationists to appeal to this taboo in their defense of Jim Crow. Rather than directly challenge the issue of interracial sex, Golden sought to deal with the problem by arguing it would not happen. Downplaying this taboo, however, would prove ineffective as events in Monroe, North Carolina, a year later showed fears about interracial sex were part of the very fabric of Southern race relations.

On October 28, 1958, police officers in Union County, North Carolina, picked up David "Fuzzy" Simpson, age eight, and James Hanover Thompson, age ten. Earlier in the day Thompson and Simpson were playing in a ditch with a small group of white children. One child suggested they play a kissing game; each of the girls sat in a boy's lap and gave him a kiss. While all the children participated, Simpson, who was busy "killing granddaddy spiders," did not. After the game ended, the children went their separate ways. While that night, one of the little girls recounted the game while talking to her mother. The child's parents were outraged, and they called the police. After being arrested, the police held Thompson and Simpson in jail until their trial six days later. Presiding over the hearing, Judge J. Hampton Price found the two boys guilty of assault and sentenced them to Morrison Training School for Negroes for an indeterminate amount of time.

Mayor Fred Wilson notified Robert Williams of the boys' arrest, and Williams took an immediate interest in their cause. Turning first to Kelly Alexander, President of the Charlotte branch of the NAACP, Williams was told that the local NAACP chapter could not take the case. Williams turned next to Roy Wilkins, Executive Director of the NAACP, who likewise refused to handle the case.

The NAACP's reluctance to become involved in the case had much to do with the issue of interracial sex. In 1937, the NAACP had initially refused to take part in the Scottsboro trials in Alabama, where authorities arrested nine black youths and charged them with sexually assaulting two white women on a rail car. Historian Dan Carter notes, "Officers of the NAACP were jealous of their organization's reputation. The last thing they wanted was to identify the Association with a gang of mass rapists unless they were certain the boys were innocent or that their constitutional rights had been abridged."¹⁰¹ Now, twenty years later, the organization was still cautious when it came to the issue of interracial sex. After being turned down by the NAACP, Robert Williams and other supporters formed the Committee to Combat Racial Injustice (CCRI). Through the CCRI, they turned the Kissing Case into an international cause. Soon, newspapers as far away as the Netherlands described the events of the Kissing Case to their readers. Letters written in support of the boys began pouring into Governor Luther Hodges and President Dwight D. Eisenhower. "By the end of 1958," historian Timothy Tyson writes, "hundreds of thousands of people around the world had expressed their conviction that the events in Monroe were more than a 'local matter.'"¹⁰²

The impact of the Kissing Case on the United States' image was particularly detrimental in the climate of the Cold War, and it was not long before international pressures compelled Governor Luther Hodges to act.

Harry Golden first became involved in the case in December 1958. Writing to Kelley Alexander, he affirmed, "I have been asked by Conrad Lynn, a lawyer in New York, to help with a habeas corpus proceeding for the two Negro boys in Monroe, (N.C.) who are now in the workhouse having been convicted on the charge of kissing a little girl...but I did not think it would be wise to proceed in any way without your knowledge and consent and as a matter of fact with your review of the entire case and how you feel about it."¹⁰³ In the letter, Golden also revealed his feelings about Robert Williams, who he still resented for pushing the issue of the swimming pool over school desegregation. He wrote, "I have felt all along that the Negro leadership in Monroe has been very bad...I refer to [Robert Williams'] need for publicity and for the stupid statement about that swimming pool. Let us fight this school battle first."¹⁰⁴ Harry Golden remained critical of Robert Williams because he believed Williams's decision to work to desegregate Monroe's public pool fed white fears about interracial sex between black men and white women and forestalled efforts to build an interracial coalition to fight for school desegregation.

After the Kissing Case gained international attention, the NAACP decided to take up the case. In a December 1958 letter to Gloster Current, NAACP head of branches, apprised Roy Wilkins, the NAACP's national director, of the situation in Monroe. "I pointed out to [Kelly Alexander] that the entire situation can be very embarrassing to the Association unless something is done," he continued.¹⁰⁵ Under orders from the national office, local civil rights leader Reginald Hawkins and Kelly Alexander were sent to secure a quiet resolution to the matter. Hawkins later recalled, "Kelly and I went over because of the notoriety in the case...You have got to understand the NAACP. It was a bourgeois organization. It did not want to deal with the underclass and such. And Kelly took orders from Roy Wilkins. It wasn't until it broke national news that we got involved."¹⁰⁶ Hawkins and Alexander suggested that Harry Golden, a friend to Governor Luther Hodges, be sent to negotiate the boys' release. But Robert Williams adamantly opposed this strategy; he believed it would detract from the real issues of the case, school desegregation, and the taboo of interracial sex.¹⁰⁷ Just two weeks before the police arrested the two boys, Robert and Mabel Williams, who attempted to register their two sons at Monroe's all-white school. The Kissing Case was clearly a response to these efforts to desegregate. Williams's opposition to negotiation also underscored his distrust of Harry Golden's role as mediator. Continuing their efforts, the CCRI brought sustained attention to the boys' case through Williams, who went on national speaking tours to raise funds for their cause.

Golden, acting privately as a liaison on behalf of Kelly Alexander, contacted the Governor about the Kissing Case. In a confidential memo written to Luther Hodges on February 3, 1959, Golden informed the governor that while many of the state's liberals sought a resolution to the case, Williams had little support from them. "The sentiments I expressed concerning the unwise Negro leadership in Monroe are the sentiments of most of the liberal groups around the state, including the responsible Negro leadership. There are interested people in Charlotte who would like to do anything possible to resolve the matter." Golden's comments offer interesting insight into his role as liaison. No longer was he simply pushing the cause of desegregation to the Governor; now, he was also affirming black leaders who shared his position on civil rights.

On February 13, 1959, the state of North Carolina released James Hanover Thompson and David "Fuzzy" Simpson from Morrison Training School for Negroes. The exact reasons for their release are not entirely clear. Robert Williams attributed their release to international pressure. Conrad Lynn echoed similar sentiments: "[Thompson and Simpson] were freed because of great public indignation over the entire world, about their plight."¹⁰⁸ Harry Golden offered his own explanation by asserting that Kelly Alexander of the NAACP had asked him to meet with Governor Hodges.

Kelly said, 'Harry, our best bet is Governor Hodges. The Kissing Case is escalating...Will Hodges talk to you about it?' Hodges would. I told the governor that Robert Williams had collected \$10,000 the night before in Cleveland... 'Why should he get ten thousand dollars over the imprisonment of two boys? Let's get them out of jail,' I said. 'I want them out of jail,' said Hodges. 'But...the court made these boys wards of the state to protect them. They come from fatherless homes. They have no direction. How can I say the court is wrong?' 'We'll put the homes together again,' I suggested. [Hodges said], 'If you can guarantee that these two mothers will be established in stable environments, in clean apartments in separate parts of Charlotte, with respectable jobs, I'll let the two boys out tomorrow morning with a governor's fiat.' That afternoon, Kelly got the mother's jobs and rented two apartments, paying a month's rent on each.

In the morning, Luther Hodges was as good as his word and sent Hanover and Fuzzy home.

Incongruities in Golden's account make it doubtful. For example, in his explanation of the Kissing Case in the *Carolina Israelite*, Golden notes that Alexander was unable to find jobs in Charlotte for the boys' mothers. Nevertheless, Golden did meet with Governor Luther Hodges the day before the boys were freed.¹⁰⁹ Whether or not Golden's story about the boys' release was true, his rendition affirmed his role as liaison and underscored his belief that communication and negotiation with state officials could bring desired changes.

Writing about the Kissing Case in the *Carolina Israelite*, Golden illustrated a weakness of compromise as a strategy. Shifting the attention from the events of the case, Golden portrayed the incident as a matter of child neglect, using the boys' mothers as scapegoats.

First, the authorities saw that each boy had been in a few scrapes before. And the Authorities next learned that the mothers of the boys were not able to provide the minimum of home care for them. At this moment, the authorities acted both legally and wisely in retaining custody of the boys. North Carolina did not deserve the bad press it received in the matter. Certainly, neither the State nor the boys deserved to have the affair exploited. After examining every aspect of the case, I am prepared to state that North Carolina did not make a judicial mistake in retaining these boys, nor did the State make a 'Humanitarian' mistake. It did make a mistake in public relations...The Commissioner of Welfare, Mr. Madison said that as soon as the two mothers were established in homes and jobs, he would send the children back to them. This has happened in thousands of cases throughout North Carolina although none of these cases had any attendant publicity.¹¹⁰

Golden's article on the Kissing Case exonerated the state and placed the onus on the mothers of the children. Sacrificing the integrity of both the boys and their mothers, Harry's article demonstrated the weakness of compromise by lifting responsibility for the events in the case off the shoulders of the state to defend his political ally, Governor Luther Hodges. Golden's article also highlighted the tenuous position of white liberals who were forced to juggle obligations to both black and white allies.

After the Kissing Case ended, Harry Golden criticized Anne Braden, a white civil rights advocate in Kentucky and a member of the CCRI. In a letter written to fellow CCRI member George Wiseman, Braden commented on Golden's article in the *Carolina Israelite*, stating "I guess Harry had to make peace with the Carolina bosses. These 'liberals will just have to watch themselves from now on. You can bet Harry will continue to do so."¹¹¹ Braden's comments both stress the tenuous nature of Golden's political compromise and highlight another weakness in Golden's strategy. By siding with the state in his article, Golden lost credibility in the eyes of fellow activists like Braden. Similarly, Virginia Durr, a white civil rights activist in Alabama who aided protesters in the Montgomery Bus Boycott, criticized Golden for his efforts in the Kissing Case. Durr's remarks shed light on the limitations of Golden's model of activism. She stated, "I do not share in the general acclamation about [about Harry Golden]. I think he is a phony, a sincere phony, and I think he presents a totally false picture of the world of today." Durr also questioned Golden's appeal: "I think the reason he is so popular is that he presents the picture of 'Only in America' that the big guys want spread, the land of unlimited opportunity where boys start out on the East Side and end up on Broadway." Siding with Anne Braden, Durr challenged Golden's handling of the Kissing Case.

"Anne Braden and I agree on him entirely," Durr affirmed, "She said in the 'kissing case' he took it up and then dropped it flat when he saw he was offending the powers that be."¹¹² The criticism of both Braden and Durr underscored the cost of Golden's strategy of compromise. His efforts to shift the blame from the state may have allowed him to maintain an open line of communication with Governor Luther Hodges, but it cost him the respect of fellow movement activists.

Only a few months later, Robert Williams leveled harsher criticism against Golden. Williams attacked Golden's role as mediator and stressed his personal desire to speak for himself. In an open letter to the *Charlotte Observer*, Williams asserted, "For the record let it be understood that Charlotte's know-all Harry Golden does not speak for the Union County branch of the NAACP. If he has been authorized to speak for the North Carolina State Conference of Branches, we dissent. While we respect Harry for his wide knowledge pertaining to all things, we feel that he is as qualified as a Dodo bird to convey our true feelings manifested in our struggle for first class citizenship. We still love and respect Harry, but we have an aversion for puppets."¹¹³ Williams' letter highlighted the tension in the movement between white and black activists. His words prefigure similar ones made by activists in the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) during the late 1960s.

At the heart of Williams's comments was the desire of black activists like himself to articulate the aims of the movement for themselves.

The dispute between Williams and Golden reached its apex when an article on Williams' expulsion from the NAACP appeared in *Commentary*, a liberal monthly published by the American Jewish Committee. The central issue leading to Williams' dismissal was his support for armed self-reliance. Titled "Challenge to the Negro Leadership: The Case of Robert Williams," the article was written by Julian Mayfield, a left-leaning black nationalist. Criticizing the NAACP, Mayfield asserted that the organization was "middle class in origin and orientation [and] in danger of losing its claim to speak for the masses of Negroes."¹¹⁴ Mayfield praised the activism of Robert Williams, particularly his involvement in the Kissing Case, and criticized the principle of non-violent direct action: "Predictions are risky at best, but...the Negro leadership class will be faced with a crisis for its purely legalistic approach will clearly not be able to control the dynamics of the Negro struggle."¹¹⁵

One of the first to reply to Mayfield was Kelly Alexander of the NAACP, whose response appeared in the August 1961 edition of *Commentary*. Alexander asserted that before Williams' expulsion from the NAACP, he lost the support of leading white liberals. "When a group of white liberals in Charlotte first heard of Robert Williams and his activities in Monroe...they immediately held out a hand of fellowship and cooperation...but they soon had to withdraw their friendship, even before the NAACP found it necessary to suspend Williams." Alexander also attempted to set the record straight regarding the Kissing Case. While Mayfield attributed the success of the "Kissing Case" to Robert Williams and the international pressure he generated, Alexander retorted, "What an amazing piece of arrogance, and what a complete falsehood. Who ever heard of any sovereign state bowing under 'pressure of world opinion,' and particularly a Southern state? Has this ever happened before?"¹¹⁶ In a tribute to his friend, Alexander concluded with a defense of non-violent direct action by borrowing from the words of Harry Golden. "The most amazing story yet to be written out of the South is that over twelve million Negroes, half of them semi-literate, have not made one serious mistake. Their great victory lies in 'walking India as Gandhi did...'"¹¹⁷

Responding to Mayfield's *Commentary* article, Golden wrote a letter to Irving Engel, President of the American Jewish Committee. "At the last minute I decided against publishing a letter to *Commentary*," he wrote, "but I thought I'd send it on to you and a few other people involved in this and if they see fit to publish this, it's all right with me."¹¹⁸ Included with the letter was Golden's personal response to the Mayfield article. "*Commentary* has now decided to espouse the cause of anyone who contradicts the prevailing climate of opinion, no matter how absurd that contradiction may be," he began.¹¹⁹ Golden also challenged Mayfield's account of the "Kissing Case" and asserted his role as mediator. "The *Commentary* article said that 'worldwide protest' alerted by Robert Williams resulted in the release of the children," Golden wrote, "Untrue. The NAACP asked me to see Governor Hodges about the matter."¹²⁰ Golden concluded by defending the principle of non-violence while criticizing those, particularly within the American Jewish Committee, who opposed his civil rights advocacy. "I wonder how these highly conservative American Jewish Committee people feel when the publication they support throws scorn and ridicule on the 'walking across India' method and instead champions Mr. Williams who urges 'self-armed reliance.'"¹²¹

Reflecting on *Commentary*'s article about Robert Williams, Golden later wrote, "[The] magazine concluded that Mr. Williams was right, and I was wrong, that Robert Williams was 'hard,' and I was soft...*Commentary*'s conclusion gave Robert Williams the sort of success he needed. A Jewish liberal magazine had disavowed me and had questioned my effectiveness."¹²² But more than a personal affront, the rift between Williams and Golden had more significant implications. While Harry Golden's role as liaison between white officials and certain segments of the Black community was supported by Kelly Alexander and others within the NAACP, the criticisms of Robert Williams and Anne Braden reveal that not everyone in the movement was comfortable with Harry Golden's role. His actions in the Kissing Case further reveal his willingness to work within the system. Thus, he formed alliances with similarly minded black conservatives like Kelly Alexander. However, organizers like Robert Williams would face criticism for advocating strategies that challenged Golden's model for social change.

In his role as mediator, Harry Golden was not simply bringing whites and blacks together, but he also sought to choose who the black leaders should be. Robert Williams challenged this aspect of Golden's authority. While Harry Golden thought black and white leaders should come together, he opposed leaders like Robert Williams.

On the surface, his opposition seemed to arise from Williams' support for armed self-reliance, but it was because Williams challenged Golden's role as mediator and, by extension, Golden's place in the movement. His involvement in the UCCHR and the Kissing Case is significant because it highlights the complex dynamics of interracial cooperation. Nevertheless, Harry Golden remained committed to promoting alliances between blacks and whites. In the 1960s, Harry Golden watched support for interracial cooperation reach its zenith but also saw it fade away.

The life of Harry Golden underscores the need to broaden the definition of movement activist. Moreover, Golden's participation in the civil rights movement affirms the need not only to examine the lives of white movement proponents but also highlights the need to investigate their interaction with fellow activists, white and black. Moreover, Golden's participation in the civil rights movement affirms the need not only to examine the lives of white movement proponents, but it also highlights the need to investigate their interaction with fellow activists, white and black. Harry Golden demonstrated that it took all kinds of people to make a movement. While civil rights organizers certainly played indispensable roles in the movement, the individual contributions of advocates like Harry Golden were also significant.

⁵¹ *Carolina Israelite* (Charlotte, North Carolina), May/June 1956.

⁵² Harry Golden, *The Right Time: An Autobiography*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Son, 1969), 307-309; "Golden Rule", *Time*, April 1, 1957, 62; *Carolina Israelite*, (Charlotte, North Carolina), September/October, 1956; *Ebony*, October 1956; *Life*, October 6, 1958.

⁵³ *New York Times*, July 18, 1958.

⁵⁴ The Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Congress for Racial Equality organized the first Freedom Ride in 1947.

⁵⁵ Galicia was a part of Austria-Hungary. It was situated between Poland and Romania. Historian Moses Rischin notes conditions for Jews here were harsher than in other parts of Eastern Europe. Moses Rischin, *The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870-1914*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 31-32.

⁵⁶ Historian Hasia Diner argues that Golden's tendency to romanticize the Lower East Side emerged from a belief that this area of first settlement represented "Jewish cultural authenticity." Thus, Golden's description of the Lower East Side does not focus on the crowded and generally harsh conditions. For more on the Lower East Side see Hasia Diner, *Lower East Side Memories: A Jewish Place in America*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 27-28; Moses Rischin, *The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870-1914*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 76-94; Harry Golden, *Only in America* (New York: The World Publishing Company), 95.

⁵⁷ Historian Stephen Brumbeg notes that educators with New York City schools saw it as their goal to facilitate young immigrant's assimilation into American society. Thus, anglicizing students' names was common. Stephen Brumbeg, "Going to America, Going to School: The Immigrant-Public School Encounter in Turn-of-the-Century New York City," *American Jewish Archives* 85, no. 34 (November 1984): 86, 104-116. Golden, *The Right Time*, 48.

⁵⁸ Thomas, 6; Golden, *The Right Time*, 136-150.

⁵⁹ Before separating in 1941, Gallagher and Goldhurst had four children together. Although the two did not legally separate until 1961, their marriage ended with Goldhurst's departure for Virginia in 1941. Golden, *The Right Time*, 209-220.

⁶⁰ Morris Speizman, *The Jews of Charlotte, North Carolina: A Chronicle with Commentary and Conjectures* (Heritage Printers, Inc., 1978), 74-75.

⁶¹ Harry Golden's initial list of subscribers came largely from lists he purchased from Jewish organizations in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. Additionally he purchased lists from agencies in North Carolina and Charlotte. Golden, *The Right Time*, 255-256.

⁶² *Carolina Israelite*, (Charlotte, North Carolina), February 1945.

⁶³ Examples of the articles opposing bigotry that Golden reprinted include: "How Much Hate Can Our Democracy Stand?" reprinted from the *Jewish Herald-Voice*; "Race Hate: Enemy Bullets Can't Stop" by Frank Murphy reprinted from *Liberty Magazine*; "A Sure Cure for the KKK" by Harry Ashmore reprinted from the *Charlotte News*.

⁶⁴ *Carolina Israelite*, (Charlotte, North Carolina), November/December 1946.

⁶⁵ *Carolina Israelite*, (Charlotte, North Carolina), July/August, 1948.

⁶⁶ *Carolina Israelite*, (Charlotte, North Carolina), June 1951.

⁶⁷ Speizman, 57-59; 72-73; *Carolina Israelite* (Charlotte, North Carolina), January 1944; *Carolina Israelite* (Charlotte, North Carolina), December 1947; *Carolina Israelite* (Charlotte, North Carolina), January 1947; *Carolina Israelite* (Charlotte, North Carolina), March 1948; *Carolina Israelite* (Charlotte, North Carolina), January 1949.

⁶⁸ *Carolina Israelite*, (Charlotte, North Carolina), December 1947.

⁶⁹ *Carolina Israelite*, (Charlotte, North Carolina), April 1948; Three years earlier Golden was equally critical of the Fair Employment Practice Committee (FEPC) for similar reasons. *Carolina Israelite*, (Charlotte, North Carolina), February 1945.

⁷⁰ Loveland, 97-105.

⁷¹ Golden, *The Right Time*, 213.

⁷² *Carolina Israelite*, (Charlotte, North Carolina), February 1954.

⁷³ Michael Klarman, "How Brown Changed Race Relations: The Backlash Thesis" *Journal of American History* 1994 81(1): 84 -86.

⁷⁴ *Charlotte Observer*, February 10, 1958; *National Jewish Post and Opinion* (Indianapolis), February 14, 1958.

⁷⁵ *Carolina Israelite*, (Charlotte, North Carolina), January/February, 1957. Following the bombing of Atlanta's synagogue, Jews in the city took a more open stance on civil rights. For more on the Atlanta temple bombing, see: Melissa F. Greene, *The Temple Bombing* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1997).

⁷⁶ Harry Golden, *The Right Time*, 280.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Golden, *The Right Time*, 252.

⁷⁹ *Carolina Israelite*, (Charlotte, North Carolina), January-February, 1957.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Carolina Israelite*, (Charlotte, North Carolina); March/April 1957, 1; Golden, *Only in America*, 122-123.

⁸² Marry Bell to Harry Golden 1959, Hodges Correspondence. Harry Golden Papers, University of North Carolina-Charlotte.

⁸³ John Kirk, *Redefining the Color Line: Black Activism in Little Rock, Arkansas, 1940-1970* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), 106-138; Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954-1963* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 222-225.

⁸⁴ *Carolina Israelite*, (Charlotte, North Carolina), January-February, 1959.

⁸⁵ *New York Times*, July 18, 1958.

⁸⁶ *New York Tribune*, July 24, 1958.

⁸⁷ Timothy Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power*, (Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 83.

⁸⁸ *Raleigh News & Observer*, July 26, 1956.

⁸⁹ *Crusader* (Monroe, North Carolina), September 24, 1960.

⁹⁰ David Chappell, *Inside Agitators: White Southerners in the Civil Rights Movement* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994), 72-73.

⁹¹ Lillian Smith quoted in Loveland, 57.

⁹² Fosl, 207; Morton Sosna, *In Search of the Silent South: Southern Liberals and the Race Issue* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1977), 140-171.

⁹³ Harry Golden was initially named as a potential candidate for the Executive Board of the North Carolina Council on Human Relations (NCCHR) in a memo written by C.H. Parrish. Parrish selected Golden because of his "wide contacts in the Carolinas." While it is not clear if Harry Golden ever joined the NCCHR, he did join the Charlotte Human Relations Council in the 1950s. John H. Wheeler to Grace T. Hamilton (July 2, 1954), Southern Regional Council Papers.

⁹⁴ In a letter written to the North Carolina Council on Human Relations from the national office, SRC Director George Mitchell suggested that the NCCHR work to desegregate schools in mountains first. This decision arose from the belief that these schools could proceed quietly with desegregation. This is an example of the quiet activism Golden favored. Grace T. Hamilton to Harry S. Jones (January 28, 1955), Southern Regional Council Papers.

⁹⁵ George S. Mitchell to Harry L. Golden (December 9, 1955), Harry Golden Papers, University of North Carolina-Charlotte.

⁹⁶ *Carolina Israelite*, (Charlotte, North Carolina), June 1954.

⁹⁷ Passed by the state legislature in the spring of 1955, the Pupil Assignment Plan was North Carolina's first response to the school desegregation issue. It was designed to prevent statewide lawsuits aimed at school desegregation; the Pupil Assignment Plan invested local school boards with the responsibility of deciding who would be admitted to each school. The pupil assignment plan was later replaced by the Pearsall Plan. Numan V. Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race and Politics in the South During the 1950's* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 1969), 77-78; William Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina and the Black Struggle for Freedom*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 43-60.

⁹⁸ *Carolina Israelite*, (Charlotte, North Carolina), September-October, 1955.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Golden, *The Right Time*, 246-248.

¹⁰¹ Dan T. Carter, *Scottsboro: A Tragedy of the American South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 52-53.

¹⁰² Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie Robert F. Williams, and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 119-120.

¹⁰³ Harry Golden to Kelly Alexander, December 1958. Harry Golden Collection. University of North Carolina-Charlotte.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ NAACP papers, Group III, Box 92, Gloster B. Current to Roy Wilkins.

¹⁰⁶ Stephanie Banchero Papers, Rev. Reginald Hawkins, DDS, 1994 interview transcript, 1.

¹⁰⁷ Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 110; Golden, *The Right Time*, 304-306.

¹⁰⁸ Patrick Jones, "Communist Front Shouts 'Kissing Case' to the World": The Committee to Combat Racial Injustice and the Politics of Race and Gender during the Cold War, 105, MA Thesis. Both Jones and Tyson note the ambiguity surrounding the boys' release. See Tyson, 135 and Jones, 104-106.

¹⁰⁹ Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 135.

¹¹⁰ *Carolina Israelite*, (Charlotte, North Carolina) January-February, 1959, 1.

¹¹¹ Anne Braden to George Wiseman, March 5, 1959. Committee to Combat Racial Injustice Papers. State Historical Society of Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.

¹¹² Virginia Durr to Clark Foreman, December 1959, in Patricia Sullivan, ed., *Freedom Writer: Virginia Durr, Letters from the Civil Rights Years* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 195.

¹¹³ *Charlotte Observer*, April 28, 1959.

¹¹⁴ Julian Mayfield, "Challenge to the Negro Leadership: The Case of Robert Williams," *Commentary* 31, no. 4 (1961), 297.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 305.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ The recipients of the letter included: *Commentary*, Alfred Baker, Kelly Alexander, Kivie Kaplan, Herbert H. Ehrmann, Roy Wilkins, Frances Green. Harry Golden to Irving Engel. September 1961. Harry Golden Collection. University of North Carolina-Charlotte.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Golden, *The Right Time*, 382.