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Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust Hosts Compelling Panel Discussion on Nuremberg and Jim Crow Laws

New York, NY—On **Wednesday, October 14 at 7 p.m.**, leading academics will examine the persecution of and cooperation between blacks and Jews in *Racial Laws: Nuremberg and Jim Crow* at the **Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust**. **Robert Burt**, Yale Law School; **Jonathan Holloway**, African-American Studies, Yale University; and **Henry Feingold**, The Graduate Center, CUNY will discuss whether a shared suffering under anti-minority legislation was a motivating factor in the alliance between American Jews and blacks from World War II through the Civil Rights era. A tour of *Beyond Swastika and Jim Crow: Jewish Refugee Scholars at Black Colleges* will be held before the program at 6 p.m. Space is limited; pre-registration for the tour is required.

Tickets to this program are \$10 general admission, \$7 students/seniors, \$5 members and are available online at www.mjhnyc.org or by calling the Museum box office at 646.437.4202.

About Jim Crow and Nuremberg Laws

In the late 1870s, Southern legislatures began to pass laws that required the separation of white and black people in schools, on public transportation, and in other public places such as theaters and restaurants in order to severely limit contact between the races. Interracial marriage was prohibited. Through poll taxes, literacy tests, and other intentionally discriminatory measures, former Confederate states' legislatures effectively disenfranchised the majority of the black population in the South until the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Blacks could not vote or serve on a jury or in local office. Even in cases in which Jim Crow laws did not expressly forbid black people to participate in certain activities, sports, or church services, custom and the threat of violence or unjust legal consequences succeeded in creating a completely segregated society. Laws varied from state to state and town to town, but all were enforced in order to segregate and discriminate. These laws were validated by the Supreme Court case *Plessy vs. Ferguson* in 1896 in which the court ruled "separate but equal" constitutional—this case was not overturned until 1954 landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*.

In 1935, in the city of Nuremberg, Germany the Nazis announced new laws which institutionalized many of the racial theories prevalent in Nazi ideology in order to keep German blood "pure." This marked the first time the Nazis unequivocally stated who would be considered a Jew within the Reich. The laws excluded German Jews, defined as anyone with three or four Jewish grandparents, from citizenship and prohibited them from marrying or having intimate relations with non-Jews. While the Nuremberg Laws were not the first anti-Semitic policies in Germany, they brought about immediate segregation and therefore were the precursors for new laws that would further persecute Jews. It was common practice for the Nazis to appropriate and radicalize practices in their own culture and others in order to support their political, racist aims. It is clear that Hitler was familiar with the Jim Crow laws and other historical precedents to the Nuremberg laws.

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About the Speakers

Robert A. Burt has been a member of the Yale faculty since 1976 and previously served on the law and medical school faculties at the University of Michigan and the law faculty at the University of Chicago. Professor Burt has written extensively on biomedical ethics and constitutional law. His most recent book is *Death is That Man Taking Names: Intersections of American Medicine, Law and Culture*; in preparation for this book, he was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in 1997.

Jonathan Holloway is the author of *Confronting the Veil: Abram Harris Jr., E. Franklin Frazier, and Ralph Bunche, 1919-1941* (2002), the editor of Ralph Bunche's *A Brief and Tentative Analysis of Negro Leadership* (2005), and the co-editor of the anthology, *Black Scholars on the Line: Race, Social Science, and American Thought in the 20th Century* (2007). He is presently working on his next monograph, *Jim Crow Wisdom: Memory, Identity, and Politics in Black America, 1941-2000*.

Henry L. Feingold is professor emeritus of history at the Graduate Center and Baruch College, City University of New York. He is the author of numerous books including *Silent No More: Saving the Jews of Russia, the American Jewish Effort, 1967-1989*; *A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream, 1920-1945*; and *Bearing Witness: How America and Its Jews Responded to the Holocaust*.

This program has been made possible by a generous gift from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany: Rabbi Israel Miller Fund for Shoah Research, Documentation and Education.

About the Exhibition

On view through January 4, 2010, *Beyond Swastika and Jim Crow* tells the story of Jewish professors who fled Nazism and came to America in the 1930s and 1940s, finding teaching positions at historically black colleges and universities. The exhibition explores the encounter between these scholars and their students, and their impact on each other, the Civil Rights Movement, and American society.

This exhibition is made possible through major funding from the Leon Levy Foundation. Additional support was provided by the Helen Bader Foundation, The Lupin Foundation, The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation, the Alpern Family Foundation, and the Charles and Mildred Schnurmacher Foundation.

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About the Museum

The Museum's three-floor Core Exhibition educates people of all ages and backgrounds about the rich tapestry of Jewish life over the past century—before, during, and after the Holocaust. Special exhibitions include *Beyond Swastika and Jim Crow: Jewish Refugee Scholars at Black Colleges*, on view through January 4 and *The Morgenthau: A Legacy of Service*, opening November 16. *Keeping History Center*, a new permanent, interactive visitor experience, opens on November 6. The Museum offers visitors a vibrant public program schedule in its Edmond J. Safra Hall. It is also home to Andy Goldsworthy's memorial *Garden of Stones*, as well as James Carpenter's *Reflection Passage*, Gift of The Gruss Lipper Foundation. The Museum receives general operating support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and is a founding member of the *Museums of Lower Manhattan*.

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