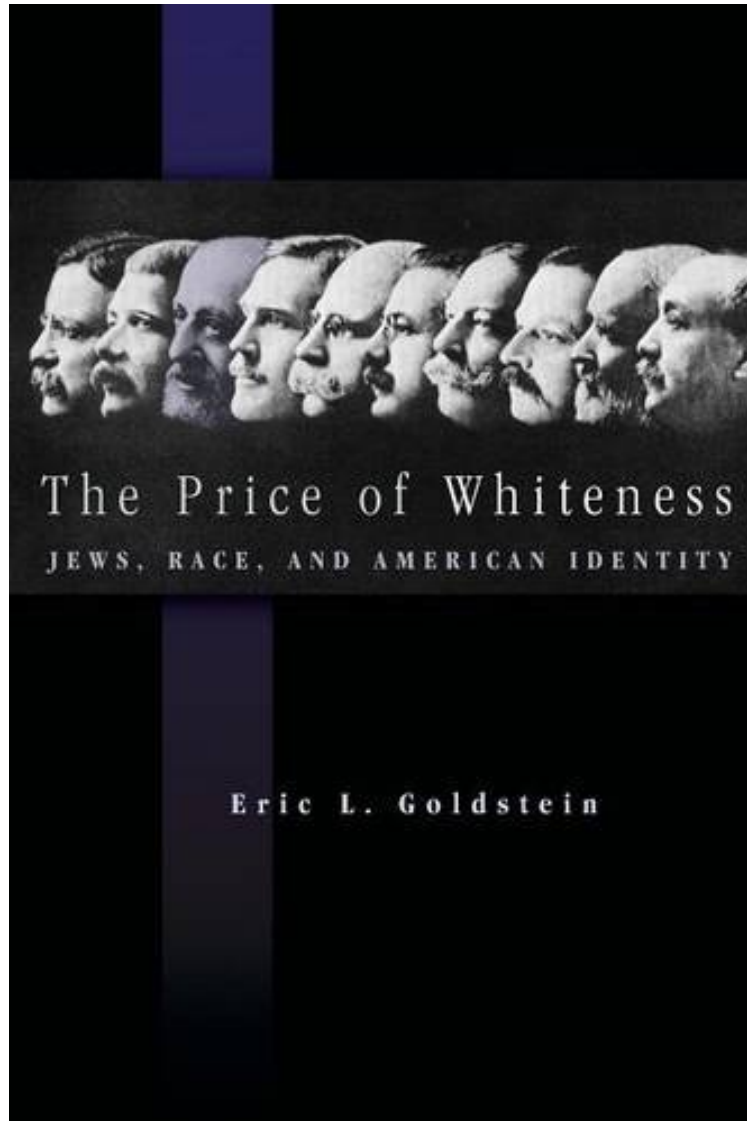


[Download pdf ebook] The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity

# The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity

*Eric L. Goldstein*

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**Eric L. Goldstein : The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating book By A. Colgan Goldstein paints a vivid picture of Jews' original indifference to racial dynamics in America and their subsequent efforts to be endorsed as 'belonging to the white family of races.' He then tracks later Jewish attempts to disassociate from whiteness and the cultural difficulties that result. Really interesting. 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. the price of whiteness By

Silvia R. Petuchowski An excellent chronological and logical overview of the development and complexity of Jewish Identity in the history of the United States, specifically as the immigrants from Europe attempt to end their own history of discrimination. The book introduces those who are first time readers in the subject to the name of the many Jewish organizations that have formed through the history of the US, representing different Jewish group interests. The book gives a beginning of an understanding to the complex relationship between Jews and Blacks, but leaves this topic barely on the surface. The book suffers from lack of depth in its analysis of this history but gives us from where to begin the study of this fascinating topic. 17 of 30 people found the following review helpful. Original and problematic

By Seth J. Frantzman This book deals with a number of different issues surrounding Jewish identity in America at least partly as it relates to the white majority and the black minority between which they found themselves in New York City and during the civil rights movement. The most original and insightful argument here is that Jews attached themselves to the white milieu and abandoned their 'coloured' identity of belonging to the minorities, such as Blacks, Asians and Hispanics. However this is where the major problem begins. It is not just Jewish identity that became connected to 'white, European western civilization' but rather a process whereby European-white civilization decided to craft the Jews into a white identity in the post-Holocaust period. Under the guise of arguing that Hitler's racial theories were lies there was a drive to create a 'new Jew' whereby Jews had to be assimilated into the white majority, thus the Jews became 'white'. But this book doesn't see the two-sided process. It also doesn't ask the central question: "is race merely a contrived fake idea, created in the 19th century and perhaps worth abandoning?" The author assumes that whites see themselves as separate from the 'others' but this is a ludicrous idea that only exists among the leftist-white upper classes who see everything in America based on varying degrees of skin color. Logical people realize ethnicity and race are mostly self-identity frauds.

Seth J. Frantzman

What has it meant to be Jewish in a nation preoccupied with the categories of black and white? *The Price of Whiteness* documents the uneasy place Jews have held in America's racial culture since the late nineteenth century. The book traces Jews' often tumultuous encounter with race from the 1870s through World War II, when they became vested as part of America's white mainstream and abandoned the practice of describing themselves in racial terms. American Jewish history is often told as a story of quick and successful adaptation, but Goldstein demonstrates how the process of identifying as white Americans was an ambivalent one, filled with hard choices and conflicting emotions for Jewish immigrants and their children. Jews enjoyed a much greater level of social inclusion than African Americans, but their membership in white America was frequently made contingent on their conformity to prevailing racial mores and on the eradication of their perceived racial distinctiveness. While Jews consistently sought acceptance as whites, their tendency to express their own group bonds through the language of "race" led to deep misgivings about what was required of them. Today, despite the great success Jews enjoy in the United States, they still struggle with the constraints of America's black-white dichotomy. *The Price of Whiteness* concludes that while Jews' status as white has opened many doors for them, it has also placed limits on their ability to assert themselves as a group apart.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . Relationships between American Jews and African-Americans have a long, complicated history. Jews engaged in African-American civil rights work as early as the 1910s. Yet Jewish songwriter Irving Berlin felt a strong need to repudiate the indisputable influence of African-American music on his work. In this original, boldly conceptualized and well-researched inquiry into the complicated intersections of "race" and Jewish-American identity, Emory University's Goldstein explores how Jewish immigrants gradually began to understand themselves as "white" (i.e., fully European) when most of America did not. Goldstein writes that he has framed this book not "as a study of how Jews became white but as one that explores how Jews negotiated their place in a complex racial world," which makes this substantially different from such works as Karen Brodtkin's *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America*. Using a dexterous mix of traditional history, sociology, critical race and whiteness studies. Goldstein brings together a wealth of examples—such as the turn-of-the-20th-century argument that Jews had a "primitive Negro past"—to explore the myriad ways the racialization of Jewishness formed a central tenet of ideas about race in American culture. (Mar.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Winner of the 2008 Sami Rohr Prize for the Jewish Literature Choice Award Finalist for the 2007 Weinberg Judaic Studies Institute Book Award Winner of the 2006 Theodore Saloutos Prize, Immigration and Ethnic History Society Co-Winner of the 2006 Saul Viener Book Prize, American Jewish Historical Society Finalist for the 2006 National Jewish Book Award in American Jewish Studies, Jewish Book Council

"In this original, boldly conceptualized and well-researched inquiry into the complicated intersections of 'race' and Jewish-American identity, Goldstein explores how Jewish immigrants gradually began to understand themselves as 'white' (i.e., fully European) when most of America did not." --Publishers Weekly (starred review)

"A palimpsest layering institutional, communal, literary, religious, and visual materials, Goldstein's study moves deftly and amusingly through periods and across cultural domains to show how the Jews came to describe themselves. . . . Goldstein's presentation of a century and a half of Jewish 'negotiation' of whiteness is fascinating chapter by chapter, and deft in communicating the bewildering diversity and reactivity of Jewish relationships to the black community." --

Elisa New, *New Republic*"More than any other historian to date, Goldstein . . . shows the changing ways in which Jewish Americans themselves argued either for their own racial particularity, or for their inclusions as whites, or for both."--David Roediger, *Chronicle of Higher Education*"Essential reading for understanding ethnic/race relations and Jewish identity. Goldstein provides an excellent history of Jewish efforts to place themselves within the American racial hierarchy."--Ronald H. Bayor, *Southern Jewish History*"Eric Goldstein demonstrates in this intriguing and insightful study [that] it would be much too short-sighted to regard race solely as a problematic concept imposed on American Jews in order to marginalize them."--Tobias Brinkmann, *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*"Eric L. Goldstein has written a penetrating and illuminating account of US Jews' entanglement with 'race' from the last third of the 19th century to the present. . . . [T]his is a thought-provoking text that deserves a wide readership."--Choice"This is a field well-trodden in recent years, but Eric L. Goldstein adds both earnest research and close interpretation to the inherently limitless question of Jewish-American 'identity.'"--American Historical "Eric L. Goldstein's book should be among the very first stops for those wishing to approach the subject of Jews and race in America.... It is broad, well researched, compellingly told, extraordinarily nuanced, and it comes as a kind of savior to an area of scholarship that has suffered from large gaps regarding basic historical fact."--Michael Alexander, *American Jewish History*"Eric Goldstein, an American historian, has written a fascinating, meticulously documented book that . . . shows that American Jews' definition of the Jewish collectivity, for themselves as well as for others, has undergone significant change over the past two centuries, to a large extent reflecting their varying sense of security in American society."--Chaim I. Waxman, *Jewish Political Studies*"Goldstein's *The Price of Whiteness* is a valuable addition to the study of the American Jewish community in the twentieth century. . . . Even though Jews are likely to remain ambivalent on what is a Jew, Goldstein's book has provided much solid research, thoughtful reflection, and added insight on this question. The book is recommended without hesitation or reservation."--Saul Lerner, *Shofar*"*The Price of Whiteness* is technically solid, with insightful writing and organization. . . . *The Price of Whiteness* is even more relevant than Goldstein is willing to claim. This is a highly readable, well-researched, and equitable examination of one of the most interesting topics in American Jewish history and a book worthy of consideration for course adoption in this field."--Glen Anthony Harris, *American Jewish Archives Journal*"[An] imaginative, provocative, and well-researched book."--Edward S. Shapiro, *Congress Monthly*From the Back Cover"This is an outstanding book. It offers scholars and general readers a complicated, nuanced, and sophisticated engagement with [the] issue."--Hasia R. Diner, *New York University*"Provocative and sure to spark discussion, this book will interest students of both American and Jewish history. It is a valuable contribution to scholarship in the field."--Deborah Dash Moore, *University of Michigan*