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Best wishes.
J. M. Lonsom

A Southern Philo-Semite: Josephus Daniels of North Carolina

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THE LAST NORTH CAROLINA APPEARANCE OF Josephus Daniels' long life (1862–1948) saw that long-time Methodist Sunday School teacher, a *yarmulke* on his head and a Zionist message on his lips, exhorting the congregation of the House of Jacob Synagogue in Raleigh. It was the Sabbath-eve service of December 12, 1947, and that Friday night had been set aside to mark the United Nations' recent decision to partition Palestine. Just before he caught the cold that developed into his short fatal illness, Daniels angrily attacked the British for having sought the Mandate and then betraying their pledge. He called for the United Nations to prove itself by now implementing the Palestine partition, and he was proud that a fellow North Carolinian, Herschel V. Johnson of Charlotte, had been the American spokesman in the partition debate at Lake Success.¹

A goodly number of non-Jews sat in attendance at the synagogue that night, including a delegation of Christian ministers from Smithfield, N. C., and the visitors looked on with interest, first as the rabbi introduced the speaker and later as the president of the congregation presented Daniels with a golden certificate indicative of his enrollment in the Jewish National Fund Golden Book at Jerusalem. Mrs. T. J. Lassiter, Sr., publisher of the semi-weekly newspaper in Smithfield, was then attending her first Jewish service, and she told her readers: “. . . As I listened to the young rabbi lead the responsive readings in pleasing sonorous tones and heard the Hebrew voices in response, the thing that kept recurring to me was: Jesus Christ was a Jew. He was of similar men as those I saw around me. . . . Mr. Daniels was as much at ease in the Jewish synagogue as he would have been in a church of his own Methodist denomination.”²

Josephus Daniels, editor of the *Raleigh News and Observer*, Secretary of the Navy in the Wilson Administration, and Ambassador to Mexico in the Administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, was probably the premier Christian Zionist on the American scene. It was Daniels whom Woodrow Wilson sent as his representative to the great Zionist dem-

1. *Raleigh News and Observer*, Dec. 13, 1947.

2. *Smithfield [N.C.] Herald*, Jan. 23, 1948.

onstration in New York, September 29, 1918, celebrating the British military liberation of Palestine and the then supposedly imminent implementation of the Balfour Declaration. In any case, Josephus Daniels was a philo-Semite long before he became a Zionist. To some extent his attitude was almost the expected one in the rural South of his day. Relatively few in number in the South, the Jews were characteristically self-employed, law-abiding, generous of their means, and steadily contributing their skills and capital to the upbuilding of a hopeful New South. All this is to say nothing of the South's prior concern over its Negro minority. Moreover, their religiously oriented Christian neighbors regarded the Jews as the People of the Bible, even to naive assumptions about the qualifications of Jewish storekeepers as masters of Biblical exegesis. Philo-Semitism has developed, historically, out of economic motives as often as from religious impulses. In Josephus Daniels, however, his admiration for the Jewish people unquestionably grew out of his lifelong attachment to the Bible. Thus developed a history of personal friendships with Jews and a general attitude of philo-Semitism that marked a lifetime that began during the Civil War and ended in the Atomic Age.

I

JOSEPHUS DANIELS CONCEIVED HIS ADMIRATION for the Jewish people during his boyhood in Wilson, N. C., where his widowed mother served as post-mistress to support herself and her three young boys. The editor recalled, of the 1870's, that his Methodist mother and two other women "made a trinity of cheer to those in sickness, want, or bereavement." The two others, he added, were Mrs. Mary Catherine Groves Connor, Catholic, and Mrs. Eva Oettinger Rosenthal, Jewish, and they "pioneered in the days when there were no trained nurses, no hospitals, no Red Cross or Community Chest organization."³ The Oettingers and the Rosenthals were, as the names might suggest, of those German Jewish immigrants of 1848, many of whom debarked at Baltimore and some of whom made their way southward. Mrs. Rosenthal's husband, Emil Rosenthal, was a well-to-do merchant, and Daniels always cherished the memory of his generosity. One day, while the future editor and his mother were sorting the day's mail, news came that the home of a man in the country had been destroyed by fire the night before. One prosperous townsman waiting for his mail avowed that he was sorry, whereupon Emil Rosenthal reached into his pocket and declared, "I am sorry twenty-dollars' worth."⁴

When young Daniels eked out his meager education by attending the Summer Law School of 1885 at the University in Chapel Hill, he formed a close friendship with Solomon Cohen Weill of Wilmington,

3. Josephus Daniels, *Tar Heel Editor* (Chapel Hill 1939), p. 136.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

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N. C. Characteristically, it began with admiration for Weill's brilliance. Young Weill was so proficient a Greek scholar that when the University's Greek professor retired because of illness, the young Jewish student acted in his stead for more than a year. In Chapel Hill the local Methodist minister got young Daniels to teach a Bible class in the church, and Sol Weill did not hesitate to attend regularly. Daniels recalled: "He knew the Old Testament better than I did and with a sort of wicked laugh would sometimes expose my lack of Bible lore."⁵ After Daniels settled in Raleigh in the fall of 1885, Weill would come over and join the editor in courting young ladies or in attending church. Weill would tease Daniels for trying to make him into a Methodist.⁶

During the troubled 1890's—which Henry Steele Commager has justly called a watershed of American history—Daniels emerged as a pre-eminent Southern Democratic champion of progressive reform. If he advocated Free Silver without any profound understanding of the quantity theory of money, it was because he envisaged it as an opening wedge for a whole catalogue of reforms. Those he had specifically in mind were regulation of public utilities, a progressive income tax, direct election of United States senators, abolition of child labor, rights for labor, and rights for women. In his reformer's role of combating the dominant position in his state of the Southern Railway, Daniels was the self-styled "Mordecai at the Gate." He used the Jewish allusion because it was undoubtedly meaningful in a homogeneous Protestant society, where even the unlettered knew the story of the wicked Haman who was undone by the pious and just Mordecai. Daniels called the railroad's head, Alexander B. Andrews, the "would-be political boss of North Carolina" and satirically portrayed this latter-day Haman saying to himself: "Yet all this availeth me nothing so long as I see Mordecai, the Jew, sitting at the King's gate."⁷ Daniels was proud to be thought of as Mordecai the Jew; it was his patent of incorruptibility.

At the same time, the political battles of the 1890's did generate a variety of rhetorical anti-Semitism. The hue and cry against "Wall Street" and "Jewish international bankers," which punctuated some of the more intemperate Populist arguments, was undoubtedly more characteristic of the West than of the South. Nevertheless, the hard times produced their scapegoat, and anti-Semitic stereotypes did begin making their appearance.⁸ The Democratic Daniels, though sympathizing with many Populist reform ideas, hastened to denounce such occasional anti-Semitism as sometimes appeared in his state's Populist press. On one occasion, for instance, he sternly rebuked the Populist *Caucasian* (Raleigh) for attacking a prominent Democratic lawyer, Kope Elias, as "an anti-Christian law-

5. *Ibid.*, p. 230.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

7. *Raleigh News and Observer*, Nov. 3, 1897.

8. For a discussion of anti-Semitism in Populist literature, see Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York 1959), pp. 77-81.

yer." Elias was of Jewish origin but had married a Methodist woman and had joined her church. So it was both as a Methodist and a philo-Semite that Daniels retorted to the *Caucasian's* slur: "The attempt to belittle Mr. Elias because he is of Jewish extraction is on a par with the methods in vogue among Populists. It is a practice which belongs to the dark ages and is unworthy of this decade."⁹

THE TURN OF THE CENTURY saw the death of the Populist party but not of the populist form of rhetorical anti-Semitism. It even crept into Daniels' own *News and Observer*. As the new century dawned, North Carolina became a one-party state to the accompaniment of Negro disfranchisement. The Republican ex-Governor Daniel L. Russell and the Populist ex-Senator Marion Butler, while still holding their respective offices, had hatched a scheme in which Russell was the prime mover, to obtain full payment on some old scaled-down North Carolina state bonds. The bonds represented an honest, if almost forgotten, debt, but the sight of the two "Fusionists" conspiring to impoverish their native state infuriated the Democrats. Especially galling was the subterfuge incident to the lawsuit for payment, an arrangement of a "gift" of a packet of bonds to South Dakota so that that state could sue North Carolina in the United States Supreme Court. The high court decided in 1904, voting five to four, that North Carolina must pay.¹⁰ The angry and frustrated Democrats excoriated their two "traitors," Josephus Daniels leading the outcry, and his newspaper charged that the long-suffering and unpaid firm of Schafer Brothers (a Jewish firm in New York) was acting the part of Shylock. At one point *The News and Observer*, publishing "The Inside Story of Dakota Bonds," referred to a put-upon bondholder who was in fact being defrauded by the Republican ex-governor as "the gentleman with the Jew name."¹¹ If the *Caucasian* was "unworthy" in 1896, so was *The News and Observer* in 1905. Nevertheless, no such slur was afterward permitted to appear in *The News and Observer*.

During those long years of Democratic exile from the White House, Josephus Daniels was his state's Democratic national committeeman. He went down to national defeat three times with his idolized William Jennings Bryan and once with the conservative Alton B. Parker. By the time of 1912 and the imminent Democratic success, Daniels was a widely traveled visitor to national conventions and other Democratic gatherings. He had made many new Jewish friends in the process, all Democrats who

9. Raleigh *News and Observer*, Jan. 3, 1896.

10. 192 U.S. 286 (1904); a recent and thorough account of the bond controversy is Robert F. Durden, *Reconstruction Bonds & Twentieth Century Politics: South Dakota v. North Carolina (1904)* (Durham, N.C. 1962).

11. Jan. 24, 1905. The gentleman was identified as J. M. Lichtenauer, 20-22 Broad St., New York City. That he was defrauded by ex-Governor Russell is shown in Durden, *Reconstruction Bonds*, p. 43n.

had worked in harness with him, like Henry Morgenthau, Sr. Their sons reminisced about it—Jonathan Daniels to Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Jr.—during the Second World War. The younger Daniels recalled how his mother took her four sons on a trip that celebrated Woodrow Wilson's recent election to the Presidency and also the recovery of mother and two sons from a bout of typhoid fever. One day in New York City the Daniels youngsters were given the run of the Mirror Candy Factory, there to eat and carry away all the candy they could hold. It had all been arranged by the elder Morgenthau, soon to be appointed Ambassador to Turkey, and the young Danielses never forgot him for it.¹²

II

DURING THE EIGHT YEARS that Daniels was Secretary of the Navy, he was that Cabinet member to whom the Jews always turned. Indeed, his given name of Josephus made a few Jews rejoice that President Wilson had named one of their co-religionists to the Cabinet.¹³ Daniels showed himself more benignly philo-Semitic than ever, and possibly more so than a self-consciously Jewish Cabinet member. His first speech after being inducted into office was at a Washington banquet of B'nai B'rith, and he happily told his audience about his boyhood Jewish friends in Wilson, N. C., and about Emil Rosenthal's being sorry twenty-dollars' worth.¹⁴ There was no question about Daniels being completely relaxed in the company of the Jewish friends he had made during the recent political campaigns, too, men like Nathan Straus, Henry Morgenthau, Abram L. Elkus, and Herman Bernstein.

Daniels rarely missed an opportunity thereafter of making a friendly public gesture toward the Jewish people. His first chance occurred in 1914 and he acquitted himself honorably. As Secretary of the Navy, Daniels ordered a public funeral held at the Brooklyn Navy Yard for the nineteen American sailors killed during the forcible occupation of Vera Cruz. A New York rabbi addressed himself to Daniels, pointed out that two of the sailors were Jewish, and begged that a Jewish clergyman be asked to participate in the public funeral.¹⁵ To be sure, the rabbi in question wanted to seize the occasion to establish a permanent Jewish chaplaincy—something which Jewish numbers in the Navy did not then warrant—but Daniels saw the point and acted with dispatch. After President Wilson had concluded his moving address to the great throng at the memorial service, he was followed in prayer by Rabbi Stephen S. Wise.¹⁶ Daniels had seen to it.

12. Dec. 27, 1943, Jonathan Daniels Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.

13. Josephus Daniels, *The Wilson Era: Years of War and After, 1917-1923* (Chapel Hill 1945), p. 214.

14. *Ibid.*

15. E. B. M. Browne to Daniels, May 3, 1914, Josephus Daniels Papers, Library of Congress.

16. Raleigh *News and Observer*, May 12, 1914.

Later that year Rabbi Wise was "waiting for Secretary Daniels that he may accede to our wishes in the matter of transporting produce to Palestine. . . ."17 As the guns of August, 1914 opened fire in Europe, a group of American Jews led by Louis D. Brandeis formed a Provisional Executive Committee in response to appeals from needy Jews caught in the war zones and especially from the imperiled Jewish settlers in Palestine. In those days the Palestinian Jews were fleeing into Egypt, where by early 1915 the American consulate at Alexandria acted as headquarters for the relief effort. Americans sending money could, thanks to Secretary of State Bryan, use the consulate as a depository and distribution agency. The Provisional Committee then obtained safe conduct for a food ship from the British and French, who dominated Mediterranean waters. Finally, though they had collected the money and bought the supplies, the Provisional Committee needed shipping, and for this the members turned to Josephus Daniels.18

Herman Bernstein had already written Daniels of the desperate need in Palestine, and the Navy Secretary had heard from William Jennings Bryan of his interview with Brandeis and with Rabbis Wise and Judah L. Magnes. Sending a relief ship into the war zone was against Navy regulations, so Daniels suggested to President Wilson the solution that was adopted. So long as the American Navy was sending colliers into the Mediterranean for the coaling of American Navy vessels there, why not reduce the space on the next two colliers and give it over to Jewish relief supplies? Woodrow Wilson, Daniels' fellow-Southerner, readily agreed, and so the Navy Secretary dispatched the collier *Vulcan* with nine hundred tons of food supplies and medicines.19 A little later he dispatched the collier *Starling*, which carried medicines and—the Methodist Secretary had seen to it—*matzoth* for Passover.20 Years later ex-Secretary Daniels was deeply affected when his generous act was remembered at a testimonial dinner given him at the Jewish Center of Brooklyn.21 He received resolutions of appreciation and a bronze plaque with the Ten Commandments, which he proudly displayed for the rest of his life.

His experience with the Provisional Committee in 1915 made Daniels a lifelong friend of Rabbi Wise, who remembered him as "a never failing friend of the oppressed,"22 and of Louis D. Brandeis, whose appointment to the Supreme Court Daniels both favored and assisted.

17. Stephen S. Wise to Mrs. Wise, 1914 (undated), in Justine Wise Polier and James Waterman Wise (eds.), *The Personal Letters of Stephen Wise* (Boston 1956), p. 148.

18. This account of the Provisional Committee's work is derived from Alfred Lief, *Brandeis: The Personal History of the American Ideal* (New York and Harrisburg 1936), pp. 324-25.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 325.

20. Daniels, *Wilson Era: Years of War*, p. 219.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Stephen Wise, *Challenging Years: The Autobiography of Stephen Wise* (New York 1949), p. 185.

Daniels' help came in the form of securing the favorable vote on confirming Brandeis' nomination from the recalcitrant Senator Lee S. Overman of North Carolina. Overman was acting chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, where the Brandeis nomination was in serious trouble (unlike the Senate itself, where the Wilson Administration had the votes). In May, 1916 President Wilson invited Daniels and Overman to accompany him to a patriotic celebration the President was to address in Charlotte, N. C. The presidential train was scheduled to pass through Salisbury, N. C., Senator Overman's home, and the latter begged Daniels to intercede with Wilson on behalf of a whistle-stop appearance so that President and Senator might pose happily on the rear platform for the home-folks. Wilson had earlier told Overman that the thing was out of the question, but to Daniels' diplomatic urgings the President gave in and made Overman happy.²³ He also got Overman's vote for Brandeis' confirmation. As the war clouds moved closer to America in March, 1917, Mr. Justice Brandeis tried to comfort his pacifist wife by reminding her that Josephus Daniels did not yet despair. Said Brandeis of Daniels: "I guess he would be as likely to see peace ahead as any living man—if it were visible."²⁴ In 1926 Daniels wrote happily to his doctor-son that Justice Brandeis, with whom he had just talked, had agreed that young Daniels would do well to locate his practice in Washington.²⁵ In the last conversation Josephus Daniels had with Brandeis, during the New Deal days, the Justice asked Daniels to persuade two well-known lobbyists to leave Washington and quit selling their influence.²⁶

THE LONGEST AND PERHAPS CLOSEST friendship dating from Daniels' Cabinet years was that with Bernard M. Baruch. The latter recalled that Daniels gave him encouragement from the first, recommended him for every appropriate post, even talked up Baruch as President Truman's Secretary of the Treasury because such an appointment would fill the world with confidence.²⁷ Historians not equipped to be critical of the *Diaries* of Colonel Edward M. House (Yale University Library) have been puzzled by House's assertion that Baruch approached President Wilson in 1916 and urged him to remove Daniels as Secretary of the Navy. The same *Diaries* record House's own plan to accomplish the very same end. Baruch has since declared that House's assertion as to Baruch is entirely false, and Jonathan Daniels has satisfied himself—on the basis of a personal inspection of the House *Diaries*—that the Colonel's postur-

23. The anecdote is in Josephus Daniels, *The Wilson Era: Years of Peace, 1910-1917* (Chapel Hill 1944), pp. 546-47.

24. Alpheus Mason, *Brandeis, A Free Man's Life* (New York 1946), p. 519.

25. Josephus to Worth Bagley Daniels, Dec. 16, 1926, in possession of Dr. Worth B. Daniels, Washington, D. C.

26. Daniels, *Wilson Era: Years of Peace*, pp. 548-49.

27. Bernard M. Baruch to Jonathan Daniels, May 25, 1953, Jonathan Daniels Papers.

ings and inconsistencies demolish his credibility as a witness.²⁸ Even if supposedly safely buried in the House *Diaries*, House's own desire to oust Daniels—not Baruch's alleged desire to do so—was widely reported in the press, so much so that the Colonel took care to write Daniels a denial in 1917.²⁹

Baruch and Daniels shared a common interest in their woebegone Democratic party during the administrations of Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover. The onset of the Depression and the approach of a Democratic victory in 1932 brought the two old friends closer together than ever. Josephus Daniels almost did not live to become F. D. R.'s Ambassador to Mexico, for on January 13, 1932—in his seventieth year—he suffered a bad automobile accident in Atlanta. Matters looked black for Daniels as he lay bedridden in an Atlanta hospital. He had already been dealt a serious blow in the failure of his hometown bank, which had failed with his life savings on deposit. And to compound his troubles, business conditions had grown so depressed that they threatened the very existence of *The News and Observer*. At this juncture, January 18, 1932, Bernard M. Baruch came forward with a providential loan—and truly a fortune in those days—of \$25,000.³⁰ The loan was repaid over a period of years, partly with money saved from the Ambassador's salary and partly from the recovering *News and Observer*. "Your kindness at the time was more valuable to me than you can know," the Ambassador wrote, "and I shall never cease to be grateful to you."³¹ A late joint appearance by the old Wilsonians was at Charlotte, N. C., on February 21, 1946. Baruch made the introduction of Daniels, who was being given the *Carolina Israelite* award for distinguished service in furthering human rights. Characteristically, the old gentleman made a fighting Zionist speech.

That speech tied in directly with his first Zionist address. The occasion was a great Zionist "Patriotic Demonstration" in New York, September 29, 1918, "to celebrate the victory of the Allied Armies in Palestine and President Wilson's statement approving the aims of the Zionist Organization."³² President Wilson assigned Daniels to represent him, and the Navy Secretary was introduced by Judge Julian W. Mack to a packed and deeply stirred house. Secretary Daniels minced no words, and tied the 1918 military liberation of Palestine to the previous year's Balfour Declaration. Himself deeply affected, he declared: "Who knows but what in modern Judea, whose every hill and valley rings with the imperishable utterances of an Isaiah and a Jeremiah, of a Micah and an Amos, there

28. Jonathan Daniels to Bernard M. Baruch, June 18, 1953, *ibid.*

29. Edward M. House to Josephus Daniels, Sept. 11, 1917, Josephus Daniels Papers.

30. Office of Bernard M. Baruch to Daniels, April 29, 1936, *ibid.*

31. Daniels to Baruch, June 4, 1936, *ibid.*

32. Josephus Daniels, *The Navy and the Nation: War-Time Addresses* (New York 1919), p. 257. The text of Daniels' Zionist address, "The Return to the Promised Land," is on pp. 257-65.

may not be born some new truth to bless the world and lead mankind to even greater heights than it has already attained?"³³ He had no sooner finished than "the thousands of devout Jews began a song of deliverance," which his unpracticed ear was unable to identify as *Hatikvah*. "In all my life," he recalled, "I have never seen deeper spiritual fervor."³⁴

III

DURING THE 1920's Daniels had all he could do to keep his Democratic party from committing suicide, especially at the disastrous Madison Square Garden Convention of 1924. Rural America and its values were, in effect, at war with urban America and its standards. Daniels was inescapably in the rural camp, but his moderation was at sharp variance with the bitter-end fanaticism that characterized his old friend Bryan. Indeed, when Bryan came to call on the editor and sought his support in passing a North Carolina law to ban the teaching of evolution, Bryan was flatly refused.³⁵ Daniels took exactly the opposite position in his paper, and helped to defeat the proposal that would have made North Carolina as much an object of ridicule as Tennessee in the Scopes trial.³⁶ Another weapon in the rural armory was the Ku Klux Klan, which Josephus Daniels fought openly and without stint. Nevertheless, as a leading Southern Democratic spokesman he knew that the rank-and-file Klansmen were traditionally Democratic and must be carefully weaned away from their aberration. He therefore pulled his editorial punches just enough to avoid naming names. To be sure, the Southern Klansmen were far less anti-Semitic than they were anti-Negro and anti-Catholic. And in North Carolina the obtuseness of the rank-and-file Klansman was brought home to Sol Lipman, a Jewish clothier of New Bern, N. C., who recalled being approached by one of his customers (who was fully aware of Lipman's Jewishness) and being invited to join the Ku Klux Klan³⁷.

During the 1920's Daniels' references to the Jews—sometimes platitudinous, always warmly well-intentioned—hailed Mortimer L. Schieff for giving \$25,000 to the building fund of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the Cone family of Greensboro, N. C., for giving buildings to that city's Y. M. C. A., to Julius Rosenwald for his benefactions to Negro Y. M. C. A.'s and schools. "Whenever men are governed by love," Daniels

33. *Ibid.*, p. 263.

34. Daniels, *Wilson Era: Years of War*, p. 220. The quotation, "Who knows but what in modern Judea . . .," appears also in *ibid.*

35. Ben Dixon MacNeill, "Josephus Daniels," *American Mercury*, XXIX (July 1933), p. 306.

36. Daniels' key editorial in helping to kill the Poole Bill, which would have forbidden the teaching of evolution in state-supported schools, is in *Raleigh News and Observer*, Feb. 18, 1925.

37. Interview with Sol Lipman.

wrote during the Christmas season of 1924, "that divine spirit transcends creed or race."³⁸

As for Julius Rosenwald, Daniels had conceived an admiration for the head of Sears, Roebuck during their work together on the World War I Council of National Defense. When Rosenwald came to Raleigh during the 1920's to dedicate one of the many Negro schools made possible by his generosity, he visited Daniels' home and admired on the editor's table the bronze Ten Commandments awarded him by the Jewish Center of Brooklyn. Rosenwald jokingly avowed that his firm sold everything but the Ten Commandments "because we have broken most of them."³⁹ On a later trip to Chicago Daniels was Rosenwald's guest, and one day he found himself the only non-Jew at Rosenwald's table, where a bitter denunciation issued against Henry Ford for his recent sensational attack on the Jews. Daniels had been on cordial terms with Ford, having sought Democratic campaign contributions from him in 1916, won his cooperation in building Eagle Boats for the Navy in 1917-18, and helped to draft the automobile magnate as senatorial candidate in 1918. Therefore, when asked if he agreed with the denunciation of Ford, Daniels surprised and probably embarrassed the Rosenwald party by saying he did not. "I astonished them by saying that I could not imagine anyone hating Mr. Ford, who was so gentle and guileless, and I expressed the opinion that someone had taken advantage of Mr. Ford's lack of knowledge of history and put one over on the pioneer automobile king. That irritated the man who despised Ford, but Mr. Rosenwald calmed him by agreeing with me that when Mr. Ford found that he had been imposed upon he would be the first to regret he had lent himself to the unjust propaganda. And that is exactly what happened, but not without much bitterness."⁴⁰

IV

DURING THE HITLER ERA Josephus Daniels was an especially outspoken friend of the persecuted Jewish people, and he started with conditions at home. It seems that his beloved University of North Carolina (he was a Trustee from 1901 until his death in 1948) was then supporting only a two-year medical school. This medical school was applying a *numerus clausus* against Jewish applicants on the grounds that the local authorities were encountering difficulty in placing their Jewish students for the final two years of their M.D. training. In other words, it was always the *other* medical schools that were unfairly discriminating. In the fall of 1933 a "fifth" Jewish student was denied admission to the University's Medical

38. Raleigh *News and Observer*, Dec. 11, 1924.

39. Daniels, *Wilson Era: Years of War*, p. 218.

40. Josephus Daniels, "There Are No Self-Made Men," fragment in "Life Begins at Seventy," unpublished autobiographical notes, Jonathan Daniels Papers.

School; he was "fifth" in the sense that, under the *numerus clausus*, only four were admissible in an entering class of forty. When this "fifth man" appealed his rejection by the Dean, President Frank P. Graham not only over-ruled the Dean and admitted the student, but also accepted the Dean's resignation.⁴¹ Many publications, including *The American Hebrew* of October 27, 1933, hailed President Graham's act as symbolic during the first year of Hitler's accession to power. And from Mexico came the expected approval from Trustee Josephus Daniels, who wrote from the Embassy in Mexico City: "The University could not live up to its ideals if it had rejected the young Jew who had shown himself in every way qualified to be admitted to the Medical School."⁴²

In 1937 Josephus Daniels did not hesitate to rebuke his own brother, Charles C. Daniels, for anti-Semitism. The Ambassador had formed the habit of sending periodic Diary-Letters to members of his large family, and in one such message he warned all the Danielses against becoming infected with the anti-Semitic virus. "In New York," the Ambassador wrote, "Charles regaled me with his usual Jew-complex stories. I cannot imagine how any man can feel like indicting a whole race as he does. . . . Last night and the night before I went to the movies aboard ship . . . and both nights I have been with Commander Newberger of the Navy Medical Corps—very intelligent and a Jew."⁴³

During his ambassadorial stay in Mexico, Daniels' Diary-Letters show that he did everything he could to mitigate the lot of the European refugee Jews there. In *Shirt-Sleeve Diplomat*, Daniels' Mexican memoir, he entitled his short chapter on Jewish affairs "The Scattered Nation."⁴⁴ He used that title advisedly, for it was the title of the celebrated philo-Semitic oration by Zebulon B. Vance of North Carolina. The original "Scattered Nation" was written by Vance, the state's folk hero and Civil War Governor, in 1891 as a protest against the vicious Russian pogroms of that year. Daniels knew the Vance story intimately; he knew of Vance's many Jewish friends and of his likening "The Scattered Nation" to the invigorating and distinct Gulf Stream. He knew also the story of May, 1865, when a troop of Federal cavalry arrested the Governor at his Statesville home preparatory to delivering him at the Salisbury railroad station thirty-five miles away and sending him on to prison in Washington. There was not a horse or rig to be spared in town,

41. Raleigh *News and Observer*, Oct. 1, 1933. A collection of related clippings is in the Presidents' Papers (Frank P. Graham), University Archives, University of North Carolina Library, mostly dated Oct. 1 and 2, 1933.

42. Daniels to Graham, Oct. 11, 1933, President's Papers (Frank P. Graham), University Archives, University of North Carolina Library.

43. July 16, 1937, Bagley Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina. Josephus Daniels wrote this Diary-Letter aboard the *S.S. Manhattan* en route to France, where the Ambassador was to act as a member of the American Battle Monuments Commission.

44. Pp. 334-37.

so Vance's Jewish friend, Samuel Wittkowsky, got out his buggy and proceeded to chauffeur and to comfort the captive Governor on his sad journey. Vance had never forgotten Wittkowsky's kindness, and Daniels had never forgotten Vance's "The Scattered Nation."⁴⁵

Daniels' Diary-Letters of January and of October 22, 1938 voiced concern over the thousands of Jews who had come to Mexico after the First World War—barred from the United States by immigration quotas—and had desperately described themselves as "agriculturists." Now there was agitation to deport them, but where could they now find a haven?⁴⁶ His Diary-Letter of January 6, 1939 recorded some minor anti-Jewish outbreaks in Mexico.⁴⁷ Daniels' Diary-Letter of September 21, 1940 referred agonizingly to the unfortunate eighty Jewish refugees who had arrived by ship at Vera Cruz from Portugal and were not permitted to land in Mexico. They all bore visas given them by the Mexican consul at Lisbon (by this time no longer an official of the Mexican government), and the poor people had been relieved of \$100 for each worthless visa.⁴⁸ The old Ambassador even fed pro-Jewish items to his editor son Jonathan for possible inclusion in *The News and Observer*. One such instance was a copy of the elder Daniels' note to Henry Morgenthau, Sr. reminding the other of the World War I canard that American Jews were to be deported. Morgenthau's own memoir had recorded the promise of Arthur Zimmermann, German Foreign Minister, that the Germans would treat Jews better than ever because of their splendid record fighting for the Kaiser. Daniels added: "The promise made by Zimmermann had been repudiated by Hitler!"⁴⁹ Above all, Daniels spoke up for the Jews when they most needed support. In the immediate pre-Pearl Harbor days, when the anti-Semitic remarks of Charles A. Lindbergh betokened a new high in anti-Jewish bitterness,⁵⁰ the old editor spoke up.

Daniels had just come back to the United States to "retire" because of Mrs. Daniels' continued ill health. He himself was, in his eightieth year, as sturdy as an oak. He knew it was important to the Jews that he accept an invitation to address the annual convention of the North Carolina B'nai B'rith Federation. As a journalist he knew his news values well enough to appreciate that a speech by Josephus Daniels would receive full coverage by the news media. In the wake of Lindbergh's anti-Semitic outburst, therefore, Daniels called the roll of his Jewish friends.

45. Widely published in anthologies, the oration has been published separately: Zebulon B. Vance, *The Scattered Nation* (Raleigh 1928).

46. The text of the Diary-Letter is in Josephus Daniels, *Shirt-Sleeve Diplomat* (Chapel Hill 1947), pp. 334-35.

47. The text is in *ibid.*, p. 336.

48. The text is in *ibid.*, pp. 336-37.

49. Oct. 21, 1938.

50. The occasion was an America First rally in Des Moines, Ia., Sept. 11, 1941. A good discussion of this speech is in Kenneth S. Davis, *The Hero: Charles A. Lindbergh and the American Dream* (Garden City 1959).

He spoke of Louis Brandeis, Felix Frankfurter, Bernard Baruch, the two Henry Morgenthau, Herbert Lehman, and Stephen S. Wise "with whom I have had the honor to be associated in days that tested patriotic devotion."⁵¹

V

ONE DAY IN THE MIDST OF THE WAR YEARS, with the "retired" ambassador busily doing two men's work on *The News and Observer*, he had a caller named Harry Golden. In those days, long before his fame with *Only in America*, Golden did much traveling to make financial ends meet, and on this occasion he bore an invitation for Daniels to speak at a Zionist meeting. Old Mr. Daniels was charmed by Harry Golden, and began making a rule of inviting the younger man to his home. About the third meeting, Golden recalls, he felt compelled to reveal the secret of his prison record to his host. Golden was fearful lest Daniels hear the story from someone else, that it might then be a reflection on Jews generally. He identified himself as that Harry Goldhurst who had gone to prison after pleading guilty to mail fraud in 1929, as that Harry Goldhurst who had conducted the stock speculations for Daniels' political and ecclesiastical enemy, Bishop James Canon, Jr.⁵² Did it now make any difference to Josephus Daniels? Not in the slightest. He gave a great peal of laughter, patted Harry Golden on the back, and never revealed his secret.⁵³

Josephus Daniels opened the last year of his life with still another pro-Jewish gesture. In February, 1947, the University of North Carolina Trustees were met to consider an extremist resolution that would (1) forbid a certain "too-integrationist" professor to continue teaching social anthropology in the University, and (2) return to the "pro-Negro" Rosenwald Foundation the Rosenwald Fund. The Board of Trustees—composed of 100 members so that extremists can be included and outvoted—let another speaker address himself to social anthropology but called on Daniels for a defense of Rosenwald. In his eighty-fifth year, the editor rose to the occasion: "I knew him well, and the fact that he, as a Jew, gave hundreds of thousands of dollars to Negro Y. M. C. A.'s and Y. W. C. A.'s because he knew most Negroes were Christians, showed him to be a big man who wanted his money to go where it would do the most good. His gifts were inspired by the highest of motives." Of the pending resolution, he said it "could not only hinder freedom of our University but"—and here he emphasized what he considered self-evi-

51. Raleigh *News and Observer*, Dec. 1, 1941.

52. For the Goldhurst-Cannon story see Virginius Dabney, *Dry Messiah: The Life of Cannon* (New York 1949), pp. 197 ff.

53. Interview with Harry Golden, Charlotte, N. C., Feb. 20, 1962.

dently despicable—"it would be Jew-baiting."⁵⁴ It was the worst condemnation that Josephus Daniels could conceive.

In that year of 1947 old Josephus Daniels acted as if he were going to live forever. By now he had thrown off the lonely depression he had suffered upon his wife's death in 1943. He traveled everywhere unaccompanied; to Warm Springs to pay tribute to the memory of Franklin D. Roosevelt who as President had loved to call his old superior "Chief," to the United Nations at Lake Success, to New York where he conferred on Bernard Baruch the Woodrow Wilson Foundation's 1947 award for distinguished service, to a dozen localities in North Carolina where he eagerly sniffed the political winds. From each place he wrote back editorial correspondence for *The News and Observer* signed with the familiar J. D. From Lake Success he wrote of "The Parliament of Man," and counted himself fortunate to have been at the United Nations when the promised homeland for the Jewish people was up for debate. Daniels wrote from Lake Success that Britain must make good on its Balfour pledge or else must stand aside and let the United Nations do so.⁵⁵

In that signed column he wrote back home what he was to dwell on more emphatically in the House of Jacob Synagogue in that last public appearance in North Carolina, December 12, 1947. The congregants who still preserve the mental picture of Josephus Daniels in the Jewish pulpit on a Sabbath Eve remember him as resembling those "beautiful" old men who are the cherished elders of Israel. Shortly thereafter he caught the cold which developed into his final illness, and the good man died on January 15, 1948.

54. Trustee Minutes, Feb. 10, 1947, University Archives, University of North Carolina Library. A full account is also in the *Raleigh News and Observer*, Feb. 11, 1947.

55. *Raleigh News and Observer*, May 11, 1947.

