



In the Shadow of Hitler: Alabama's Jews, the Second World War, and the Holocaust (Modern South)

Dan J. Puckett

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In the Shadow of Hitler chronicles the experiences of Alabama Jews as they worked to overcome their own divisions in order to aid European Jews before, during, and after the Second World War.

In this extensive study of how southern Jews in the United States responded to the Nazi persecution of European Jews, Dan J. Puckett recounts the divisions between Alabama Jews in the early 1930s. As awareness of the horrors of the Holocaust spread, Jews across Alabama from different backgrounds and from Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox traditions worked to bridge their internal divisions in order to mount efforts to save Jewish lives in Europe. Only by leveraging their collective strength were Alabama's Jews able to sway the opinions of newspaper editors, Christian groups, and the general public as well as lobby local, state, and national political leaders.

Puckett's comprehensive analysis is enlivened and illustrated by true stories that will fascinate all readers of southern history. One such story concerns the Altneuschule Torah of Prague and describes how the Nazis, during their brutal occupation of Czechoslovakia, confiscated 1,564 Torahs and sacred Judaic objects from communities throughout Bohemia and Moravia as exhibits in a planned museum to the extinct Jewish race. Recovered after the war by the Czech Memorial Scrolls Trust, the Altneuschule Torah was acquired in 1982 by the Orthodox congregation Ahavas Chesed of Mobile. Ahavas Chesed re-consecrated the scroll as an Alabama memorial to Czech Jews who perished in Nazi death camps.

In the Shadow of Hitler illustrates how Alabama's Jews, in seeking to influence the national and international well-being of Jews, were changed, emerging from the war period with close cultural and religious cooperation that continues today.

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