The Struggle for Soviet Jewry in American Politics
Israel versus the American Jewish Establishment
Fred A. Lazin

Praise for The Struggle for Soviet Jewry in American Politics

"Fred Lazin's book covers one of the great humanitarian campaigns of our time. But even beyond the struggle over the fate of Soviet Jewry, it provides wonderful insight into the ways in which humanitarian impulse, public policy, and civic society come together in America. Lazin has provided a valuable account of how the system can work when there is sufficient good will and dedication to do the right thing." —Princeton N. Lyman, Council on Foreign Relations

"This important study focuses on the American Jewish community and the ways it tried to influence U.S. policy on Soviet Jewry, often in conflict with the views of the government of Israel. It makes a significant contribution to understanding the influence of organized groups generally, and provides particularly fascinating material for those interested in the complexities of Jewish politics and communal life in the United States." —Joel D. Aberbach, University of California, Los Angeles

"Future researchers of the Soviet Jewry movement in America are given much to build on in this exquisitely researched study that touches all bases of this complex subject. Researchers in this area cannot afford to ignore this work." —Henry Feingold, Baruch College, The City University of New York

"In this important new study, Fred Lazin lays bare the tensions and contradictions embodied in the "We Are One" slogan deployed by American Jews to signal solidarity with Israel. Rather than bow to Israel's strong desire to channel all Soviet Jewish refugees its way, American Jewish leaders initially demanded that immigrants select their own destination. When it eventually became clear that the costs of settling so many refugees in the United States would overwhelm local federations, only then did the US Jewish leadership accept a cap on Soviet Jewish immigrants. As Lazin shows, this decisive event marked a kind of declaration of independence of American Jewry, an assertion that its interests, rather than Israel's, would automatically govern community priorities." —Kenneth D. Wald, University of Florida

"This thoughtful, deeply-researched book about the politics that affected the destination of Soviet Jewish émigrés powerfully illuminates key issues characterizing the
Until 1989 most Soviet Jews wanting to immigrate to the United States left on visas for Israel via Vienna. In Vienna, with the assistance of American aid organizations, thousands of Soviet Jews transferred to Rome and applied for refugee entry into the United States. The Struggle for Soviet Jewry in American Politics examines the conflict between the Israeli government and the organized American Jewish community over the final destination of Soviet Jewish émigrés between 1967 and 1989. A generation after the Holocaust, a battle surrounded the thousands of Soviet Jewish émigrés fleeing persecution by choosing to resettle in the United States instead of Israel. Exploring the changing ethnic identity and politics of the United States, Fred A. Lazin engages history, ethical dilemma, and diplomacy to uncover the events surrounding this conflict. This book is essential reading for students and scholars of public policy, immigration studies, and Jewish history.

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About the Author
Fred A. Lazin is the Lynn and Lloyd Hurst Family Professor of Local Government at Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva, Israel.
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