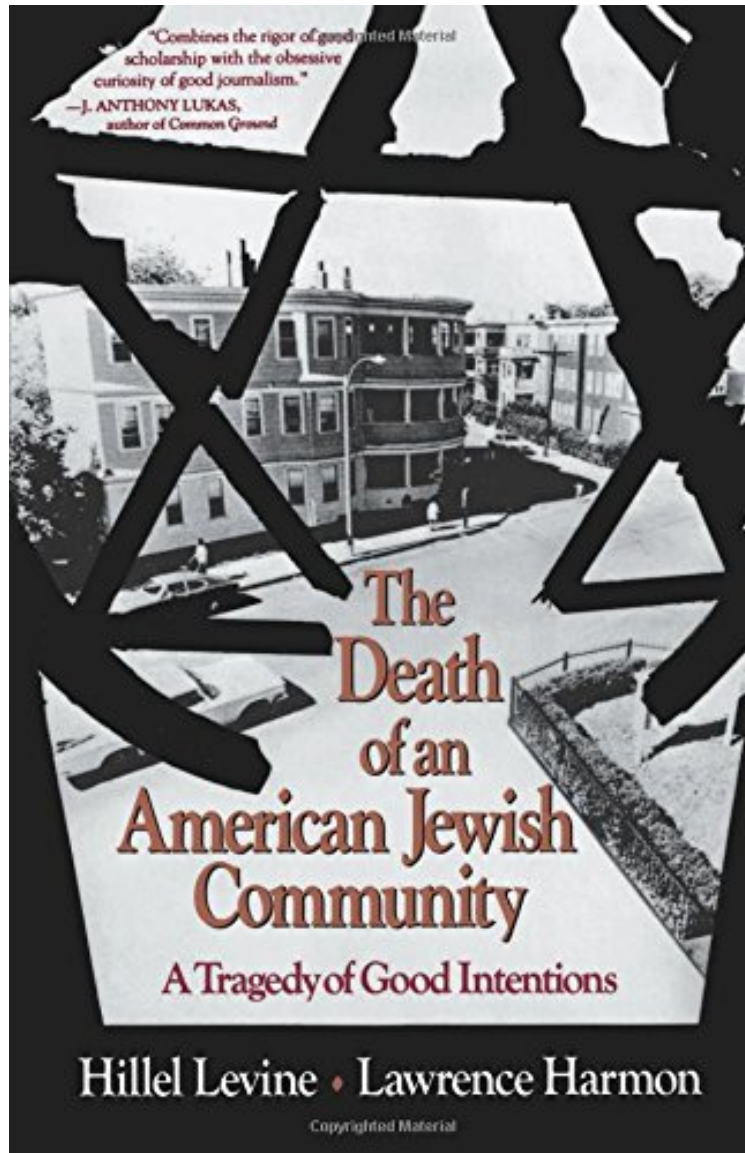


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# The Death of an American Jewish Community: A Tragedy of Good Intentions

*Hillel Levine, Lawrence Harmon*  
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**Hillel Levine, Lawrence Harmon : The Death of an American Jewish Community: A Tragedy of Good Intentions** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Death of an American Jewish Community: A Tragedy of Good Intentions*:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This book was very interesting to me because I actually ...By Robert A. Linda BogdanowThis book was very interesting to me because I actually lived through the circumstances that is what happened to the community where I lived. Also there was a complete chapter about the Temple that my family belonged to and the Rabbi who was affiliated to it. It This rabbi is the one who officiated at my wedding. As you can tell this book is extremely interesting as I remembered how my parents ere targeted by the banks and real estate people to where they ended up having to sell the home that I grew up in. The book has caused me to have many different emotions as I read it.I now see myself what caused the shift in demographics in my beloved neighborhood. my parents were of the generation that did not tell the children about these things so I was not aware when the shift was happening. Now I am aware and remember tthe circumstances which led to my parents having to sell and find a new home that they could afford. This book is one that I will keep in my book collection.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. You don't have to be Jewish to enjoy this most enlightening well written and engaging volumeBy D. A. FisherBoston, the melting pot that never melted. You don't have to be Jewish to enjoy this most enlightening, well written and engaging volume. Having spent my childhood years in Jewish Dorchester amongst quite a few relatives, i always wonder why this section of Boston imploded. Sobering expose of oft not so subtle antisemitism and the greedy self serving machinations of politicians, bankers and real estate interests. Finally I know why Irish Dorchester is still Irish and Jewish Dorchester no longer exists. David Fishetr6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. The passing of a great neighborhoodBy Sandi S. LouThis is a area in Massachusetts that I was born and raised in, attended school, played as a child married in had two children My husband and I moved out at just the right time. As we both look back with all our old friends tears come to our eyes as what has happened to our home area.This book is written in fact and not in fiction. Hittel Levine has told it as it was

apos;The Death Of An American Jewish Community: A Tragedy of Good Intentions, apos; with much of its concentration on the policies of banks and real estate interests on ethnic communities in the 1960s, should help fill in the time line and develop an focus on ethnic relations and urban affairs more in the social structural direction.

From Publishers WeeklyIn a well-researched, instructive, controversial analysis, Levine, a rabbi and director of Judaic Studies at Boston University, and Harmon, former editor of Boston's Jewish Advocate , show how forces external to the black and Jewish communities of Boston undermined their relationship. At issue: blockbusting in the Roxbury-Dorchester-Mattapan sections of the city, where the mid-1960s population of 90,000 Jews has been reduced to 2500. At fault, according to the authors, are: badly administered federal programs underwriting mortgage loans with little or no down payment to minority low-income and welfare families; local redevelopment agencies; profiteering realtors; establishment Jewry who, the book charges, abandoned working-class coreligionists; plus the consortium comprising Boston Banks Urban Renewal (B-BURG), which secretly established a boundary within the Jewish section as the only area in which insured mortgages would be granted, and only to blacks. B-BURG'S ribbon-cutting took place in 1968, and within three months 314 loans were made. By 1974, however, 50% of B-BURG purchasers had lost their homes through either foreclosure or abandonment, and the area developed its present alarming crime rate. Levine and Harmon present stories of harrassment, panic selling and violence, while singling out neighborhood Jews and blacks who tried to make integration succeed. The book brings a scandal to the docket, naming culprits and arguing a case that needs to be addressed--and not only in Boston. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Kirkus sA metaphor for America's urban tragedy as told in the dramatic story of old Jewish Boston's swift and cruel demise. According to Levine (Sociology and Religion/Boston Univ.) and Harmon (ed., Brookline Citizen), idealistic advocates of racial integration and greedy real-estate kingpins conspired in the mid- 60's to target the Jewish inner-city enclaves of Mattapan, Dorchester, and Roxbury for a massive infusion of poor blacks. Working-class areas like ``Southie" (the Irish neighborhood) and the North End (Boston's Italian stronghold), the authors say, were spared from the carrots of mortgage manna (e.g., banks conspiring to offer Dorchester mortgages easily, and only, to blacks) and the sticks of violent blockbusting techniques (including synagogue burnings) because it was known that these minorities would rather fight than take flight. Levine and Harmon are sympathetic to the goals of racial integration but are indignant over the brutality and unfairness that accompanied these orchestrations. Bankers and politicians are indicted here by elaborate court evidence and by supplementary research cited by the authors, who use their insiders' passion (Harmon was born and raised in Dorchester) and professional expertise to forever preserve the corned-beef flavor of old Blue Hill Avenue. As much an elegiac memory book of old Jewish Boston as a searing indictment against her killers. -- Copyright 1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.From the Back Cover'The Death Of An American Jewish Community: A Tragedy of Good Intentions, ' with much of its concentration on the policies of banks and real estate interests on ethnic communities in the 1960s, should help fill in the time line and develop an focus on ethnic relations and urban affairs more in the social structural direction.