

police officer was equaled by his kind and generous heart. He consistently provided a hot meal or kind word to a person or family in need.

Mr. O'Reilly treated everyone with dignity and respect, regardless of their social status. He was just as comfortable in sharing a conversation with an elected official as he was in sharing lunch with a homeless man. His expansive heart and concern for others extended beyond the 4th District. He volunteered throughout the community, teaching community safety to neighborhood groups, and he also held leadership positions on the boards of many community organizations, including the Holy Name Society, St. Michael Hospital Community Board, and the Cleveland Police Patrolmen's Association.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor, gratitude and remembrance of Mr. David J. O'Reilly. As a police officer, Mr. O'Reilly dedicated his professional life to the safety of his officers, and the safety of the entire Slavic Village community. I extend my deepest condolences to his beloved wife, Denise; his beloved daughter, Rebecca; his beloved son, James; and also to his extended family and many friends. His courage and kindness will live on forever within the hearts and memories of his family, friends, and the public he so faithfully served.

“JACKIE ROBINSON'S TRYOUT WITH THE BOSTON RED SOX, APRIL 1945”

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2005

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, this week the U.S. Congress is honoring one of the true giants of sports history, Jackie Robinson.

There is a little-known chapter in Mr. Robinson's career that is chronicled in the attached narrative. That chapter details an act of courage and creativity in the political life of Boston by Isadore Muchnick, a Boston City Councillor who served in the 1940s in the city. He deserves recognition for his achievement in obtaining a tryout for Jackie Robinson with the Boston Red Sox.

It also puts in context the courage and determination that Jackie Robinson displayed throughout his long and illustrious career in baseball.

It is a privilege for me to place this excerpted chapter, from the book “Shut Out: A Story of Race and Baseball in Boston” by Howard Bryant, into the RECORD.

JACKIE ROBINSON'S TRYOUT WITH THE BOSTON RED SOX, APRIL 1945, EXCERPTED FROM “SHUT OUT: A STORY OF RACE AND BASEBALL IN BOSTON,” BY HOWARD BRYANT

Virtually everything about Boston baseball is conditional. What would have happened if . . .

So who knew that on April 16, 1945, the Red Sox would once more approach history's intersection? With FDR on his deathbed and World War II winding down, fate and the last vestige of a city's social conscience conspired and put the Red Sox in a historic position.

At the end of World War II, the question of black rights in America was again relevant.

Asking black soldiers to fight and die for the liberty denied them at home created renewed dialogue.

Now, baseball found itself at the center of the argument. Black soldiers could not die on the battlefield and still be prohibited from playing center field in the major leagues.

Segregation was an unbreakable rule. That blacks played in separate leagues was a practice that went largely unquestioned. When debate was stirred, either from a relentless black press or from the few mainstream white reporters who made integration a cause, there was always a reason why the time was not prudent for the majors to open their doors to blacks. The only groups that were truly vociferous in their appeals stood on the fringes of the mainstream.

But during the latter half of 1944 and in the early months of 1945, Eddie Collins was uncomfortable. He was the vice president and general manager of the Red Sox and was now being pressured by Isadore Muchnick, a liberal Jewish city councillor, who demanded the Red Sox begin offering some form of talent evaluation of black players.

It was a threatening concept. Baseball prohibited black players from the major leagues in 1884, and no serious challenges to that authority had arisen. The desire to keep blacks out of the major leagues existed in great degree from the players all the way to the commissioner's office.

Shunned, blacks created their own leagues, and the races played the same game on patently uneven tracks. To some, the very existence of the Negro leagues was proof that blacks didn't care to play in the big leagues.

Yet here was an emboldened Muchnick, potentially unsettling the balance. For emphasis, he approached Collins with a hammer. In those days in Boston, a permit was required to play baseball on Sundays. The city council required a unanimous vote for the permit to be granted. Muchnick told Collins he would withhold his vote unless the Red Sox agreed to sponsor a tryout for black players, a potentially crippling financial blow.

This was a new pressure. Led by Muchnick's threat and with consistent commentary in the black press (and to a lesser degree the mainstream), integration advocates pushed baseball as they hadn't before the war.

Dave Egan from the Boston Record pushed in his column for the Red Sox or the Braves to be consistent with the Boston pedigree and lead the major leagues into a new, integrated era.

Wendell Smith, columnist from the black weekly Pittsburgh Courier, joined Egan in challenging Collins as well as other general managers across the league to offer tryouts to black players. Sam Lacy of the Baltimore Afro-American had vainly tried to push for integration in 1939. In 1945, Lacy and Collins began corresponding about integration.

It was, however, Muchnick's voice and clout that turned a cadre of disparate voices into something of a movement. Mabray “Doc” Kountze, perhaps the preeminent black reporter in Boston, referred to Muchnick as a “white modern abolitionist.”

Muchnick was the first person in the modern era to pressure baseball's power structure and come away with a tangible result. The Boston Red Sox would be the first team in the twentieth century to hold a tryout for black players.

“I cannot understand,” Muchnick wrote to Collins in late 1944, “how baseball, which claims to be the national sport and which . . . receives special favors and dispensation from the Federal Government because of alleged moral value can continue a pre-Civil War attitude toward American citizens because of the color of their skins.” What Col-

lins did next was a clear reflection of both the unassailable mindset of baseball as well as the arrogance of the Red Sox.

“As I wrote to one of your fellow councilors last April,” Collins replied to Muchnick in a letter, “I have been connected with the Red Sox for twelve years and during that time we have never had a single request for a tryout by a colored applicant. It is beyond my understanding how anyone could insinuate or believe that all ball players, regardless of race, color or creed have not been treated in the American way so far as having an equal opportunity to play for the Red Sox.”

Collins' cordial inaction insulted Muchnick, who pressed further. Collins had no intention of even granting the tryout, but he had badly underestimated Muchnick's tenacity. Collins was used to being in a position of strength when he dealt with baseball issues, but it was clear that he couldn't say a few positive, encouraging words to rid himself of Isadore Muchnick, a man who was determined to see tangible progress. When he received no satisfaction from their written correspondence in 1944, Muchnick alerted Collins to his intention to block the Red Sox from playing baseball on Sundays. It was a potentially crippling blow. In the 1940s, baseball clubs were almost completely dependent upon gate receipts as a revenue source. To infringe on that would surely get the attention of any baseball owner.

Jackie Robinson was fatalistic about the tryout. He didn't believe the Red Sox were serious about integration and wasn't especially thrilled about his own situation. He had only played for the Negro League's Kansas City Monarchs for a few weeks and was already disappointed by the league's air of gambling and disorganization.

When Robinson arrived in Boston, the tryout was delayed for two more days in the wake of Franklin Roosevelt's death.

[It] finally took place at Fenway Park at eleven on the morning of April 16, 1945. Two above-average Negro leaguers, Sam Jethroe and Marvin Williams, joined Jackie Robinson. The players fielded, threw, and took batting practice. [Manager Joe] Cronin sat, according to one account, “stone-faced.” Another depicted Cronin barely watching at all. Muchnick marveled at the hitting ability of Robinson, whose mood apparently darkened. Joe Cashman of the Boston Record sat with Cronin that day and reported that the manager was impressed with Robinson. He wrote cryptically, with virtually little comprehension, that he could have been witnessing a historic moment. “Before departing, Joe and his coaches spent some 90 minutes in the stands at Fenway surveying three Negro candidates. Why they came from such distant spots to work out for the Red Sox was not learned.”

Robinson himself was satisfied with his performance, although by the time he left Fenway he was smoldering about what he felt to be a humiliating charade. As the three players departed, Eddie Collins told them they would hear from the Red Sox in the near future. None of them ever heard from the Red Sox again.

Eighteen months later, the Dodgers signed Robinson, who would begin a legendary career a year and half later. Jethroe, at age thirty-three, integrated Boston pro baseball with the Braves in 1950 and would become the National League Rookie of the Year. Williams would stay in the Negro leagues, never again coming so close to the majors.

The remaining details of that morning are completely speculative. Robinson never spoke in real detail about the tryout. Joe Cronin never offered a complete account about the tryout except to say that he remembered that it occurred, although he and Robinson would never speak.

Thirty-four years later, Cronin explained the Red Sox position as well as the game's:

"I remember the tryout very well. But after it, we told them our only farm club available was in Louisville, Kentucky, and we didn't think they'd be interested in going there because of the racial feelings at the time. Besides, this was after the season had started and we didn't sign players off tryouts in those days to play in the big leagues. I was in no position to offer them a job. The general manager did the hiring and there was an unwritten rule at that time against hiring black players. I was just the manager."

"It was a great mistake by us. He [Robinson] turned out to be a great player. But no feeling existed about it. We just accepted things the way they were. I recall talking to some players and they felt that they didn't want us to break up their league. We all thought because of the times, it was good to have separate leagues."

Clif Keane would give the day its historical significance. A reporter for the *Globe*, Keane said he heard a person yell from the stands during the tryout. The words—"Get those niggers off the field"—were never attributed to one person, but they have haunted the Red Sox . . . Numerous Red Sox officials have been credited with the taunt, if it was ever said at all.

What cannot be disputed about the events of that April day are the final results and the consequences that followed. It was an episode from which the reputation and perception of the franchise have never recovered.

"I still remember how I hit the ball that day, good to all fields," Robinson later said. "What happened? Nothing!"

Thus the tryout ended bitterly for Jackie Robinson. But that evening, he accepted a dinner invitation at 9 Powelton Road in Dorchester. It was the home of Ann and Isadore Muchnick, the city councilor who pressured Eddie Collins and arranged the Boston tryout. Why young Robinson, who was 26 at the time, would be invited to dinner made perfect sense to Ann Muchnick. Fifty years later, she would recall the reason with a warm smile. "Because no one else asked him."

Isadore Harry Yaver Muchnick was born on January 11, 1908, in Boston's West End, on a residential neighborhood that no longer exists. There existed among the four children of Joseph and Fannie Muchnick strong beliefs in justice, fairness, competition, accomplishment, and the power of education. All four children of these Russian Jewish immigrants would attend college. Izzy received the first double promotion at the renowned Boston Latin School since Benjamin Franklin. He played goal in college hockey and lacrosse, lettering in lacrosse for Harvard in 1928.

Activism was a trademark for Izzy Muchnick from almost the very beginning. [H]e and his wife Ann were active in HIAS, the Hebrew Immigrants in America Society, and Hadassah, the women's Zionist organization, as well as numerous other Jewish organizations in Boston.

Izzy Muchnick commanded a principled, homespun rhetoric and possessed a natural political sense that would serve him well throughout his life. He taught his children lessons laced with humor, always containing morals of family and simple decency.

Being Jewish in 1940s America carried a considerable weight of prejudice, but Muchnick possessed a skill and integrity that led him to be respected by both the Irish, who controlled city government, and the entrenched Yankees, who dominated Boston's cultural, legal, and financial world. He did this without becoming an outcast

from his own community, and such a balance required real political skill.

Muchnick graduated from Harvard College in 1928 and from Harvard Law in 1932. The Yankee law firms that wanted [to hire] him also wanted something else in return for their lucrative offers: A name change. "Muchnick" was too ethnic, too Jewish. It wasn't a request that Muchnick was asked to think over. That was a condition of employment. Muchnick responded by opening up his own law firm.

If there existed in Isadore Muchnick the indignant streak of a person straddling two entrenched worlds, it was in the political realm where he felt he could best remedy injustices. [A]fter being elected to the city council in 1941, Muchnick found himself in constant opposition to the majority. He fought for equal pay for women in the city's patronage jobs and supported a redistricting of the city's schools that would have created some integration of public schools long before the eruptions of the 1970s. He was a classic East Coast liberal.

There was something about Muchnick, something both admirable and self-destructive about his unflinching adherence to his principles. Both of his children would marvel at the number of times their father would align with the underdog. In her personal papers, his wife Ann would note how much her husband gave of himself, often at the expense of more lucrative prospects. He consistently found himself on the minority side of issues.

Perhaps even had he wanted to opt for safer ground, his personal convictions wouldn't allow it. In this regard he found kinship with the uncompromising Robinson.

The duplicity of baseball angered Izzy Muchnick. He was a Red Sox fan, but the game's contradictions conflicted with his worldview. If it was the game that was supposed to represent the goodness of America, the ultimate arena of fairness, how could it be staunchly segregated? How, he wondered, could this impregnable line of segregation—which baseball maintained did not exist—go unchallenged for so long? Blacks were relegated to the inferior Negro leagues, went the baseball rhetoric, because they liked it there.

Perhaps even more than the game's obvious contradictions, it offended Muchnick that its government-endowed protection against competition and uncontested national standing produced in team owners a certain kind of arrogance. Their dance around integration was especially off-putting to a man of his credentials. No law prohibiting black players existed in the league's charter, although no team had fielded a black player since 1884.

For a man for whom standing on the right side of an issue was an absolute must, history would not be kind to Isadore Muchnick.

[H]is reputation, in fact, would be destroyed by one [myth] that would be repeated so often that it became fact. Instead of being known as the first politician to use his clout courageously and confront a resistant power structure, Muchnick emerged as something worse than forgotten, as the opportunistic, oily politician who sought to exploit both Robinson and the black struggle for civil rights.

Al Hirshberg, one of the first Jewish sportswriters in Boston, wrote in his 1973 book *What's the Matter with the Red Sox?* that Wendell Smith was the architect behind the tryout and that Muchnick saw a solution to a precarious political future:

"Wendell Smith, a television news announcer in Chicago before his death, had been fighting the color line for years as sports editor of a Negro newspaper in Pittsburgh. Because of a quirk in Boston's Sunday baseball law, he saw a chance to force

one of the Boston clubs to give black players a tryout in the spring of 1945.

"At the time, although Boston had had Sunday baseball for some years, the law Smith found was that it had to be voted on unanimously for renewal every year by the Boston City Council. One of the council members, Isadore H.Y. Muchnick, represented Roxbury, originally a Jewish stronghold but becoming predominately black. Smith suggested to Muchnick that he could insure a big black vote in his district by withholding his vote for Sunday baseball until one of the two ball clubs tried out a few black players."

In *Baseball's Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy*, Jules Tygiel wrote that in Boston, "The Red Sox and Braves found themselves in a curious position as they prepared to start the new season. The city council, under the leadership of Isadore Muchnick, a white politician representing a predominately black district, was pressuring the two teams to employ blacks."

Arnold Rampersad's thorough *Jackie Robinson: A Biography* stated, "behind the tryout was the action of a Boston city councilman and Harvard College graduate Isadore H.Y. Muchnick. In 1944, seeing his constituency change steadily from mainly Jewish to mainly black, Muchnick joined the ragtag band of critics fighting Jim Crow in baseball."

These historical accounts were not only inaccurate but were also a reflection of the crudity of the conventional thinking. The only reason Muchnick would become involved, so went the thinking, was to win a political prize. In the eyes of his children, it was not an innocent journalistic mistake that snowballed. Rather, the result, thought Fran Goldstein, was the permanent besmirching of her father's name. Muchnick was accused of acting to ingratiate himself to a new black constituency, but in 1940, Izzy Muchnick's Mattapan district was 99.69 percent white. In 1950, it was 99 percent white. During that year, 439 nonwhites lived among the district's 51,170 residents. In two of his elections, Muchnick ran unopposed. In short, there was no black vote for Muchnick to exploit, nor was there during the 1940s any difficult election year for him. It wasn't until the middle to late 1960s, after Muchnick was dead, that his old district turned from Jewish to black, which occurred long after Muchnick traded bitter letters with Eddie Collins. Hirshberg once apologized to Muchnick's son David for the error.

Outside of his personal commitment to fairness, Izzy Muchnick had no political motive to act on behalf of blacks. There weren't yet many blacks to work for in the first place.

How Muchnick's name was not only omitted from the Robinson tryout but was also subsequently brutalized in the retellings of the event is open to troubling interpretations.

The truth, however, is that the first American politician to disrupt the idea of segregated baseball and emerge with a result was Isadore Muchnick, the former Hebrew School teacher who could have made a fortune in a Yankee law firm had he only changed his name.

Muchnick pressured the Red Sox to integrate because he was the rare person who—like Robinson—often placed principle in front of political or personal pragmatism.

Glenn Stout, who along with Dick Johnson would write the most complete book ever on the history of the Red Sox franchise, never believed that Muchnick approached the Red Sox with the intention of receiving anything.

"It's much more the opposite. Looking at what he did I'm sure was not very popular. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been the only one hanging out there. You could say that what he did was political suicide."

What did emerge after the failed tryout of 1945 was a legitimate friendship between Jackie Robinson and the Muchnick family. When Robinson was signed by the Dodgers, Muchnick wrote him a letter that read in part, "My congratulations and best wishes to you on your well-deserved promotion to the Brooklyn Dodgers! Since the day when you first came here with Wendell Smith of The Pittsburgh Courier and I arranged for you and two other boys to get a tryout with the Boston Red Sox, I have naturally followed your career with great interest. I have every confidence you will make the grade."

The Muchnick house became a regular stop for Robinson when the Dodgers came to town to play the Boston Braves. After Robinson retired, he sent Muchnick a copy of his autobiography with journalist Carl Rowan with the inscription, "To my friend Isadore Muchnick with sincere appreciation for all you meant to my baseball career. I hope you enjoy 'Wait Til Next Year.' Much of it was inspired by your attitudes and beliefs."

Izzy and Jackie remained in frequent contact over the years. Robinson and one of his sons came to Boston at Muchnick's invitation to speak at a father-and-son breakfast at Muchnick's synagogue. The two men engaged in heated debate about the 1960 presidential election. Muchnick was a lifelong Democrat, and Robinson, in a move he would later regret, backed Nixon.

There was a clear spiritual connection between Robinson and Muchnick. Robinson, battered and weary from the fight, died too young of a heart attack in 1972. He was only fifty-three years old. Isadore Muchnick died nine years earlier, in 1963, but he was just as young, fifty-five at the time. His will to live, David Muchnick believed, was enormous. Over his final five years, Muchnick suffered seven heart attacks. On a rainy night in 1957, Muchnick received a frantic call at 5 A.M. from a former city councilor's wife. Her husband had gone out drinking and had not come home that night. Muchnick crawled out of bed and went out into the drizzly Boston night to look for his old colleague. At 9 A.M., Ann Muchnick received a phone call of her own. Izzy had suffered a major heart attack and had been rushed to Massachusetts General Hospital, which sits in Boston's old West End near Izzy Muchnick's boyhood home.

It was Muchnick who used his influence to push the door open, to force the Red Sox and baseball to publicly face itself. Even if Joe Cronin and Eddie Collins weren't paying attention, Branch Rickey most certainly was. Slowly, the landscape began to change.

In 1998, Ann Muchnick died. She was eighty-nine. In prior years, the daughter asked for family information and the mother obliged with poignant recollections. She wrote that her husband "was a wonderful man . . . helped so many, so many abused his help, took advantage of him. I could name dozens, but better forgotten." They also spoke of Jackie Robinson not as the man spurned by the Red Sox, but as their friend. "It was the Red Sox's loss," Ann Muchnick said of the whole tryout affair. "It wasn't his loss. Look at the career he had. He lost nothing. It was the Red Sox who lost everything."

In Robinson's autobiography with Carl Rowan lay another tribute to Muchnick. "Without the pushers and the crusaders, the waiters wait in vain; without people like Damon Runyon, and Branch Rickey, Wendell Smith and Isadore Muchnick, Jackie and the Negro might still be waiting for their hour in organized baseball."

In the end, the Robinson tryout failed because the Boston Red Sox were reticent from the outset. Led by Eddie Collins, the club had no real intention of acting beyond that April morning or as history would show for more than a decade thereafter. Within the organization, there was no guiding force, no catalyst with the vision to make integration a reality, and in years to come this would become the critical characteristic of the Boston Red Sox regarding race. Had there been a central figure in Boston, a Branch Rickey or even a Gussie Busch, who provided some form of vision, the Red Sox script would indeed have been different. It is more than a little damning that the months before the tryout and even after, it was Collins who represented the club and not Tom Yawkey, who stood invisible. At a time when the Red Sox stood at the precipice of baseball history, the team's owner lay deep in the background. Tom Yawkey was the only figure in the organization with the power to act boldly, and whether or not he harbored a personal dislike for blacks is secondary to his silence. That silence, in effect, would become a closing indictment. No different than the curved maze of streets in its city, the Red Sox lacked a clear-cut moral direction on race; against this, the combined pioneering spirit of Isadore Muchnick and Jackie Robinson never stood a chance.

IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE OF
SERGEANT MICHAEL FINKE, JR.

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2005

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and remembrance of United States Marine Corps Sergeant Michael Finke, Jr., who courageously and selflessly rose to the call to duty and made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of our country.

Sergeant Finke was an exceptional United States Marine and was an equally exceptional human being. His life was characterized by his unwavering sense of duty and commitment to our nation, and above all, his life reflected a deep dedication to, and steadfast focus on his family—his beloved wife Heather, his parents, sisters, brother, grandparents and many friends.

Sergeant Finke grew up in Medina, and shortly after high school graduation, he fulfilled his childhood dream by enlisting in the Marines. His eleven years of service was framed by honor, bravery and duty. Throughout his military journey, Sergeant Finke carried with him a strong foundation of faith, family and community. He quickly ascended through the ranks, and attained the title of Sergeant. His strong intellect and solid sense of integrity evenly matched his exceptional sense of humor and kindness toward others. Sergeant Finke's entire life—civilian and military, reflected his generous heart and sincere concern for the welfare of others. He often and easily offered his assistance to anyone in need, asking for nothing in return.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor and remembrance of Sergeant Michael Finke, Jr., whose heroic actions, commitment and bravery will be remembered always. I extend my deepest condolences to the family of Sergeant Finke—his beloved wife Heather; his beloved parents, Sally and Michael Sr.; his beloved stepparents Geoffrey

and Nadine; his beloved sisters and brother, Trisha, Tonia and Tim; his beloved grandparents, Wayne Finke and Donna Thompson; and his extended family and friends.

The significant honor, sacrifice, service, and courage that defined the life of Sergeant Michael Finke, Jr., will be forever honored and remembered by the entire Cleveland community and the entire nation. And within the hearts of his family and friends, the bonds of love and memories created in life by Sergeant Finke will never be broken, and will live on for all time.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION
TO ALLOW HOUSE TO OBTAIN
CRITICAL INFORMATION ON OUR
NATION'S SINGLE EMPLOYER
PENSION PLANS

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2005

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I rise to introduce a resolution for the purpose of allowing the House to obtain critical information about the financial status of our nation's single employer pension plans. Current law requires this valuable information about pension plans to be kept secret. This is wrong. Employees and investors should know all the facts. Employees should be fully informed about financial health of their own plan, and use that information as part of their overall retirement planning. The President says he supports making the information public. I have introduced legislation making this information public. I hope Congress will act on this proposal when we take up pension legislation later this year.

For now, Congress should be fully aware of the financial health of the nation's top pension plans as it debates ways to strengthen defined benefit pension plans. This resolution will insure we get the data to make informed decisions. Recently, the GAO put the Pension Benefits Guaranty Corporation, PBGC, on its "watch list" for the second time in a row. The PBGC recently reported a \$23 billion deficit for last year. Overall, PBGC reports that private pension plans are underfunded by some \$450 billion, the largest amount in history. The Bush administration recently proposed hiking pension plan insurance premiums by \$15 billion over the next 5 years, and proposes billions of dollars in accelerated pension contributions. And yet, we are being asked to consider such a proposal without current and accurate information about any individual company's funding status. This resolution requests the administration to provide us this information within 14 days, while protecting any proprietary information related to the sponsoring company.

IN HONOR OF DR. DONALD P.
BARICH

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2005

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Dr. Donald P. Barich,